

**POSC 306/406**  
**INTEREST GROUPS IN THE POLICY PROCESS**  
**SPRING 2009**

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MAND 406	216-514-8337 (home)	M/W: 1:00 -2:30
Tuesdays, 5:20 – 8:00 pm	<a href="mailto:jxw87@po.cwru.edu">jxw87@po.cwru.edu</a>	and by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course has two main topics: how interest groups and individuals affiliated with those groups can and do try to influence public policy, and the dynamics of the policy process itself. From a political science perspective, therefore, this course combines two sub-fields: interest groups, and the policymaking process. It differs from traditional interest group courses first because it considers organizational actors as well as interest groups – e.g. the perspective of individual hospitals as well as of the American Hospital Association. Second, the course puts less emphasis on evaluation of interest groups as a “good” or “bad” part of politics, and more on the variety of ways that groups can try to influence events. It differs from traditional policy process courses in putting more emphasis on the process as an opportunity and constraint upon advocates for particular positions. What can organizations or groups do to influence policy choices? We will see that different interests with different kinds of resources may follow different strategies and tactics. These opportunities and constraints are a large part of what you would want to figure out if you, in your careers or as an avocation, engage in public policy advocacy..

This course is joined with, but not formally co-listed with, MAND 406, *Nonprofit Public Policy and Advocacy*, which is offered to students in the Mandel Center in Nonprofit Organizations’ Masters degree program. Those students are subject to the rules of the MBA program, so normally attend class for only two hours per week. Therefore they will attend from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. Our section of the class will begin class each week at 5:20 p.m., and take a break around 5:50 for the Mandel Center students to join us. I know this sounds strange, but we’ve done it three times before and it has worked out OK.

Because of the interests of the Mandel Center students, we will have a small amount of reading, and larger amount of discussion, that focuses on the nonprofit sector. In practice, many of the organizations with which you might want to get involved are nonprofits, so it should be useful for you to learn a bit about the unique aspects of that sector.

A more significant effect of this course’s combination of foci is to limit the time available to discuss some of the issues that might be central in a regular interest group course, particularly an upper-division course. We will address some of those issues, instead,

through your research paper assignment, as well as class discussions during our separate half hours.

#### COURSE MATERIAL:

Common course readings include two required texts, available for purchase, and a collection of articles that will be posted on Kelvin Smith Library e-reserve. There will also be hardcopies available from the KSL reserve desk.

The texts are:

Alan Rosenthal, *The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. 2001. CQ Press

Maureen H. Casamayou, *The Politics of Breast Cancer*. 2001 University of Pittsburgh Press

I have also drafted some summaries of perspectives on both interest groups and policymaking, and those summaries will be posted on the course blackboard site.

#### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the weekly readings, your assignments will include four in-class short quizzes, a book review, and a moderate analytical or research paper. POSC 406 students will be required to write a longer paper. The due dates are spread over the term, to avoid a crunch at the end of the term.

*All assignments will be penalized a full grade for each day they are late. Students who have a reason for delay that could be anticipated in advance must inform me in advance, if they wish to seek an exception. Students who face unanticipated emergencies must document the emergency and inform me as soon as possible, if they wish to seek an exception. I will judge each case on its merits.*

Here is some more detail on the assignments.

1) Quizzes: Quizzes will be administered during the first half hour of class. In case you're curious, the MAND 406 students will get to do a take-home midterm instead! Each quiz will consist of short-answer questions about terms and concepts in the reading.

2) Outside Reading Reports: Each student will read one book that is not assigned to the rest of the class, but addresses the role of interests in the policy process. Each student will write a report that explains the basic issues raised and conclusions of the book s/he read, and comment on how this material fits (e.g. confirms, contradicts, or supplements) arguments made in the shared class material. Each report should be **between 2,000 and 2,500 words** long.

No more than seven students will be allowed to read the same book. **All students should make their selections by the third class session (January 27).** There are two reasons for this early date: to make sure you have sufficient time to procure the book, and to ensure you have time to read it.

Students' selections will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students who select a book that has already been chosen by the maximum number of classmates will be required to choose some other reading, unless they can convince me that special circumstances apply. **The reports will be due in class on April 14.** Class sessions on April 14 and April 21 will each discuss three of the texts, and the students who read each book will lead the discussions.

