

INTEREST GROUPS AND LOBBYING

POLS 3006

Spring 2022

Classroom: Brewster C-102

Class time: Tues. & Thurs., 11 am to 12:15 p.m.

Office hours: Tues. & Thurs., 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.,
Wednesday (virtual), 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Peter L. Francia

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines the role and influence of interest groups in American politics. Topics include the reasons that interest groups form and the ways they maintain themselves; the reasons that people join interest groups; the importance of leaders and leadership strategies in attracting members and in building and maintaining the stature of the group; interest group activities in political campaigns and elections; inside-the-system efforts to influence government policy through lobbyists and lobbying activities; outside-the-system efforts to influence government policy through protests and civil disobedience; and bias in interest-group representation and its effects on government policy. The course also draws on case studies of interest groups to apply and reinforce the core concepts covered in class lectures and the required readings. Throughout the semester, I encourage you to think critically about several important questions: Are interest groups the healthy byproduct of a free society that allows citizens to organize, assemble, and petition the government, or are they a pernicious outgrowth of citizens pursuing their own selfishly motivated interests at the expense of the common good? What role, if any, should the government play in regulating interest group campaign and lobbying activities? Do societal inequalities affect which interests are able to organize and voice their concerns effectively in the political arena or does group competition balance conflicting interests? Are interest groups, on balance, beneficial or harmful to American democracy?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The general learning objective in this course is for you to gain a broad understanding of interest groups. To complete this class successfully, you will need to demonstrate factual, applied, and conceptual knowledge of the subjects covered in the course. I will expect you to be able to identify and define terms; interpret theories; apply principles to hypothetical scenarios; compare and contrast concepts; construct solutions to political problems and controversies; and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various different perspectives concerning interest groups. Please note that I will not share my partisan affiliation to anyone in class and will present both sides of any argument as fairly as possible. My larger and ultimate learning objective in this course is to teach each of you *not what to think*, but rather *how to think* about the issues we address in class.

REQUIRED READINGS

The required readings in this course are: (1) Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, 6th ed. (Routledge, 2018); (2) Jack Abramoff, *Capitol Punishment* (WND Books, 2011); and (3) selected readings on Canvas.

OPTIONAL READING

There is one optional reading in this course: Allan J. Cigler, Burdett A. Loomis, Anthony J. Nownes, *Interest Group Politics*, 10th ed. (CQ Press, 2020).

COURSE STRUCTURE

Classes begin with a lecture on the topic listed in the course outline. You should come to class prepared to ask questions and to participate in class discussions. Keeping up with the assigned weekly readings and attending class regularly throughout the semester will allow for more informed classroom dialogue and for more interesting debates, as well as improve your ability to contribute to and learn from the class interactions. I also encourage everyone to read a newspaper, watch the television news, and follow current events. Doing so will broaden your interest in this course and help you better understand the importance of the material we cover. To incorporate visual learning in the classroom, and to help generate additional thought on the subjects covered in the course, I often show video material in class. This includes televised news footage of various historical events, documentaries, and political films. On occasion, I may select documentaries and films that have an “R” rating. Please see me if you have any moral, religious, political, or other objections to viewing documentaries or films with an “R” rating.

EVALUATION

Your final grade in the course will be based primarily on three exams. There is also an optional writing assignment (see the final page of the syllabus for details). Your grade on the optional writing assignment will replace your lowest exam grade. Class attendance and participation will factor into the calculation of your final grade as well. The weights assigned to your exams and class attendance are as follows:

- (1) Exam 1 on February 17 is worth 30% of your overall grade.
- (2) Exam 2 on March 31 is worth 30% of your overall grade.
- (3) A final exam on May 4 is worth 30% of your overall grade.
- (4) Class attendance is worth the remaining 10% of your overall grade.

