

Interest Groups

POS 4463/Fall 2023

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Office hours:

Mondays/Fridays 1-3
(205 Anderson Hall)

Class meets:

MWF 11:45-12:35
MCCA 1142

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Figure 1: Political cartoon by Etta Hulme. This cartoon appeared in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Monday, May 20, 1985

Course Overview & Goals

Contrary to tradition, against the public morals, and hostile to good government, the lobby has reached such a position of power that it threatens government itself. -Justice Hugo Black, 1935

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. -James Madison, Federalist #10, 1787

Interest groups are a critical link between citizens and the institutions of government. To understand American politics - how it really works - you must understand where groups come from, what they do, and how they influence public policy. This semester we will survey the role of interest groups in American politics, including representation, lobbying, and electioneering.

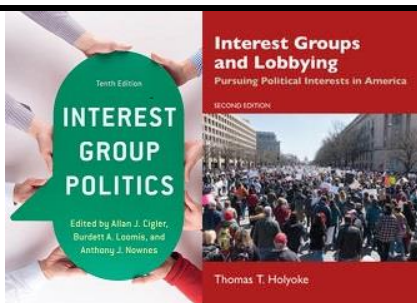
Students are expected to have basic knowledge of American politics before taking this course. Since this is an upper division course, you will learn to explain theories, models, hypotheses, and data to one another. Thus, we will read a great deal of literature and discuss it in detail. We will consider normative questions about the role of groups and - e.g., do they undermine or enhance democracy? Empirically, what influence do groups have? Can we know?

This semester, students will work on the following learning objectives:

- develop a greater understanding of the role of groups in American politics;
- distinguish between assumptions and evidence in evaluating arguments;
- synthesize diverse literature to draw inferences and conclusions regarding interest groups;
- improve oral and written communications skills;
- improve critical and analytical thinking; and
- increase the quality and depth of research through collaboration.

Interest Groups

Required Texts



Reading before class is critical as we will discuss the readings in detail. I've assigned two texts and many readings (on Canvas) to kick-start our discussion this semester.

The following are required, and e-books are acceptable:

- o Cigler, A. J. , Loomis, B. A., & A. J. Nownes. 2019. *Interest Group Politics, 10th Edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- o Holyoke, Thomas T. 2020. *Interest Groups and Lobbying, 2nd Edition*. Routledge.

The readings on Canvas include many classics, including works from Madison, Bentley, Dahl, Schattschneider, Truman, and Olson. You will also read many contemporary scholars such as Berry, Hojnacki, Yackee, Merry, and Strolovich. The required reading is listed in detail in the appropriate modules on Canvas and noted briefly on page 3.

Tips for Success

Go to class (and read before class). The class is organized as an advanced seminar. I will lecture, but we will talk often. Pay attention when I lecture and ask questions. Participate during workshops. You can't do well if you skip class.

Move beyond parroting talking points to using **critical thinking skills**. Ask yourself, "why," "if this is true, what else must be true," and "what is this an example of?" Think about implications and **make connections across the reading**.

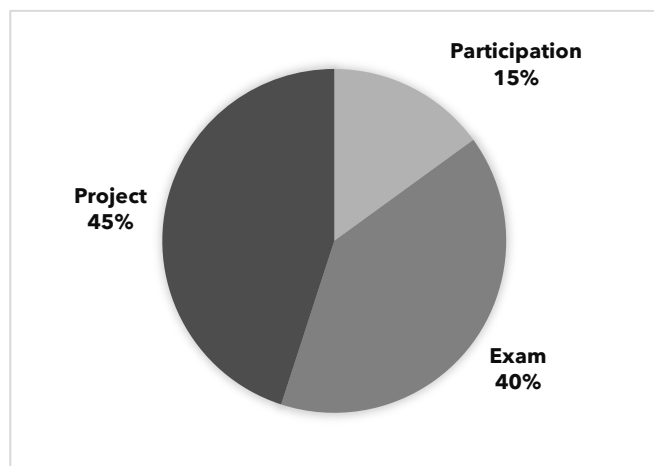
Complete all the assignments on time.

Assignments & Grading

Participation/Attendance: Read the assigned readings before class - this is critical to your success. Raise questions about what you do not understand, question assumptions, demonstrate a firm grasp of the material. Everyone will also self-evaluate their participation twice during the semester. *You must attend class to participate.* (15%)

In-class Exam: close to the end of the semester, you will take a short in-class exam consisting of short answer questions. The questions are designed to assess broad, rather than detailed knowledge of major concepts and themes in the course. (40%)

Course Project: Working in teams, you will complete a case-study comparison of interest groups in America. The group project consists of four data/information submissions and a presentation. Each person will write their own final case study, incorporating the literature from the class. **More details are on Canvas.** (45%)



A	94.0%	C	73.0%
A-	90.0%	C	70.0%
B+	87.0%	D+	67.0%
B	83.0%	D	63.0%
B-	80.0%	D-	60%
C+	77.0%		

Interest Groups

Module 1: Introduction (August 23-25)