Students will choose from the following list of books:

Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. **Discussion on April 14**

Anthony J. Nownes, *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get it)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. **Discussion on April 14**

Jeffrey M. Berry, *The New Liberalism: The Rising Power of Citizen Groups*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 2000. **Discussion on April 14**

Douglas R. Imig, *Poverty and Power: The Political Representation of Poor Americans*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. **Discussion on April 21**

Michael D. Pertschuk, *Smoke in Their Eyes: Lessons in Movement Leadership from the Tobacco Wars*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001. **Discussion on April 21**

Steven E. Schier, *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001. **Discussion on April 21**

3) An **Analytic Research Paper** about one of three major topics in the literature about interest groups. For each topic, there will be some core readings from which I expect each of the students who does that topic to begin. I will provide a list of those readings by the second week of classes. You then will be expected to find further articles (or books if you wish) as part of your research. Feel free to consult with me about the other readings you consider doing as part of your research. The topics are:

\* *Interest Groups and Elections*. This includes issues such as how groups are mobilized to influence elections and the use of campaign contributions by groups that seek to influence public policy. The most obvious questions are how important interest groups are to elections; whether this role favors some groups over others; and how important influence on elections is to influence on policy.

\* *Theories of Organization and Its Difficulties*. As I will explain in the opening lecture of the class, social scientists from various perspectives have puzzled over the question of why and how people organize to pursue political goals, considering that there are some obvious obstacles. The classic statement of the difficulty, from an economist's perspective, is Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action*. Those who write on this topic will be expected to read Olson (it's a short book) and a series of articles in which scholars have explained why Olson's argument is not entirely true, and offered other analyses of individual participation in advocacy organizations.

\* *Normative Evaluation of the Interest Group System*. In other words, is the pattern of group behavior good, bad, fair, unfair, a threat to good government or the basis of democracy? Or none of the above? Much of the academic and journalistic discussion along these lines involves assessments of "pluralism," which was the dominant descriptive theory of American politics during the 1950s – 70s, and of "hyperpluralism," a description that came into vogue during the 1980s.

You will be expected to write an analytic essay, in which you pose relevant questions and answer them, as best you can, based on the reading you have done for the paper as well as other class material. Please be aware that, in such essays, there is no such thing as a "right" answer. There are, however, answers that are better-informed, more logical, and wiser than others. In many cases a careful "it depends," with an explanation of on what it depends and why, is appropriate. You may notice that many of the readings for the course, in fact, give those kinds of answers to the questions they pose.

**The final product for this study will be due by either e-mail or hardcopy by May 4 at 3:00 p.m. POSC 306 students will be expected to write a paper that is no less than 2500 words long. POSC 406 students will be expected to write a paper that is no less than 3500 words long.**

In order to ensure that you choose your topic far enough in advance and gather material early enough that you are not caught in an end-of-semester rush to finish, you will be required to submit a one-page statement that identifies your topic and a list of four sources other than the assigned ones that you will consult. That **topic selection statement will be due in class on February 24.**

## GRADING

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- \* Quizzes: 30% total.
- \* Book Review: 25%
- \* Research Report: 35%
- \* Class Participation: 10%

The participation portion of the grade is meant to reward contributions to discussion and encourage class attendance. Students who attend regularly but are not active in

discussion will not be penalized, but also will not be rewarded. A student who misses three or more class sessions, without approval for the absence, cannot receive more than a “B” for participation. A student who misses six or more class sessions cannot receive more than a “C” for participation. A student who misses eight or more class sessions cannot receive more than a “D” for participation.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You must document all sources you use in writing your papers according to an accepted style guide. A good standard approach is in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), but any standard format will be fine for this class. Plagiarism of any form will be punished by referral to the appropriate university judicial proceedings, as well as by a failing grade in the assignment on which the plagiarism occurs. Plagiarism includes, according to the *MLA Handbook* (New York: MLA, 1988), two related activities: repeating “as your own someone else’s sentences, more or less verbatim,” and “paraphrasing another person’s argument as your own, and presenting another’s line of thinking as though it were your own.” Proper citation of sources will allow you to incorporate others’ analyses without committing plagiarism.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES:

Note: I have selected what I consider particularly useful articles from a variety of texts. Among others, these include the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> editions of Allan J. Cigler & Burdett A. Loomis, *Interest Group Politics*, all published by CQ Press, various years. In the citations below, rather than continually repeat the title, I will just say “Cigler & Loomis,” and the edition. A number of others are taken from Paul S. Herrnson, Ronald G. Shaiko, and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying, and Policymaking in Washington* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., also from CQ Press. I will refer to that as “Herrnson et al.”