Course averages will be converted to letter grades using the scale below:

Course Average	Grade	Course Average	Grade
93 and above =	A	73 to 76 =	C
90 to 92 =	A-	70 to 72 =	C-
87 to 89 =	B+	67 to 69 =	D+
83 to 86 =	B	63 to 66 =	D
80 to 82 =	B-	60 to 62 =	D-
77 to 79 =	C+	Below 60 =	F

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is an essential part of success in this course. There will be exam questions based specifically on the material that I discuss in my lectures and on the video material that I show in class. Coming to class also exposes you to questions that other students ask. This often helps in clarifying any challenging concepts from the course material. There is an attendance grade as well. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each lecture. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you are present in class. If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance. Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes that you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50; etc.). Students who are active participants during class discussions will receive a bonus point added to their overall course grade.

* Note: In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, class may be moved to an online format for up to two weeks. I will provide details via e-mail and Canvas on exactly how we will proceed if that occurs. If you have poor internet access, please contact me within 48 hours of the announcement of the online move to work out a plan for you to receive the material for the course.

EXAM RULES AND POLICIES

Failure to be present for any of the scheduled exams will result in an automatic “0.” On all exam dates, please come prepared with an exam book and a pen (or pencil). If you cannot attend an exam, you must contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up exam only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss the exam because of an illness, you are still required to contact me before the exam. You must also present me with proper verification (see below).

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND VERIFICATION

I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and/or (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery. If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with some form of verification no later than one week after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule.

* Note: Do NOT schedule non-emergency doctor’s appointments (such as an annual check-up visit or a dental visit) or any other personal commitments during our class time.

CLASSROOM RULES

The classroom is a learning environment. I expect all students to observe some basic rules of courtesy and respect, which include the following: (1) arrive to class on time and do not leave before class is dismissed; (2) do not pack up your things early; it is disruptive to others around you; (3) turn off cell phones and keep them away during class; (4) no laptop use during video screenings; (5) no reading the newspaper or listening to music through headphones during class; (6) no sleeping during class; (7) no carrying on private conversations with others in the classroom while someone else is speaking; and (8) please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students' views, comments, and questions. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Failure to follow these rules will negatively affect your class attendance grade.

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

As stated in ECU's [Community Expectations](#), please observe the following class policies related to health and safety:

- All students are required to comply with the [University Regulation on Face Coverings](#). No student will be allowed into the classroom without a face covering or mask worn properly over both the mouth and nose. You must wear a face covering properly the entire time you are in class.
- If you do not have access to a face covering, you may obtain a mask from the Dowdy Student Store, Pirate Pantry, or another provider of masks.
- Maintain appropriate social distancing in hallways and common spaces prior to and after class, and maintain as much space as possible in the classroom.
- Follow all posted signage related to entry, exit and pedestrian flow within classroom buildings.
- Conduct a daily health screening using the CDC's [COVID-19 symptoms](#) list. Do NOT attend class if you answer "yes" to any item on the list or if you are experiencing symptoms of any illness.

In the case of a COVID-19 outbreak affecting our classroom, we will transition to online delivery for up to two weeks for your safety. Health officials may need to contact you by phone to help them monitor public health conditions. Please ensure [your phone number is up to date in PiratePort](#). After this period of up to two weeks, we will resume on campus in-class activities. The temporary move to online course delivery will not affect the due dates for exams, assignments, or any other form of assessment. If the course schedule requires adjustment, I will notify you through e-mail and Canvas. I also will provide all necessary course materials, including my lectures (in Power Point slides), on Canvas.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the cornerstone value of the intellectual community at East Carolina University. Academic integrity is required for all students to derive optimal benefits from their educational experience and their pursuit of knowledge. Violating the principle of academic integrity damages the reputation of the university and undermines its educational mission. ECU students are responsible for promoting academic integrity within the ECU community by

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)

upholding integrity in their own work and by reporting any suspected violation. A student knowing of circumstances in which an Academic Integrity Violation (AIV) may have occurred (or is likely to occur) should bring this knowledge to my attention. An AIV is defined as any activity that exhibits dishonesty in the educational process or that compromises the academic honor of the university. Examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

Cheating: Unauthorized aid or assistance or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work.

Plagiarism: Copying the language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and adopting the same as one's own original work.

