

# Interest Groups

PSc221.LH  
Masters of Arts in Legislative Affairs Program  
Spring 2006

## Instructor:

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## Time and Place:

Spring 2005  
Thursdays 6:00pm to 8:00pm  
First Class, January 27, 2006; Final Class, May 5, 2006

## Office hours:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday by appointment, my assistant is Erik Telford who can be reached at 202-994-6000.

## **Overview and Objective**

This course is designed to provide an understanding the history, development and operation of organized interests and the practice of lobbying. Because this class is offered as part of a legislative affairs curriculum, the congressional context for interest groups activity will be emphasized. Students will also learn about the attempts at regulating these activities and how current laws and regulations apply to them. Because of recent events, lobby reform efforts will be scrutinized and evaluated. As such we will be following closely the Jack Abramoff investigation and its fallout for the lobbying community and the Congress.

The class format includes some lecture and much discussion. Professional lobbyists and association executives will be occasional guests in the class and we may join a class or two run by C-SPAN's Steve Scully covering some similar topics. His classes use the C-SPAN facilities which are located in our building thus making it convenient for us. Students are expected to have read and completed all assignments and be ready for discussion each week.

As mentioned the course emphasizes the legislative dimension of lobbying and interest group activity and is therefore linked to other offerings in the Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs program of the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University.

Students are expected to:

- Participate in all class discussion,
- Complete two, small written assignments,
- Write two essays,
- Complete a 20-page advocate's brief with an oral presentation.

The overall objective of this class is for each student to have an improved understanding of how interest groups and lobbyists participate in the legislative process.

### **Texts and References**

- 1) *A Citizens Guide to Lobbying Congress*, by Donald Dekieffer
- 2) *Analyzing Interest Groups*, by Scott Ainsworth

These reference books will be on reserve in the reading room or available from the instructor:

*Interest Groups Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington*, edited by Paul S. Herrnsen, Ronald G. Shaiko, and Clyde Wilcox

*Lobbying Congress: How the System Works*, by Bruce C. Wolpe and Betram J. Levine

*Interest Group Politics*, Burdett Loomis and Allan Ciglar

*Lobbying and Nonprofits*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Robert A. Smucker  
*Washington at Work: Back Rooms and Clean Air*, Richard E. Cohen

*Congress and Its Members*, Roger Davidson and Walter Oleszek

*Leading Congress: New Styles, New Strategies*, John Kornacki

*Networks of Champions*, Christine DeGregorio

*Congress A to Z*, Congressional Quarterly

*The Dance of Legislation*, Eric Redman

### **Grading, Student Responsibilities and Class Format**

Grading is based on four elements:

- class participation, 20%
- small assignments, 20%
- mid-term exam, 20%
- advocate's brief and oral presentation, 40%

Some students may have responsibilities that intrude on class time. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in advance of a planned absence and to make up any work that is missed. Absence from more than two classes may result in an incomplete grade.

Since this course is a graduate seminar, discussion is enlivened by the thoughtful contributions of all participants. Students shortchange themselves by not being prepared or opting out of the

valuable discussion time that a seminar offers. *It also affects grading.*

A period of each class will be devoted to a review of current political issues and K street news. Students are asked clip articles; download Web information or copy materials that may be relevant to class topics. Discussion leaders will be assigned for each class. Thursday edition of the *Washington Post* carries a brief summary of recent lobbying and interest group news.

### **Lobbying Brief**

The lobbying brief will require the application of class subjects and concepts to a policy or issue of your own choosing. The brief should be at least 20 pages double-spaced, with a one paragraph single-spaced executive summary. Each student will make a presentation that summarizes the paper. Think of it this way: I am the Congressman, you are the lobbyist; you will have ten minutes of face time to make your point. This may seem simple but it is far from it. Clarity of expression, factual integrity and a professionally effective demeanor are skills worth honing. Now is your time to showcase them in front of your peers. Crafting, then articulating a position effectively requires research, practice and training. An objective of this course is to provide the opportunity to develop some of these practical skills of understanding an issue thoroughly and conveying a message effectively. A two-person team approach is possible if two people choose the same issue and wish to collaborate or offer alternative ideas.

If you wish to have your brief returned to you with instructor's comments, please include a self-addressed and stamped large, document-sized envelope when you hand in your final paper on the last day of class.

### **Statement on Scholarly Ethics**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, as in all courses, students are expected to be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, recycled assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to your instructor. You may also consult director of the program or the associate dean of the college.

### **Class Schedule with Assignments (06.1)**

## **1. January 27**

Introductions

Discussion of course expectations, assignments and format

Historical view of lobbying and the development of interest groups, Part I

Reading assignment:

Wright, chapters 1, 2 and 3

Herrnson et al., chapter 2

## **2. February 2**

Historical view of lobbying and the development of interest groups, Part II

Interest groups and Congress.

Reading assignment:

Wright, Chapter 4

Herrnson et al., Chapters 6 and 8.

## **3. February 9**

The art and science of lobbying, Part I

Small paper #1 assigned

Reading assignment:

Wright, Chapter 4

Herrnson et al, Chapters 7, 9 and 11

Wolpe and Levine, Part I (chapters 1-8)

## **4. February 16**

The art and science of lobbying, Part II

K Street perspective

**Small paper #1 due**

Reading assignment:

Wright, Chapter 5

Herrnson et al., Chapters 12-15

Wolpe and Levine Part II (Chapter 3 on NAFTA)

## **5. February 23**

The case of trade policy, Part I  
The executive connection

Reading assignment:  
Herrnson et al., Chapters 3-5  
Wright, Chapter 5

## **6. March 2**

The case of trade policy, Part II  
PACs, campaigns and elections

Reading assignment:

## **7. March 9**

More case studies

### **Midterm examination**

Reading assignment:  
Wolpe and Levine, Part II (all remaining chapters)

## **8. March 16 (Spring Break, no class)**

## **9. March 23**

The art and science of lobbying  
*A K Street* perspective

Reading assignment:  
Herrnson, Chapters 16-18  
Small paper #2 assigned.

## **10. April 6**

The judicial connection

### **Small paper #2 due**

Reading assignment:

**11. April 13**

Nonprofits, foundations and advocacy, Part I

Reading assignment:

Wright, Chapter 7

**12. April 20**

Nonprofits, foundations and advocacy, Part II

**13. April 27**

Oral presentations, Part I

**14. May 4**

Oral presentations, Part II

**Advocate's brief due**

Remember to provide two copies and a self-addressed, stamped document-sized envelope if you wish a to have your papers returned with comments.