*January 13: Introduction to class and each other.*

Students will be asked to speak about organizations for which they’ve worked or with which they’ve been involved, and the relevance of public policy to those organizations as they see it. I will lecture about interest groups and advocacy in general. A longer version of my lecture will be made available on the course website, and should be read by all students certainly before the first quiz! It is titled “Mand406Interests”

*January 20: Perspectives on Lobbying and Interest Groups.*

Some people see groups as evil; others see them as necessary. Some perspectives emphasize how groups try to influence government, while others emphasize groups’ need to know how government might affect them. The reading provides perspectives on interest groups overall, corporations, and nonprofit organizations.

Burdett A. Loomis and Allan J. Cigler, “The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics.” Cigler & Loomis 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 1-33.

R. Kenneth Godwin and Barry J. Seldon, "What Corporations Really Want from Government: The Public Provision of Private Goods." Cigler & Loomis 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 205-224.

Introduction and Chapter 1 from Gary D. Bass, David F. Arons, Kay Guinane and Matthew F. Carter, *Seen but not Heard: Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2007. 11-56.

*January 27: Engaging the Policy Process*

In order to influence policy, one needs to have a sense of the dynamics of policy-making and how your organization can fit into that process. This includes a sense of the stages in the process, how your organization may fit within the universe of other participants, and how it can fit within the process of argumentation and debate.

Joseph White, "Models of Policy," on course website as Mand406PolicyModels";  
Readings on Advocacy Coalition Framework, to be determined

Beth L. Leech, Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, and David C. Kimball, "Organized Interests and Issue Definition in Policy Debates." Cigler & Loomis, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 275-92.

**Assignment: Students Should Have Selected Their Supplementary Readings By This Date**

*February 3: Internal Structures and Opportunity Structures*

Organizations' success in addressing policy challenges depends upon their internal resources and ability to mobilize those resources, and on the constraints and opportunities within the political world. Thus a federation of state organizations, for example, may have to both manage internal politics and assess whether national or state-level policy-making conditions are more promising. Any organization must provide incentives for members to contribute to its efforts; whether it can provide those incentives depends in part on potential members' values and in part on the success of the organization's efforts. An organization may either address policy-makers who are basically sympathetic to its goals, so be able to rely on "inside" tactics, or policy-makers who are antagonistic to its purposes, so have to generate "outside" pressures in order to have any influence. The reading for this week provides examples that illustrate these dimensions of advocacy and policy-making.

Brian Anderson and Burdett A. Loomis, "Taking Organization Seriously: The Structure of Interest Group Influence." Cigler & Loomis 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 83-96.

Constance E. Cook, "The Washington Higher Education Community: Moving Beyond Lobbying 101." Cigler & Loomis 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 97-117.

Robert H. Salisbury and Loretta Conklin, "Instrumental Versus Expressive Group Politics: The National Endowment for the Arts." Cigler & Loomis 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 283-302.

**Assignment: First In-Class Quiz**

*February 10: Anatomy of Advocacy*

For many organizations, public policy at the local and state level is at least as important as national policy. Alan Rosenthal's book provides an overview of lobbying at the state level. The first half of his book provides typologies of lobbyists and lobbying activities; of types of interests and the rules of the game. It thus provides a sort of anatomy of advocacy.

Rosenthal, Chapters 1-5, 1-107 and endnotes.

*February 17: Physiology of Advocacy*

The second half of Rosenthal's book focuses on what lobbyists do from building relationships to building coalitions to forging compromises to knowing when to fight another day.

Rosenthal, Chapters 6-10, 108-230 and endnotes.

**Assignment: Second In-Class Quiz.**

*February 24: Arguments and Information.*

Defenders of the U.S. system of interest groups commonly argue that they serve an a crucial purpose by providing information to policy-makers. Representatives of organizations are more likely to admit to "educating" policy-makers than to "lobbying" them. In practice, advocates rarely or never are able to compel decision-makers to support them, so advocacy is mainly a matter of persuasion. Information therefore IS crucial – but, it also may be biased or slanted, and the receivers of information have their own biases. How, then, is information used in advocacy? The reading addresses one legislature's (the U.S. Congress') information needs; the world of organizations that ostensibly exist to provide information rather than to advocate ("think tanks"), and the rhetoric of a specific policy dispute (public lands).

R. Kent Weaver, "The Role of Policy Research." In Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2000. 135-68.

Mark A. Peterson, "How Health Policy Information is Used in Congress." In Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein eds. *Intensive Care: How Congress Shapes Health Policy*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995. 79-126.

