

# INTEREST GROUP POLITICS

POS4463 SECTION 12CA - SPRING 2015  
POLITICAL SCIENCE – UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
PROFESSOR SUZANNE ROBBINS

## COURSE INFORMATION:

- Time & Place: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45-12:35; Anderson Hall Room 134
- Instructor: Suzanne M. Robbins, Ph. D.
- Office & Office Hours: 205 Anderson Hall , M/W/F 1-2pm
- Contact info: [Suzanne.Robbins@ufl.edu](mailto:Suzanne.Robbins@ufl.edu), 352-273-2381
- Course Webpage: Canvas

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Interest groups are a critical link between citizens and the institutions of government. This course is intended to survey the role of interest groups in American politics. To understand American politics – how it really works – you must understand where groups come from, what they do, and how they influence public policy. The first part of the semester, we investigate the role of groups in the American polity, why and how groups form, who joins groups and why, and how groups survive. That is, we will primarily learn about group aggregation and representation. In the second half of the semester, we will investigate questions of influence, or what groups do and to what end. Our look at group activities will lead us through topics such as lobbying, political action committees (PACs), campaign contributions, protest, and the like. We will consider normative questions about the role of groups – e.g., do they undermine democracy or enhance it? We will also consider empirical questions – e.g., what influence do groups really have? Can we know?

Students are expected to have basic knowledge of American politics before taking this course. Since this is an upper division course, you will learn to explain theories, models, hypotheses and data to one another. Thus, we will read a great deal of literature and discuss it in detail. I reserve some time for lectures to clarify particularly difficult ideas, introduce key questions and concepts and help stimulate discussion. Neither the lectures nor discussion is a substitute for reading the material, nor will we simply restate or summarize the readings in class. Students should leave the course with a two main accomplishments: a greater understanding of the role of interest groups in American politics *and* better research, writing, and reasoning skills.

## REQUIRED READING:

### **Required reading (textbooks):**

- Alexander, Robert. 2006. *The Classics of Interest Group Behavior*. Cengage
- Godwin/Ainsworth/Godwin. 2013. *Lobbying and Policymaking: The Public Pursuit of Private Interests*. Sage.
- Additional readings as noted at the end of this syllabus; these are available on Canvas.

### **Print, Broadcast & Alternative Media:**

It goes without saying that government majors pay attention to current events. For this course, *gather and analyze* (don't just consume) news and opinions regarding lobbying and interest groups. You should use multiple sources for information to avoid bias. You should also consider print, broadcast and alternative media as sources. For this course, you should review two weekly insider magazines, *The National Journal* and *CQ Weekly*. On-line resources

include *The Hill* and *Politico*, among others. Finally, I strongly encourage students to listen to NPR. *We will discuss the news regularly, and I will post relevant articles about interest groups, lobbying and campaign finance on Canvas. You will be responsible for this content.*

## REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT:

### SUMMARY

Your grade will be based on the following:

- |                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Participation (daily)      | 10% |
| • Group Memo                 | 10% |
| • Comparative analysis paper | 25% |
| • Midterm Exam               | 25% |
| • Final Exam                 | 30% |

### READINGS & PARTICIPATION

I expect all students to read the assigned readings before class – this is absolutely critical to your success. Learning requires active participation. You are expected to have read the assignments before class to fully participate. Keep in mind that valuable participation includes raising questions about what you do not understand, questioning and/or challenging the assumptions of the reading itself, *as well as* demonstrating a firm grasp of the material. **You must attend class to participate.** I will randomly call on students throughout the semester regarding current events and the reading. Each of you will be assigned a permanent workgroup; each workgroup will be responsible for leading class discussion once during the semester and submitting a two-page graded memo synthesizing the main themes/questions associated with the readings.

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER

Each student will write a comparative analysis essay of 10-15 pages. Each of you will select one pair of interest groups/lobbying groups/SuperPAC/501c4 from a list I provide and write a researched essay in which the student answers a series of specific questions regarding the origins, successes, and strategies of the group. Successful essays will show original research, in-depth knowledge, and a clear application of theoretical concepts discussed in class. Details about this assignment will be provided in class and on Canvas. This assignment is due April 22.

### EXAMS

The two exams will test your mastery of the material covered throughout the course. I derive exam content from the reading, lecture, discussions and current events. This is an upper division course, so the questions will require that you think critically and use analytical skills (don't just memorize). The midterm exam will be short answer/essay format, closed note, in class. The final exam will be a take-home essay exam submitted via Canvas.

### GRADING

Specific criteria for each assignment will be discussed in class. I will be judging your writing and presentations as a whole, looking at your knowledge, as well as your judgment in selection and presentation of material. However, for most writing assignments, I will use the following general guideline:

- A/A-s: An excellent grasp of the facts. Evidence of considerable organizing intelligence and powers of argument/critical analysis. Strong use of readings/evidence to support arguments. Well organized, proofread.