- The syllabus
- An Exodus from Congress (Berman)
- As Legal Fees Mount (Goldmacher/Haberman)
- The Pentagon Saw a Warship Boondoggle (Lipton)
- The Fight over Gas Stoves (Tabuchi)
- The Secret History of Gun Rights (McIntire)
- Cigler, Loomis, & Nownes text: Chapter 1
- Holyoke text: Intro and Chapter 1

Module 2: Group Formation (August 28-Oct 13)

Pluralism (August 28-September 1)

- Federalist No. 10 (Madison)
- Political Associations in the U. S. (Tocqueville)
- Group Involvement & Democratic Orientations (Joslyn)
- The Governmental Process (Truman)

First Critiques of Pluralism (Sep. 6-8)

- Who Governs? (Dahl)
- Semi Sovereign People (Schattschneider)
- The Structure of Power in American Society (Mills)

Collective Action Theory (Sep. 11-15)

- Holyoke text, Chapter 2
- Logic of Collective Action (ch.1, Olson)
- Incentive Systems (Clark & Wilson)
- An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups (Wilson)

NeoPluralists & Group Maintenance (Sep. 18-25)

- Trade Associations (Drutman)
- Three Modes of Political Mobilization (Walker)
- Neo Pluralism (McFarland)
- The Importance of Financial & Human Capital (Barakso et al)
- Cigler, Loomis & Nownes text: Chapters 2, 4-6
- Holyoke, Chapter 3

Implications for Representation (Sep. 27-Oct. 11)

- Identity Crisis (Heaney)
- Cigler, Loomis, & Nownes, Chapter 3
- Holyoke, Chapter 4
- Organizations & the Democratic Representation of Interests (Schlozman et al)
- A More Level Playing Field? (Strolovitch)
- Extreme Voices (Claasen & Nicholson)

Module 4: Lobbying, Elections, & Influence (Oct. 13-Nov. 21)

Introduction (October 13):

- Lobbying & Influence (Leech)
- Cigler, Loomis, Nownes: Chapter 10
- Stunning Findings (Morgan)
- I was a Lobbyist (Williams)
- Here's the Real Reason we don't have Gun Reform (Drutman)

Policy Making (October 16-20):

- Holyoke, Chapter 5-8
 - Cigler, Loomis & Nownes, Chapters 9, 12
- #### *Lobbying Strategy & Revolving Door (Oct. 23-30)*

- Holyoke, Chapter 9
- Cigler, Loomis and Nownes, Chapters 8, 11
- Lobbying in the Shadows (LaPira)
- The Power of Negative Lobbying (McKay)
- Constructing Narratives (Merry)
- Revolving Door (La Pira)

Electoral Influence (Nov. 1 - 17)

- Candidates, Groups, and the Campaign Finance Environment (CRS)
- Holyoke, Chapter 10
- The Rise of Dark Money (Drutman)
- How Outside Money Makes Governing More Difficult (Norton & Pildes)
- Cigler, Loomis, & Nownes, Chapter 7
- Holyoke, final chapter

Exam, Project Days, Presentations

- **September 8: Project Work Day #1 (guest)**
- **September 22: Project Part A due**
- **September 29: Project Part B due**
- **October 13: Project Work Day #2 (guest)**
- **October 27: Project Part C due**
- **November 3: Project Work Day #3 (guest)**
- **November 13: Project Part D due**
- **November 17: Exam (in Class)**
- **November 21: Project Work Day #4 (guest)**
- **November 27-Dec 6: Project Presentations**
- **December 12: Individual Project Papers due**

***Readings other than the texts are in the modules on Canvas**

Interest Groups



*In no country in the world
has the principle of
association been more
successfully used or applied
to a greater multitude of
objects than in America.*
--Alexander de Tocqueville,
1835

Boston Tea Party Source:W.D. Cooper;Boston Tea Party; *The History of North America*. London: E. Newberry, 1789.Engraving. Plate opposite p. 58. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (40), Public Domain

The Fine Print: Course, Department, and University Policy

Attendance: 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, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). Please contact Dr. Robbins if you will miss lecture and your TA if you will miss discussion for documented absences (e.g., religious observances, illness, or academic/athletic competitions).

COVID-19 (and other illnesses): If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl](https://one.ufl.edu) for vaccination opportunities.

Late Work: Canvas will assess a 5% per day penalty automatically to late work.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals or via Canvas. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Disability Services: Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. Please share your accommodation letter (and discuss your needs) with Dr. Robbins as early as possible.

Plagiarism/Cheating: Cheating/plagiarism will result in zero for the assignment and will be reported to the SCCR. Students are bound by the UF Honor Pledge: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. The use of AI (e.g., ChatGPT) is not permitted in the class.

Current UF Grading Policies/Grade Points: Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points is here: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/.

Recording lectures/discussion: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor