

SYLLABUS
PLSC 329: Interest Group Politics
Fall 2018

MWF 10:25 am – 11:15 am
Mundelein 307

Instructor

Dr. Eric Hansen

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Office Location: Coffey Hall 326B

Office Hours: MWF, 9:15 – 10:15 am, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

In representative democracies, successful political action requires *collective* effort. Individuals must work together to build consensus, exert influence, and make desired changes to the political order. *Interest groups* are the formal organizations that groups of citizens form and maintain with the purpose of influencing political beliefs, actions, and outcomes.

This course provides an in-depth examination of the purpose and influence of interest groups in American politics. Part 1 provides a theoretical examination of interest groups. We will explore how groups form, which citizens they represent, and how they contribute to democratic governance. Part 2 describes what interest groups do in practice in 21st Century American politics. We will study lobbying, group expenditures, electioneering, and issue framing. Part 3 focuses on the implications of interest group activity for politics and public policy. We will consider how much influence interest groups have and whether organized groups contribute to political and economic inequality. We will conclude by applying the lessons of the course to the modern political conflict surrounding gun rights and gun control.

Students enrolled in this class will:

- 1) Learn about the purpose and activities of organized interest groups in American politics and government.
- 2) Learn to think critically about the goals, tactics, and influence of political factions.
- 3) Further develop skills in articulating and expressing their thoughts through speaking and writing.

Required Texts

Nownes, Anthony J. 2012. *Interest Groups in American Politics: Pressure and Power*. 2nd Ed. Routledge.

Goss, Kristin A. 2008. *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*. Princeton University Press. [NOTE: A free e-copy of this book is available online at the LUC Library website.]

Optional Texts [Excerpts of these books assigned for class reading will be posted on Sakai.]

Becker, Jo. 2014. *Forcing the Spring: Inside the Fight for Marriage Equality*. Penguin.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. [1835] 1988. *Democracy in America*. Trans. George Lawrence. HarperPerennial.

Epstein, Lee, and Thomas G. Walker. 2016. *Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Rights Liberties and Justice*. 9th Edition. Sage/CQ Press.

Cigler, Allan J., Burdett A. Loomis, and Anthony J. Nownes. 2016. *Interest Group Politics*. 9th Ed. CQ Press.

Grossmann, Matt, ed. 2013. *New Directions in Interest Group Politics*. Routledge.

Grossmann, Matt. 2013. *The Not-So-Special Interests: Interest Groups, Public Representation, and American Governance*. Stanford University Press.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press.

Skocpol, Theda. 2003. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Truman, David S. 1951. *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. Knopf.

Grades

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to individual grades based on overall performance in the course and/or extenuating circumstances. There will be **NO** extra credit provided.

| Letter Grade | Percentage Score |
|--------------|------------------|
| A | 93-100 |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 83-86 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 73-76 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 63-66 |
| D- | 60-62 |
| F | 59 or below |

The proportion of each assignment as part of your overall grade is as follows:

Attendance & Participation: 10%

Writing Assignments: 40%

Reflection Paper: 5%

Fact Sheet: 5%

Paper Prospectus: 5%

First Draft: 10%

Final Draft: 15%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your overall course grade. Students are expected to participate in activities and in-class discussions of the course material. I will assess students based on the frequency of contributions, the relevance and insightfulness of the contributions in discussions, and active contributions to group work. Quality of participation can make up for a lack of frequency. Though there is no formal attendance requirement, please note that attendance is an integral part of discussions. You can't join the conversation if you don't show up!

A Note on Punctuality

I will begin class promptly at our designated meeting time. Students should arrive five minutes before class begins in order to find a seat and make any preparations of materials before class starts. Getting to class ahead of time is also a courtesy to other students, who may become distracted by late arrivers. Students who must routinely arrive late due to circumstances outside their control (for example, a class immediately before mine on the opposite side of campus) should inform me at the beginning of the semester.

Writing Assignments

Students will complete several writing assignments during the course of the semester. I have designed all assignments to assist you in completing one final term paper, eight pages in length, due the last day of class. Before submitting the final draft of the term paper, students will also submit a one-paragraph description of their paper topic, a two-page overview of the paper, and an eight-page first draft of the paper. The purpose of multiple assignments is to give students the opportunity to receive constructive feedback and revise their papers. The goal is for students to learn how to improve their own work in order to produce higher quality writing.

