COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on how interests deal with the government, or governments. It has a particular focus on nonprofit organizations, for two reasons. First, one section of the course will consist of students from the Mandel Center masters program on nonprofit organizations. Second, nonprofits nicely present two facets of interest representation, which we might call policy advocacy and organizational advocacy. By policy advocacy, I mean efforts to change the actions of government mainly in order to achieve some desired change in the world. By organizational advocacy, I mean efforts to get some government to do something that helps an organization- or not do something that would hurt the organization. These two efforts can be much the same if the purpose of the organization is to change policy – but that is often not the case.

One way to think about government action is to view it as a “policy process.” The policy process includes not just choosing purposes (should the federal government expand access to health insurance?) but implementing them (how will new health insurance exchanges be set up, and who will get the contract for the computer system to enroll people in Ohio?). The policy process, or government action in general, then should be seen as part of the environment for any organization or interest. By the environment, I mean those aspects of the outside world that shape an organization’s ability to perform its intended tasks, survive, or thrive. For example, tax code provisions about deductibility of contributions, or laws about the rate of payout from endowments, are a significant aspect of Case Western Reserve University’s environment.

In order to shape or defend against government actions, specific people associated with specific interests engage in a series of tasks. The best-known is advocacy, but part of the job of government relations professionals is also to inform the rest of their organization about what government might do to them, and how to cope with that. For both purposes, it is important to understand how governments decide – the policy process – as much as the tactics for advocacy. Different decisions are made in different ways, and so require different skills and tactics to represent interests. This course can only begin to introduce you to the questions you would ask and factors to consider if you are ever involved in
representing an interest or cause to governments. But my goal is to give you a good overview, and so give you a head start if you ever engage in such activity.

Along the way, you may also add to your understanding of how the American political system works. Textbooks talk about “democracy” and whether the U.S. system fits some ideal. That’s not an interesting question: of course it is far from the classic image of a democracy and far from ideal. The interesting questions involve who is served, how well, and why. *Who participates, to what effect?* What resources are needed to participate effectively, and do some interests have advantages because they have more of the most useful resources?

**Organization**

Two different classes are covering the same basic material, at mostly, but not entirely, the same time. Readings are the same; much but not all of the discussion will be together; assignments will be somewhat different. If that sounds strange, please take my word that we’ve done it before and have made it work.

The key organizational challenge results from the fact that classes for the Mandel Center’s graduate program follow the rules for the Weatherhead School’s graduate classes, while Political Science classes follow the rules of the College of Arts and Sciences. College classes must meet for 150 minutes per week; Weatherhead graduate classes meet for 120. Therefore POSC 306/406 students will meet without the MAND 406 students for the first half hour of each class. We will then take a quick break to let the MAND students into the room.

Some of the extra half hours will be used for quizzes on the reading. Others will be used for general discussion, and others to discuss progress on your individual projects. Because this class will have reading quizzes, it will not have a midterm. MAND406 will have a take-home midterm.

**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 course e-reserves.

The texts are:


Three other books would be particularly useful if you want to broaden your understanding of the topic. Readings from each are assigned in the class:


COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the weekly readings, your assignments will include five in-class short quizzes, a book review, a report on one interest, and a take-home final exam. POSC 406 students will be required to write a longer paper.

Here is some more detail on the assignments.

1) **Quizzes:** Quizzes will consist of short-answer questions about terms and concepts in the reading. I will post a set of potential questions by the Monday before each quiz. The idea here is not to trick you, but to ensure that you focus on some key concepts while doing the reading. The overall grade for this section will be based on your four best results – but there will be a penalty if you simply skip one of the quizzes.

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.

The reports should be prepared in two parts. The first will be an oral presentation to classmates, for class discussion. On each of four days, the students who read a given book will present what they consider the important points. As part of preparation, each should send me, beforehand, a first draft of their eventual paper. This draft need not be more than 1,200 words. I will give you feedback on these drafts and class discussion also should alert you to matters you might consider for your final versions. The finished papers will all be due to me by e-mail by 9 p.m. on Monday, April 16. Each of these papers should be between 1,800 and 2,200 words long.