Falsification/Fabrication: The statement of any untruth, either spoken or written, regarding any circumstances related to academic work. This includes any untrue statements made with regard to a suspected Academic Integrity Violation.

Multiple Submission: The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work for credit more than once without authorization from the faculty member who receives the later submission.

Violation Assistance: Knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else in an act that constitutes an Academic Integrity Violation.

Violation Attempts: Attempting any act that, if completed, would constitute an Academic Integrity Violation as defined herein.

If I believe there is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, I will follow the process found at <https://osrr.ecu.edu/>. Additional information regarding the policy may be found at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part6section2.pdf>.

E-MAIL

E-mail is a valuable tool for me to communicate announcements and information to the entire class. Please check your ECU e-mail regularly. E-mail is also a good way for you to contact me. Please feel free to use e-mail to set up one-on-one meetings with me if my office hours conflict with your schedule. If you have specific questions about the course material, I am happy to answer them through e-mail; however, I encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you are having general difficulty with your understanding of the course material. I am also happy to answer any specific questions concerning academic or career advising through e-mail, but again I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you need more general academic or career advice. Please do not use e-mail to request information already listed in the syllabus, such as an exam date or the weight assigned to a specific exam.

APPOINTMENTS

My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please see me after class or contact me by telephone or e-mail to schedule an appointment. Typically, I work from my main office, Brewster A-101; however, on some occasions, I may be working from my office at the Center for Survey Research in Brewster D-303.

INFORMATION ABOUT UNIVERSITY CLOSINGS

If you have questions about a possible school closing due to severe weather or other reasons, please call the University Emergency Telephone Number at 252-328-0062 or visit the ECU emergency alert website (<http://www.ecu.edu/alert>). In the event that the university has not canceled classes, but you commute to campus from a considerable distance and believe driving conditions may be hazardous, please contact me and I will consider excusing your absence.

DISABILITY SERVICES

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138. For additional information, please review ECU's policy on accommodation requests at <https://accessibility.ecu.edu/students/dss-guidelines/#AccommodationRequests> or call 252-737-1016. Additional DSS student resources can be found at <https://accessibility.ecu.edu/students>.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Jan. 11 and Jan. 13). Overview of the Course

January 11. Overview of the course

January 13. **No class***

**I will be in San Antonio, TX for the SPSA conference. An online lecture (with audio) will be used as a substitute for the class.*

Week 2 (Jan. 18 and Jan. 20). Theoretical Perspectives of Interest Groups

January 18. Madison' Dilemma

January 20. Pluralism and the debate surrounding it

- Reading for Week 2: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 1 and Canvas: "American Pluralism, Interest Group Liberalism, and Neopluralism"

Week 3 (Jan. 25 and Jan. 27). Why Interest Groups Form

January 25. The rise of interest groups and the reasons that groups form

January 27. The Prisoner's Dilemma

- Reading for Week 3: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 2

Week 4 (Feb. 1 and Feb. 3). Mobilization, Organization, and Leadership Strategies

February 1. Leadership, and strategies for mobilization and organization

February 3. Documentary: *I am an Animal: The Story of Ingrid Newkirk and PETA*

- Reading for Week 4: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 4

Week 5 (Feb. 8 and Feb. 10). Interest Groups in the Electoral Arena

February 8. The rise of PACs in the 1970s and 1980s and issue advocacy in the 1990s

February 10. This rise of 527s, 501(c) groups, and Super PACs

- Reading for Week 5: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 7

Week 6 (Feb. 15 and Feb. 17). Interest Groups and Political Parties, and Exam

February 15. Interest groups and parties

February 17. **EXAM 1**

- Reading for Week 6: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 3

Week 7 (Feb. 22 and Feb. 24). Lobbyists and Shaping Public Opinion

February 22. Who are lobbyists?