I will distribute full instructions for all writing assignments to students on the first day of class. The description will also contain a grading rubric for the papers detailing standards for evaluation, as well as formatting instructions and lateness policies.

The class calendar below lists the due dates for all assignments. Instructions for submitting assignments to me will be provided on separate instruction sheets and repeated verbally in class.

Midterm & Final Exam

There will be two exams during the course of the semester. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. Each exam will test students on the material covered in the half of the course preceding it. In other words, the final exam is not cumulative. Each exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. I will not offer make-ups of the final exam unless the student has petitioned their dean's office for a change in exam time.

Communication, Office Hours, Question about Grades

Please direct all communication with me outside class or office hours through my campus email account, which can be found in the header of this syllabus. I check my campus email account several times daily and will try to reply to student emails as quickly as possible. That being said, students should not necessarily expect me to reply immediately to emails sent to me at the last minute. I may not be able to reply to questions about course material the morning of an exam or provide resources for an assignment the night before it is to be turned in.

My office hours exist solely for you to visit me with questions about this class. If you can't make those times, email me to schedule a more convenient appointment time. Email is only for brief communications. If you have long and complicated questions, come to my office hours. I will not send grades over email—check Sakai for the latest updates. After I have graded and returned your assignments, there is a twenty-four hour moratorium before I will answer questions about that assignment.

Technology Use

I will not allow the use of computers, tablets, or other electronic devices during class. There may be some days when I will ask you to bring a computer with you (if there is an online activity, for example). Most of class time will involve lecture or discussion of articles and concepts related to the course—this can be accomplished without computers.

The use of cell phones or other mobile communication devices is strictly prohibited during class, except in the event of an emergency. Cell phones minimally should be put on silent but preferably should be turned off. Students discovered using their phones during class time will be asked to turn off their phones and place them out of reach.

Students with Disabilities

Loyola University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD), located in Sullivan Center, Suite 117. Students should provide me with an accommodation notification from SSWD, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with me individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information or further assistance, please call (773) 508-3700 or visit <http://www.luc.edu/sswd>.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for adhering to university policy on academic honesty and avoiding acts of plagiarism or cheating. Students can find more information about what constitutes plagiarism at the Writing Center's website: (<http://www.luc.edu/writing/studentresources/onlineresources>).

Consult the College of Arts and Sciences' statement to learn more about college policy: (<http://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement>). I reserve the right to exercise case-by-case discretion in assigning penalties for acts of academic dishonesty. Generally speaking, however, students should expect to receive a score of "0" on any assignment or exam where they are observed plagiarizing, cheating, or passing off someone else's ideas as their own. If more than one instance occurs during the semester, offending students should expect to fail my course. I report all acts of academic dishonesty to the Dean of College of Arts and Science's office.

Readings

Students are expected to complete daily reading assignments in preparation for class. Students should read carefully and be ready to discuss the material, as discussions based around these readings will form the basis of the participation grade. I reserve the right to make changes to the reading list and will inform students well in advance of any changes.

All reading assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is listed. Students are responsible for obtaining their own copies of the Nownes textbook. The Goss book may be purchased, or a free eBook version is available through LUC Libraries. All articles/chapters denoted with "[S]" will be posted on Sakai. Students may not share course materials with others outside of the class without my written permission.

| <i>August</i> | |
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| August 27 Introductions & Course Overview | Read syllabus |
| August 29 & 31 Popular Portrayals of Interest Groups | NO CLASS – Dr. Hansen out of town at conference Watch documentary “The Best Government Money Can Buy?”—DVD on reserve at Cudahy Library or available to stream online |
| <i>September</i> | |
| September 3 | NO CLASS – Labor Day |
| September 5 What Are Interest Groups? | Read Nownes Ch. 1 Reflection Paper on “Best Government Money Can Buy” Due |
| September 7 What Are Interest Groups? | Read Schlozman et al., “Who Sings in the Heavenly Chorus?” [S] |
| September 10 Historical Foundations | Read Madison, “Federalist 10” [S] Read de Tocqueville, “Political Association in the United States” [S] |
| September 12 Civil Society in the U.S., A History | Skim Skocpol, “How the United States Became a Civic Nation” [S] |
| September 14 Modern Civil Society | Read Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (including commentary by Pollitt) [S] |