**All students should make their selections by the third class session (February 1).** 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. I would like to have roughly equal numbers of students doing each book; at the time this syllabus was written that appeared to be five students per book. 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 by e-mail by Noon on Monday, April 16.**

Students will choose from the following list of books:


**3) Report on an Interested Organization**

Please note that I’ve said “Interested Organization,” not “Interest Group.” So you could choose an organization, such as Case Western Reserve University or General Motors, or a group, such as the Association of American Universities or the Chamber of Commerce. The goal of this report is to give you a chance to see how concepts and material in the class might apply to a case. So you will be asked, first, to choose your interest. Then at various points in the class you will be asked to submit a page or two on how class material might apply to your interest. The final part of this assignment will be a report in which you explain:

* What this organization’s “interests” – stakes in the policy process – are.
* To what extent this organization faces challenges in maintaining its efforts to affect policy-making. This includes, for example, whether it faces and how it overcomes collective action problems.
* How is this organization’s advocacy organized? For example (if you can find out), does it have a government relations staff? Does it hire contract lobbyists?
* Does this organization claim to have special expertise to which policy-makers should listen? What is that expertise, and are they right?
* Who are this organization’s allies or rivals or enemies?
* What are the most important strategic choices that it must make for advocacy?

Would you recommend any particular approach if its leaders asked you to make recommendations?

This paper should be about 10 pages (2500 words) long. **It will be due by 7 p.m. on May 9. Stages will be due at times identified on this syllabus.**

**4) Final Exam**

I currently plan for the final exam to be a take-home essay assignment. I will provide study questions during the last session of class. The exam will involve either one or two
essays. You will have some, but limited, choice of topic. You will have from Noon on May 3 through 7 p.m. on May 4 to complete the exam.

IF the class prefers an in-class exam, it will be on May 8 from 12:30 – 2:30. I will still provide study questions during the last session of class.

5) Class Participation

The class sessions are too long for me to do all the talking, even if I might want to do so. Many of the issues raised in this course also call on you to form your own judgments – my job is to help you do so carefully and rigorously, but my job is not, on such issues, to tell you what to think. So you need to help each other through discussion, and I am organizing the course to try to encourage that in various ways.

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. A student who makes good contributions to discussion will receive an “A” for this section, and particularly good contributions could also serve as a tiebreaker for borderline overall grades.

Assorted Rules

GRADING

Grades will be calculated as follows:

* Quizzes: 20% total.
* Book Review: 20%
* Final Exam: 25%
* Interested Organization Analysis 25%
* Class Participation: 10%

Late or missing assignments

If a student has quite a good reason to miss an assignment, I will consider exceptions to the following rules. But no exception will be made if a student does not contact me either before missing the assignment or, in the case of a genuine emergency, as soon as possible. I will also require documentation of reasons, and reserve judgment as to which reasons are sufficient.

The grade for quizzes will be the average of the four best quizzes. Yet that average will be reduced by a third of a grade (e.g. A- becomes B+) for any student who misses a quiz,
unless I have approved an excuse. If a student misses two quizzes, the average for the remaining three will be reduced by one and two-thirds grades (e.g. from A- to C). If a student misses three quizzes, she or he will receive an “F” for quizzes overall.

Book review assignments will be penalized by two thirds of a grade for each day that they are late, unless I have approved the delay in advance.

The final exam and interested organization reports must be completed on time, unless the student has requested and I have approved an Incomplete for the course. Incompletes must be requested before the assignment is due.

I expect the stages of the interested organization report to be submitted on the days required. Lateness on this part of the assignment will be considered when I assign the grade for the report.

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.

Course Content

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES:

I have selected what I consider particularly useful articles from a variety of texts. Among others, these include the 5th, 6th and 7th 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 2nd ed., also from CQ Press. I will refer to that as “Herrnson et al.”

January 18: 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 25: Perspectives on Lobbying and Interest Groups.

On the one hand, some people see groups as evil and others as necessary. On the other, 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.

Ronald J. Hrebenar and Bryson B. Morgan, “Background and History,” Chapter 1 of Hrebenar and Morgan, Lobbying in America: A Reference Handbook. This is an e-book available from KSL. 1-36.


E.E. Schattschneider, Excerpts from The Semi Sovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America (1960)

February 1: The Policy Process as Context

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.


First Quiz

Assignment: Students Should Have Selected Their Supplementary Book Reading by Today

February 6: Assignment: Submit a one-page explanation of what Interested Organization you plan to study, and why it interests you, by e-mail to Professor White by 7:00 p.m.
February 8: Participation

Politics depends on participation. But why do people participate? Perhaps because they believe it serves their interests. But how do people determine their interests? And why would that translate into political action? Political scientists and economists puzzle over such questions, but so does anyone who wants to organize advocacy and recruit participants. The reading for this week addresses these questions.


February 15: Profession 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, Preface and Chapters 1-4, including endnotes.

Second Quiz

February 22: Persuasion I

Rosenthal, Chapters 5-9, including endnotes.
Assignment: Short statement of your interested organization’s collective action challenges and/or solutions

February 29: Persuasion II: Who Listens to Whom About What?

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. In fact, a wide range of research, including the Advocacy Coalition Framework, suggests that decision-maker’ biases shape what and whom they will believe.