- B+s: Sound factual knowledge. Evidence of sound expository power, i.e. a clear line of argument throughout the essay. Good use of readings/evidence to support arguments. Organized, proofread.
- Bs: Knowledge of the basic facts. Ability to draw some conclusions, although of a somewhat superficial and generally conventional kind. Main lines of argument visible but with some problems. Some use of readings/evidence. Organized, Proofread.
- Cs: Knowledge of the basic facts but weak in argument or relevance, OR reasonably relevant but displaying factual weakness. Little to know supporting evidence or use of readings. Somewhat lacking in organization, needs proofreading.
- Ds: Some aspects correct, but only barely, touch on the ideas, but not clear you've got it. Little or no supporting evidence. Little to no organization, lack of proofreading evident.

Our grading scale is as follows:

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92.9	B+ = 87-89.9	B = 83-86.9	B- = 80-82.9
C+ = 77-79.9	C = 73-76.9	C- = 70-72.9	D = 60-69.9	F < 60

## CANVAS

We will use the Canvas classroom learning environment to facilitate organization, communication and discussion in this course. Canvas is also the primary location for submitting assignments and downloading readings. It is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly for assignments, announcements and communications.

## COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Attendance is required. Students failing to attend class during the first week may be dropped from the course; excessive absences could result in a failing grade. Requirements for class attendance are consistent with the attendance policy stated in the Undergraduate Catalog Regulations found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Cell phone use is prohibited during class. Laptops and tablets are discouraged during class sessions (except to access electronic versions of the text).

All work – excepting the group assignment - in this class is to be your own. Students who fail to abide by this policy will receive a failing grade on the assignment.

UF email: I will use your UF email account or Canvas to communicate with you (not gmail, yahoo or the like).

Make-up Work: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Students are expected to attend class every day. Makeup exams will be offered only in documented emergencies. You must notify me in writing in advance or within 24 hours of the exam. In addition, all make up exams must be completed within one week of the original exam.

Emailing Assignments: You will be turning in several course components via Canvas. Please do not email me assignments.

## COURSE READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTIONS: WHAT IS AN INTEREST GROUP? LOBBYIST? NORMATIVE FRAMES OF GROUPS.

#### JANUARY 7, 2015

- Syllabus
- Alexander, Chapter 1
- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin (GAG), Chapter 1

### TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THEORIES OF INTEREST GROUP FORMATION AND MAINTENANCE; IMPLICATIONS FOR REPRESENTATION

#### JANUARY 9, 12, 14 & 21: PLURALISM

- Alexander, Chapters 2-5
  - Madison, de Tocqueville, Bentley, Truman
- Putnam, Robert D. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65-78. (CANVAS)
- Joslyn, Mark R., and Allan J. Cigler. 2001. Group Involvement and Democratic Orientations: Social Capital in the Post Elections Context. *Social Science Quarterly* 82 (2):357-368 (CANVAS).
- **No class on Friday, January 16, I will be at the Southern Political Science Association Meeting.**
- **Sign up for Work Groups by January 14 (or be assigned a group).**
- **Group 1 presentation and memo, on Joslyn & Cigler due January 21.**

#### JANUARY 23, 26, & 28: CRITIQUES OF PLURALISM I, CONFLICT, DELUSIONS

- Alexander, Chapters 6-8
  - Dahl, Schattschneider, Mills

#### JANUARY 30, FEBRUARY 2, & 4: CRITIQUES OF PLURALISM II, EXCHANGE/INCENTIVE MODELS

- Alexander, Chapters 9-11
  - Olson, Clark & Wilson, Salisbury
- Drutman, Lee. 2009. Trade Associations, the Collective Action Dilemma, and the Problem of Cohesion. Draft for *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler/Loomis, ed., 2012, CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- **Group 2 presentation and memo on Drutman, due February 4.**

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## FEBRUARY 6, 9, 11, & 13: NEOPLURALISM

- Alexander, Chapters 12 & 13
  - Walker
- Halpin, Darren R. and Anthony J. Nownes. 2012. Reappraising the Survival Question, in *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler/Loomis, ed., CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Gray, Virginia, and David Lowery. "Federal Policy Activity and the Mobilization of State Lobbying Organizations." *Political Research Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2009): 552-567. (CANVAS)

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## FEBRUARY 16, 18, 20, 23 & 25: IDENTITY POLITICS AND REPRESENTATION

- Alexander, Chapters 14 & 15
  - Salisbury, Schlozman & Tierney
- Strolovitch, Dara. 2006. Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersection of Race, Class and Gender. *Journal of Politics* 68:893-908. (CANVAS)
- Barakso, Maryann. 2012. Dissenting Doctors: The Internal Politics of the AMA during the Health Care Reform Debate. In *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler and Loomis, ed., CQ Press.
- Heaney, Michael T. 2007. Identity Crisis: How Interest Groups Struggle to Define Themselves in Washington. In *Interest Group Politics*, edited by A. J. Cigler and B. A. Loomis. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- Gray, Virginia, and David Lowery. "A Niche Theory of Interest Representation." *Journal of Politics* 58, no. 1 (1996): 91-111 (CANVAS).
- **Group 3 memo and presentation on Strolovitch, due February 23.**
- **Signup for interest groups for the comparative analysis paper due on Canvas February 25.**