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| September 17 Growth of Interest Groups | Read Nownes, Ch. 2 Fact Sheet Due |
| September 19 Growth of Interest Groups | Read Skocpol, "Voice and Inequality" [S] |
| September 21 Group Formation & Maintenance | Read Truman, "Groups and Society" [S] |
| September 24 Group Formation & Maintenance | Read Nownes Ch. 3 |
| September 26 Collective Action | Read Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" [S] |
| September 28 Group Activities | Read Nownes Ch. 4 |
| <i>October</i> | |
| October 1 Group Agendas | Read Halpin, "Interest Group Policy Agendas" [S] |
| October 3 Lobbying | Read Nownes Ch. 5 |
| October 5 Lobbying | Read Kersh, "Corporate Lobbyists as Political Actors" [S] Paper Prospectus Due |
| October 8 | NO CLASS – Fall Break |
| October 10 Expertise & Information | Read Lipton and Williams, "Think Tanks," <i>New York Times</i> [S] Read O'Connor, "How the Sugar Industry Shifted Blame to Fat," <i>New York Times</i> [S] |
| October 12 Lobbying Courts | Read Collins, "Interest Groups in the Judicial Arena" [S] Read Becker, <i>Forcing the Spring</i> pp. 15-22 & 35-39 [S] |
| October 15 Lobbying Wrap-up | Wrap-up & review for Midterm Exam – Bring any questions about material |
| October 17 | Midterm Exam |
| October 19 Indirect Lobbying | Read Nownes Ch. 7 |
| October 22 Issue Framing | Read Stone, "Causal Stories" [S] Read Erickson Hatalsky, "Commitment" [S] |
| October 24 Does Indirect Lobbying Work? | Read Reynolds & Hall, "Issue Advertising and Legislative Voting on the Affordable Care Act" [S] |
| October 26 Electioneering | Read Nownes Ch. 6 |
| October 29 Federal Elections & Campaign Finance | Read Richter & Werner, "Sources of Congressional Candidates' Funds" [S] |

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| October 31 <i>Citizens United</i> & Related Decisions | Read Epstein and Walker, “Regulation of Election Campaigns” [S] Read Bai, “How Much Has <i>Citizens United</i> Changed the Political Game?” <i>New York Times Magazine</i> [S] Read Biersack, “8 Years Later: How <i>Citizens United</i> Changed Campaign Finance,” <i>Open Secrets</i> [S] |
| <i>November</i> | |
| November 2 State Elections & Campaign Finance | Read Mayer, “State for Sale,” <i>New Yorker</i> [S] Read Povich, “Big Money Pours into State Ballot Issue Campaigns,” <i>Pew Stateline</i> [S] |
| November 5 Parties and Interest Groups | Read Nownes Ch. 8 |
| November 7 Bias & Conflict | Read Schattschneider, “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System” [S] |
| November 9 Influence | Read Nownes Ch. 9 Term Paper Draft #1 Due |
| November 12 Influence | Read Grossman, “Institutionalized Pluralism” [S] Read Bachrach and Baratz, “Two Faces of Power” [S] |
| November 14 Influence | Read Gilens and Page, “Testing Theories of American Democracy” [S] |
| November 16 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 1 |
| November 19 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 2 |
| November 21 – 23 | NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break |
| November 26 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 3 |
| November 28 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 4 |
| November 30 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 5 |
| <i>December</i> | |
| December 3 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 6 |
| December 5 Case Study: Guns | Read Goss, <i>Disarmed</i> , Ch. 7 |
| December 7 LDOC | Read Nownes, Ch. 10 Wrap-up and Review for Final Exam Term Paper Draft #2 Due |
| December 10 | Final Exam – 9:00 am |

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class, and a new syllabus document will be posted on Sakai.