February 24. Grassroots lobbying, public relations, and “spin”

- Reading for Week 7: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapters 5-6; and please begin to read *Capitol Punishment*

Week 8 (Mar. 1 and Mar. 3). Washington Lobbying

March 1. Elements, strategies, and tactics of a lobbying campaign

March 3. Film: *Thank You for Smoking*

- Reading for Week 8: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 8

Week 9 (Mar. 8 and Mar. 10). Spring Break

Week 10 (Mar. 15 and Mar. 17). Case Study: Jack Abramoff

March 15. Overview of the Jack Abramoff scandal

March 17. Film: *Casino Jack and the United States of Money*

- Reading for Week 10: *Capitol Punishment*

Week 11 (Mar. 22 and Mar. 24). Bias and Representation

March 22. Money and political advocacy

March 24. The privileged position of business

- Reading for Week 11: *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 10

Week 12 (Mar. 29 and Mar. 31). Guest Speaker and Exam

March 29. Guest speaker

March 31. **EXAM 2**

Week 13 (Apr. 5 and Apr. 7). Case Studies: Business, Labor, and Consumer Rights Groups

April 5. The Big Business and Small Business Lobby

April 7. Organized Labor and Consumer Rights Organizations

- Reading for Week 13: Canvas: “Business and Organized Labor” and the “Nader’s Raiders”

Week 14 (Apr. 12 and Apr. 14). Case Studies: Organized Groups in the Culture War

April 12. The Religious Right

April 14. The LGBT Movement and Feminist Organizations

- Reading for Week 14: Canvas: “Religious Interest Groups” and “Women’s and Feminist Movements and Organizations”

Week 15 (Apr. 19 and Apr. 21). Case Studies: Social Movement Organizations

April 19. The Civil Rights Movement

April 21. The National Rifle Association / (**OPTIONAL PAPER DUE**)

- Reading for Week 15: Canvas: “Civil Rights,” “National Rifle Association,” and selections from Dan Balz and Ronald Brownstein, *Storming the Gates*

Weeks 16 and 17 (Apr. 26 and May 4). READING AND EXAM WEEKS

April 26. **No class.** (Friday classes meet on April 26. Tuesday classes do not meet.)

May 4. **FINAL EXAM.** The final exam is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Please note that this is a WEDNESDAY.

See: <https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/calendar/spring2022.pdf>

10 to 12-PAGE PAPER ASSIGNMENT (OPTIONAL)

Numerous scholars have defended the role of interest groups and their political activities in American politics. Others have been more critical. For this assignment, I would like you to select an interest group of your choice and discuss how this interest group attempts to use its resources to influence the political process. Your paper should address the following questions: What is the background and history of the group you selected? What are its goals? How does the interest group that you selected try to influence U.S. elections? How does it attempt to influence the legislative process? Has the interest group that you selected been mostly successful overall or has your group's political record been more mixed? Does the experience of the interest group that you selected lend more support to the arguments advanced by pluralist theory or does it lend more support to the arguments advanced by power elite theory? Or, does neither theory seem to apply? What does the experience of the group you selected teach us about how American democracy operates? This paper is due on the last day of class, April 21.

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Tips for Preparing the Paper:

- Your arguments as well as any factual claims made in the paper need to be supported by outside academic sources. The best outside sources are academic books and journal articles (e.g., *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, etc.). To earn a grade higher than a D, your paper should include a minimum of five different academic sources.
- Please note that any papers without citations are guilty of plagiarism. These papers will receive an **automatic "F"** and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.
- ALL PAPERS MUST FOLLOW THE APSA STYLE MANUAL FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE.
- All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in Times New Roman font (please use a 12-point font size). Headings, sub-headings, and page numbers also should be included.
- A well-written paper requires a thesis or an argument. You should state your thesis in the beginning or introduction of the paper. Readers should have a good idea of what the entire paper will show by the end of the second page or earlier.
- The introduction should tell the reader what exactly you are going to say in the paper. The introduction also should arouse the interest of the reader.
- The body of the paper should provide evidence that convinces the reader of your central argument. Citations from books, articles, and other sources are necessary to make your argument as convincing as possible.
- The conclusion should summarize your major arguments and consider any implications related to your thesis. It should also tie together your central points in a coherent manner.
- For additional information about how to write a proper research paper, please see the materials posted on Canvas.