

INTEREST GROUP POLITICS
PSC 221
Masters in Legislative Affairs
Spring 2009

Instructor:

Bryan Cunningham, Co-Founder & Principal
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Time and Place:

Hall of States (location available at entrance check-in each week)
Wednesdays 6-8 pm
For those unfamiliar with the Hall of States procedures, you are required to show a photo id and get a pass to enter the building. The process takes a few minutes so get there early.

Office hours:

Please contact my assistant, Amelia Blackwood, for an appointment. She can be reached at 202-347-9523 or ablackwood@polariswdc.com.

Course Description and Objectives

This course is intended to provide a comprehensive overview and understanding of the interest groups and lobbying in the United States. The primary focus is on legislative lobbying but will touch in some part on other aspects of the activity including lobbying the Administration. In addition to the basic overview, we will spend time considering the ethical dimensions of lobbying and advocacy, especially in light of recently-enacted lobbying reform legislation. The class format will include lectures and class discussion. We will, from time to time, have guest lecturers. Students are expected

to come to class fully prepared to engage in discussions based on the readings and past classroom discussions.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Be prepared with two written questions regarding the assigned reading prior to each class. Questions should be submitted in person right before class and may be chosen at random for discussion. Questions should not only involve specific issues covered in the text, but should also cover broader themes encompassed by the reading and prior class discussions. The quality of questions along with constancy upon which they are submitted will count for 10% of your final grade.
2. Class participation and attendance is expected. We will not be able to have a fulsome discussion and learning environment without attendance and discussion. Of course I understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise that will prevent you from attending. In this case, please send me (and copy my assistant) and email notifying us. You will not be penalized unless attendance becomes a serious issue. This will count for 20% of your final grade.
3. A final paper of approximately 17-20 pages double spaced, fully documented, will constitute the final exam for the course. The final paper will outline a lobbying strategy of a chosen issue or topic for an interest group. You will be expected to identify an issue/topic and the interest group(s) supporting it. Once such topic or issue is identified, you will be required to submit them to me in writing by the assigned date (indicated below) for review and comment. I will be available as needed to discuss or assist in the refining of the topic and paper. You will be asked to present your findings during the last two sessions in class in an informal discussion-type setting. No podium or microphone. You may choose to construct a handout for the class that will help guide the

discussion. We will schedule blocks of time to assist in preparation. The paper and class presentation will count for 70% or your final grade.

There will be no in-class tests.

Texts and Readings

How to Win Friends and Influence People, Carnegie

The Broken Branch, Mann and Ornstein

Hostile Takeover, Sirota

Congress: The Electoral Connection, Mayhew

Congress and Its Members, Davidson and Oleszek

Total Lobbying, Nownes

Interest Group Politics (7th Edition), Cigler and Loomis

Class Schedule and Assignments

January 14

Carnegie, Chapters 1-6

January 21

Carnegie, Rest of Book
Nownes, Chapters 1-4

January 28

Nownes, Rest of Book

Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection

February 4

Davidson and Oleszek, Parts One and Two

February 11

Davidson and Oleszek, Part Three

February 18

Davidson and Oleszek, Parts Four and Five

February 25

Mann and Ornstein, The Broken Branch

March 4

Continued Discussion of the Broken Branch

March 11

Sirota, Hostile Takeover

March 18

NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

March 25

Cigler and Loomis, Interest Group Politics Parts 1 and 2

April 1

Cigler and Loomis, Interest Group Politics, Parts 3 and 4

April 8

Cigler and Loomis, Conclusion

April 15

In-class exercises/presentations

April 22

In-class exercises/presentations

May 4 Final Paper Due