Reports on Book: Andrew Rich, Think Tanks...

March 7: Parties, Allies and Movements.

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?


Lewis F. Powell, the “Powell Manifesto.” Ms. 1971.


Third Quiz

Reports on Book: Casamayou, *The Politics of Breast Cancer*

**March 14:** NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

**March 21:**  **Nonprofits: Typical or Exceptional?**

What we typically call “nonprofit” organizations vary extremely widely: from major economic enterprises such as the Cleveland Clinic, to environmental advocacy organizations such as Greenpeace, to a local arts organization such as Dobama Theatre. Public policy can affect these organizations for the same reasons it can affect for-profit enterprises: nonprofits may want government contracts or be subject to government rules. But the nonprofit sector in the United States also includes a lot of organizations that serve quasi-governmental ends. This is not quite unique: defense contractors also may basically work for the government. But nonprofits nevertheless have unique concerns, such as their exemption from taxation. At this point in the class, we therefore will read a book about nonprofits, and discuss how this account fits into the broader discussion of advocacy. The MAND 406 students will be asked to lead the discussion.

Berry with Arons, *A Voice for Nonprofits*

**Assignment: Short summary of your interested organization’s likely allies and claims to expertise**

**March 28:**  **Polarization and Advocacy**

Is politics combat or a process of reasoning together? Is the goal of advocacy to get your way at the expense of others, or to persuade others that there is a common interest? Well, yes. To go back to Schattschneider, politics is inherently about conflict; to go all the way back to James Madison, one fundamental question for any political system is how to structure it so the conflict doesn’t blow up the society. Madison’s design failed in 1861. We may look at political conflict in the United States now and wonder whether the design is failing again. This week’s reading poses a question: does the very process of mobilization and advocacy make compromise and understanding less likely?


*The Independent* (U.K.): Assorted articles about a ban on hunting foxes with packs of dogs.

Reports on Book: Pertschuk, *Smoke in Their Eyes*

**April 4:**  **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.


**Reports on Book: Imig, Poverty and Power**

*April 11: Budgets.*

One of the most important parts of the policy process, and one of the prime objects of advocacy, is a government’s budget. Spending decisions are even more central to much organizational advocacy. Nonprofits, for-profits, and even other governments seek money from government budget and procurement processes. This week’s reading discusses generic strategies and tactics that are used in almost all budgeting; procurement lobbying in general, and lobbying for federal appropriations in particular.


**Fourth Quiz**

*April 16: Papers on Casamayou, Imig, Pertschuk or Rich books should be submitted to Professor White by e-mail by Noon.*

*April 18: Cities and Courts*
Most discussion of lobbying focuses on legislators, and especially on Congress. In a
government that is supposedly controlled by law it makes sense to attend to the
organization that makes the laws, and Congress is by all accounts the most influential
legislature in the world. But to focus on Congress is a bit like the drunk who looks for
his keys under the lamp post: by looking where it is easiest to see, we might miss the key.
In fact, choice of venue – where to pursue one’s interests – is a fundamental part of
advocacy. This can include where to look within a government and determining which
government is most important for a given purpose. Different venues reward different
skills and resources. Therefore advocacy may take different forms. In this week’s
reading and discussions we will focus on two very different situations.
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.
This involves not just how one advocates to courts, but trying to influence who is on the
courts. For many purposes, and especially some involving everyday life and
organizational maintenance, local governments can be as important as the “higher”
levels. We have looked a bit at state governments through the Rosenthal book. Now we
will look very briefly at advocacy in urban politics, and at one of the most important
targets of advocacy for many organizations, involving decisions made mostly by local
governments: decisions about land use.

Jeffrey M. Berry, “Urban Interest Groups,” Chapter 26 in The Oxford Handbook
of American Political Parties and Interest Groups Oxford University Press 2010. 503-
515
Hans J. Hacker, “Defending the Faithful: Conservative Christian Litigation in
American Politics.” Herrnson et al. 365-384.
Wayne V. McIntosh and Cynthia L. Cates, “Cigarettes, Firearms, and the New
Litigation Wars: Smoking Guns behind the Headlines.” Herrnson et al. 341-364.
Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get It). New York: Cambridge
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
7th ed. 340-65

April 25: Wrapping Up?

Kay L. Schlozman, “Who Sings in the Heavenly Chorus? The Shape of the
Organized Interest System.” Chapter 22 in The Oxford Handbook of American Political

Study guide for take-home final exam to be distributed.
May 3: Take-home exam essay question or questions provided by e-mail and posted on Blackboard by Noon.

May 4: Take-home exam answers due to Professor White by 7:00 p.m.
May 9, Interested Organization Paper due to Professor White by 7:00 p.m.