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## FEBRUARY 27, 2015: MIDTERM EXAM, IN CLASS

## INFLUENCE, LOBBYING & THE POLICY PROCESS: NETWORKS, ACTORS, VENUES

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## MARCH 9 & 11: INFLUENCE, NETWORKS, LOBBYING (OVERVIEW)

- Alexander, Chapter 18
  - Hecla
- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin, Chapter 2 & Appendix
- Leech, Beth L. 2010. Interest Group Influence. In *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups*, edited by L. S. Maisel and J. M. Berry. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (CANVAS)

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## MARCH 13 & 16: INTEREST GROUPS & POLICY MAKING

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin, Chapters 3-4
- Victor, Jennifer Nicoll. 2012. Gridlock Lobbying: Breaking, Creating and Maintaining Legislative Stalemate. In *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler/Loomis eds., CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- Cigler, Beverly A. 2012. Not Just Another Special Interest: The Intergovernmental Lobby Revisited. In *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler/Loomis, eds., CQ Press (CANVAS)
- **Group 4 memo and presentation on Cigler due March 16.**

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### MARCH 18 & 19: STRATEGY

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin, Chapters 5-6.
- Alexander, Chapter 19
  - Browne
- Carpenter, Daniel P., Kevin M. Esterling, and David M. J. Lazer. "Friends, Brokers, and Transitivity: Who Informs Whom in Washington Politics?" *The Journal of Politics* 66, no. 1 (2004): 224-46. (CANVAS)

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### MARCH 23, 25, 27, & 30, APRIL 1: THEORIES AND EVIDENCE

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin, Chapters 7-10
- Alexander, Chapter 20
  - Wright
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 2001. Interest Niches and Policy Bandwagons: Patterns of Interest Group Involvement in National Politics. *The Journal of Politics* 63 (4):1191-1213. (CANVAS)
- Hall, Richard L., and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy. *American Political Science Review* 100 (1):69-84. (CANVAS)
- **Group 5 memo and presentation on Baumgartner and Leech due April 1.**

## INFLUENCE & THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

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### APRIL 3, 6, 8, & 10: GROUPS & CAMPAIGNS

- Heaney, Michael T. 2012. Bridging the Gap Between Political Parties and Interest Groups. In *Interest Group Politics*, Cigler/Loomis, eds., CQ PRESS (CANVAS)
- Currinder, Marian, Joanne Connor Green, and M. Margaret Conway. 2007. Interest Group Money in Elections. In *Interest Group Politics*, edited by A. J. Cigler and B. A. Loomis. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- Franz, Michael M. 2013. Interest Groups in Electoral Politics: 2012 in Context. *The Forum* 10 (4):62-79. (CANVAS)
- Herrnson, Paul S. 2005. Interest Groups and Campaigns: The Electoral Connection. In *The Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington*, edited by P. S. Herrnson, R. G. Shaiko and C. Wilcox. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- Semiatin, Richard J., and Mark J. Rozell. 2005. Interest Groups and Congressional Elections. In *On the Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington*, edited by P. S. Herrnson, R. G. Shaiko and C. Wilcox. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (CANVAS)
- **Group 6 memo and presentation on Franz due April 10.**

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APRIL 13, 15, 20, 22: GROUPS & CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

- Garrett, R. Sam. 2011. "SuperPACs in Federal Elections: Overview and Issues for Congress": Congressional Research Service. (CANVAS)
- Garrett, R. Sam. 2014. The State of Campaign Finance Policy: Recent Developments and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service. (CANVAS)
- Corrado, Anthony. 2005. Money and Politics: A History of Federal Campaign Finance Law. In *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*, edited by A. Corrado, T. E. Mann, D. R. Ortiz and T. Potter. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. (CANVAS)
- Farrar-Myers, Victoria A., and Richard Skinner. 2012. Super PACs and the 2012 Elections. *The Forum* 10 (4):105-115. (CANVAS)
- Smith, Ben, and Ruby Cramer. 2012. *The Incredibly Dumb Political Spending of 2012: Lost Causes, Mixed Messages and Random States* BuzzFeed Politics, September 21 2012 [cited September 22 2012]. Available from <http://www.buzzfeed.com/bensmith/the-incredibly-dumb-political-spending-of-2012>.
- La Raja, Raymond J. 2012. Why Super PACs: How the American Party System Outgrew the Campaign Finance System. *The Forum* 10 (4):91-104. (CANVAS)
- Fowler, Erika Franklin, and Travis N. Ridout. 2013. Negative, Angry, and Ubiquitous: Political Advertising in 2012. *The Forum* 10 (4):51-61. (CANVAS)
- Smith, Jeff, and David C. Kimball. 2013. Barking Louder: Interest Groups in the 2012 Election. *The Forum* 10 (4):80-90. (CANVAS)
- **No class Friday, April 17; I will be at the Midwest Political Science Meeting.**
- **Group 7 memo and presentation on Smith and Kimball due April 20.**
- **Comparative Analysis Paper due not later than midnight April 22 via CANVAS.**

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APRIL 30: FINAL EXAM DUE VIA CANVAS NOT LATER THAN 2:30 PM