John Tierney and William Frasure, "Culture Wars on the Frontier: Interests, Values, and Policy Narratives in Public Lands Politics." Cigler & Loomis 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 303-325.

**Assignment: Research Paper Topic Statement due in-class today**

*March 3: Influencing Congress.*

Interest groups do make their case, but there are lots of other ways that they try to cause legislators to support them. Sometimes groups may seem powerful in certain ways, but have difficulty translating that into influence on legislators. In other cases they have to choose whether to ally with other groups – will that add to their strength or dilute their

cause? The readings for this week focus more on public policy lobbying, as opposed to pursuit of contracts or appropriations; appropriations lobbying will be discussed in the week on budgeting.

Burdett A. Loomis, "Interests, Lobbying, and the U.S. Congress: Past as Prologue." Cigler & Loomis 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 185 – 201.

John C. Green and Nathan S. Bigelow, "The Christian Right Goes to Washington: Social Movement Resources and the Legislative Process." Herrnson et al., 189-211.

Christine Mahoney and Frank R. Baumgartner, "When to Go It Alone: The Determinants and Effect of Interest-Group Coalition Membership." Ms., 52 pp.

*March 10: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK*

*March 17: A Case Study.*

At this point it seems appropriate to try to integrate class material by looking at one case in depth. Please remember that this case may be a bit "biased" in the sense that most of the class will be disposed to see this particular set of interests as on the side of the angels.

Casamayou, *The Politics of Breast Cancer*

### **Assignment: Third In-class Quiz**

*March 24: Influencing the Executive.*

In many cases, what matters is not what the law says but what government agencies do. So organizations will lobby the executive branch both to get it as an ally in legislative battles, and to shape the executive's use of its own discretion. The executive, in practice, may mean independent regulatory commissions, as well as agencies subordinate to the chief executive (i.e. president, governor, or mayor). Processes of executive lobbying tend to involve somewhat different resources and behavior than in advocating to the legislature.

Suzanne J. Piotrowski and David H. Rosenbloom, "The Legal-Institutional Framework for Interest-Group Participation in Federal Administrative Policymaking." Herrnson et al., 258-81.

Scott R. Furlong, "Exploring Interest Group Participation in Executive Policymaking." Herrnson et al., 282-97.

Frank N. Laird, "Learning Contested Lessons: Participation Equity and Electric Utility Regulation." *Review of Policy Research* 25 (5), 2008. 429 – 48.

*March 31: Budgets.*

One of the most important parts of the policy process, and one of the prime objects of advocacy, is a government's budget. This week's reading discusses generic strategies and tactics that are used in almost all budgeting; how lobbying for federal appropriations works; and the politics of Ohio state budgeting.

Roy T. Meyers, "Strategies for Spending Advocates," from Roy T. Meyers ed., *Handbook of Government Budgeting* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999. 548-66.

Richard G. Sheridan, "Chapter 8: The Politics of Budgeting," from Sheridan, *Follow the Money: Ohio State Budgeting*. Cleveland: Federation for Community Planning, 2000. Vii-viii, 143-67.

Joseph White, "Making Connections to the Appropriations Process." Herrnson et al, 164-88.

*April 7: Influencing the Courts.*

Someone (I think it was Alexis de Tocqueville) once wrote that in America, all political questions ultimately become judicial ones. Certainly lots of policies end up in the courts, and a whole branch of advocacy, called public interest litigation, has evolved as a result. But, as in other advocacy, confining oneself to only individual cases may be shortsighted, if the other side focuses on determining who will decide the cases. So advocacy to the third branch of government includes not just litigating but the politics of judicial selection.

Wayne V. McIntosh and Cynthia L. Cates, "Cigarettes, Firearms, and the New Litigation Wars: Smoking Guns behind the Headlines." Herrnson et al. 341-364.

Hans J. Hacker, "Defending the Faithful: Conservative Christian Litigation in American Politics." Herrnson et al. 365-384.

Karen O'Connor, Alixandra B. Yanus, and Linda Mancillas Patterson, "Where Have All the Interest Groups Gone? An Analysis of Interest Group Participation in Presidential Nominations to the Supreme Court of the United States." Cigler & Loomis 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 340-65

#### **Assignment: Fourth In-Class Quiz**

*April 14: Discussion of Berry, Nownes, and Rich books*

**Assignment: All reading reports due at the beginning of class.**

*April 21: Discussion of Imig, Pertschuk, and Schier books; conclusion of class*

**May 4: Analytic Research Paper due to Professor White by 3:00 p.m. today.**