INTEREST GROUP POLITICS
POS4463 SECTION 12CA - SPRING 2016
POLITICAL SCIENCE – UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
PROFESSOR SUZANNE ROBBINS

COURSE INFORMATION:

- Time & Place: MWF, 1:55-2:45; Anderson Hall Room 101
- Instructor: Suzanne M. Robbins, Ph. D.
- Office & Office Hours: 205 Anderson Hall, MWF 12:30-1:30
- Contact info: 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):

- 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. 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%
- Comparative analysis paper 20%
- Exam 1 20%
- Exam 2 20%
- 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. We will break into workgroups from time to time, which will allow you to participate in both large and small group settings.

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 groups. 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 20.

EXAMS

The three 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). Exams will be in class, closed note and be of mixed format (some combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay). The exams are comprehensive in nature.

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:

- 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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</tbody>
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Grades are posted as a courtesy on Canvas. The official gradesheet, however, is the one on my personal computer.

**CANVAS & THE LISTSERVE**

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. In addition, you were signed up for a class list-serve when you signed up for the course. I will send announcements to the class using the list-serve. Generally, these messages go to your UFL email account. Be sure to check your email for these messages.

**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/) 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 in this class is to be your own. Students who fail to abide by this policy, or who plagiarize, 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 11, 2016
- Syllabus
- Cigler, Loomis, Nownes (CLN), 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 13, 15, 20 & 22: PLURALISM
- Canvas Readings:

JANUARY 25 & 27: CRITIQUES OF PLURALISM I, CONFLICT, DELUSIONS
- Canvas Readings:

JANUARY 29, FEBRUARY 1 & 3: CRITIQUES OF PLURALISM II, EXCHANGE/INCENTIVE MODELS
- Canvas Readings:
FEBRUARY 5, 8, 10, & 12: NEOPLURALISM

- Canvas:

FEBRUARY 15: EXAM 1 IN CLASS

INTERNAL GROUP POLITICS, IDENTITY POLITICS, ASSESSING REPRESENTATION

FEBRUARY 17 & 19: IDENTITY POLITICS

- Canvas:
- Cigler, Loomis and Nownes:
  - Loomis, Chapter 6, “The Tea Party as an Interest”

FEBRUARY 22, 24 & 26: INTERNAL GROUP POLITICS

- Canvas:
- Cigler, Loomis and Nownes:
  - Francia, Chapter 2, “Organized Labor”
  - Halpin, Chapter 3, “Interest Group Policy Agendas”
  - Haider-Markel & Sylvester, Chapter 4, “Changing Policies/Changing Hearts and Minds”
  - Hertzke, Chapter 5, “National Religious Lobbying”
- *Signup for interest groups for the comparative analysis paper due on Canvas February 24.*

MARCH 7 & 9: ASSESSING REPRESENTATION

- Canvas:

**MARCH 11: EXAM 2 IN CLASS**

**INFLUENCE, LOBBYING & THE POLICY PROCESS: NETWORKS, ACTORS, INFLUENCE**

**MARCH 14: INFLUENCE, NETWORKS, LOBBYING (OVERVIEW)**

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin:
  - Chapter 2 & Appendix
- Canvas:

**MARCH 16, 18 & 21: INTEREST GROUPS & POLICY MAKING**

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin:
  - Chapters 3-4
- Cigler, Loomis and Nownes:
  - LaPira, Chapter 11, “Lobbying in the Shadows”
  - Nownes and Cole, Chapter 13, “Invisible Governments”
  - Healy, Chapter 14, “Working the Angles”
  - Godwin, Ainsworth and Godwin, Chapter 16, “We Have Met the Lobbyists”
- Canvas:

**MARCH 23 & 25: STRATEGY & INFLUENCE**

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin:
  - Chapters 5-6.
- Cigler, Loomis, and Nownes:
  - Apollonio, Chapter 10, “Tobacco Industry”
  - McCormick, Chapter 12, “Ethnic Interests”
  - McKay, Chapter 15, “Negative Lobbying”
- Canvas:
MARCH 28 & 30: THEORIES AND EVIDENCE, SUMMING UP

- Godwin, Ainsworth, Godwin:
  - Chapters 7-10
- Canvas:

APRIL 1: SECOND EXAM, IN CLASS

GROUPS, INFLUENCE & THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

APRIL 4, 6, 8 & 11: GROUPS ELECTIONS

- Cigler, Loomis, Nownes:
  - Boatright, “Congressional Primaries”
- Canvas:

APRIL 13, 15, 18 & 20: GROUPS & CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW

- Cigler, Loomis, Nownes:
  - Drutman, Chapter 7, “Dark Money”
  - Richter and Werner, Chapter 8, “Source of Congressional Funds”
  - Loomis & Nownes, Chapter 17, “Advocacy and Inequality”
- Canvas:

  - Comparative Analysis Paper due not later than midnight April 20 via CANVAS.

FINAL EXAM, IN CLASS, APRIL 28, 10 AM – NOON.