

Political Science 306/406
Interest Groups in the Policy Process
Fall, 2017
12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., Mondays/Wednesdays

Professor Joe White

Office: Mather House 113
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on how interests deal with the government, or governments. We will focus mainly on the processes by which interests of many types participate in making – or preventing any changes in – public policy. How does advocacy proceed? What do government relations people do? How do interests organize? What is the "policy process," and how does it provide opportunities and constraints to which organized interests respond?

Many Americans begin from a presumption that "interest groups," and interest representation of any sort, involves "special interests" winning at the expense of the "public interest." This is silly: any interest is "special" in the sense that some people agree with it and some people do not; or some people would benefit more from the policy than others would. Much of politics involves disputing what the public interest is, and there is lots to dispute.

It is much more sensible to see politics as a process of organizing interests to influence policy, and interests as the basic units of politics. But that does not mean there are no standards for assessing that process. In particular, we can ask whether certain kinds of interests have inherent advantages, and what we think of that balance.

Starting Points

A few basic perspectives have shaped my selection of material for this course. It would be useful to keep them in mind.

First, our topic is not really "interest *groups*." Case Western Reserve University does a lot of lobbying, but in what sense is it a group? That does not seem a useful description. Instead, CWRU acts as an interest, or interested party, in the policy process. There are plenty of interest groups, and the organization and capacities of groups is also an important topic. Yet a great deal of the politics of interest representation involves individuals or organizations that are not organized primarily for political purposes: such as CWRU, Lockheed Martin, and Robert L. Stark Enterprises (Tony Stark Enterprises also, if it were a real corporation). So this is really a course about "interests," or "organized interests."

CWRU is an "organized interest" in the sense that it has in place a process to gather resources and information and participate in the policy process. It is organized to participate, mainly through its Office of Government Relations. It also participates in interest groups, such as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Association of American Universities.

Second, interest representation therefore has at least two dimensions, 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. There also are plenty of times when an interest seeks to change the world in ways that go far beyond its immediate self-interest but also serve that interest. CWRU's leadership, for example, would surely like the federal government to pay for much more medical research, and much – but not all! – of those extra funds would benefit other people and not CWRU. Yet a great deal of interest representation is focused on organizational concerns.

Third, for this course the best 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 (will states set up health insurance exchanges and, regardless of who sets them up, how well will the online enrollment system work?). The process has many entry points or venues, and interests will choose at which points and how to participate. Different resources are more useful at different points in the process, so the relative "strength" or "weakness" of an interest will vary with those circumstances. And, while resources matter, so does opposition. An interest could get much of what it wants because hardly anyone objects and it is cheap for government decision-makers to be helpful. Conversely, an interest with huge resources could be blocked by powerful and persistent opponents.

Fourth, this "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. By government, I mean all levels of government. So, for example, federal tax code provisions about deductibility of contributions, or state laws about the governance of trusts, 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 well 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. That may give you a head start if you ever engage in advocacy, or better understanding when someone tells you the government is about to have some effect on your organization, or a sense of what to look for if, as a leader in a nonprofit organization, you have staff who work on government relations.

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 they are served, 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?

COURSE MATERIAL:

Common course readings include **one required text**, available for purchase, and a collection of **articles and book excerpts that will be posted on the course Canvas site**.

Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady, *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Each student will read **one other book**, for the review assignment described below. They will choose from among the following five:

Jeffrey M. Berry with David F. Arons, *A Voice for Nonprofits*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press 2003.

Maureen H. Casamayo, *The Politics of Breast Cancer*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001.

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

Richard Kirsch, *Fighting for Our Health: The Epic Battle to Make Health Care a Right in the United States*. Albany, NY: The Rockefeller Institute Press, 2011.

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

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

In addition to the weekly readings, your assignments will include a midterm and a final exam, a book review, and a project in which you study one interest's engagement with the policy process.

1) Exams

Each exam will count for 20% of your grade. Each will require you to show understanding of the preceding course material. It will take the form either of an essay question or a set of short-answer questions about core concepts. In either case I will provide a study guide, and the question or questions will be taken from that study guide. The first exam will be on **October 11**. We will discuss in class whether it should be taken in class or done as a take-home exam. I have tentatively scheduled for the second exam to be taken in class on **December 6**. I do not like giving up the final class session for the exam, but I really, really don't like the time slot that has been allocated for a final exam for this class – namely, Noon – 3:00 p.m. on December 20. We will discuss whether students prefer to have a discussion on December 6, and then do the second exam as a take-home.

2) Outside Reading Reports

Each student will read one book from the list of five above (Berry, Casamayou, Imig, Kirsch, Pertschuk). *All students should choose their book no later than by the beginning of class on Sept 13.* There are two reasons for this requirement: to make sure you have sufficient time to get the book, and to ensure you have time to read it. I would like to have roughly equal numbers of students doing each book. Therefore, choices will be approved on a first-come, first-serve basis. On September 14 I will assign a book to any student who has not chosen.

Your task is to explain what the book tells us about the role of interests in the policy process. You may find that, at that point in the class, the book is providing perspectives on issues that we have discussed. You might also find that it is raising issues we haven't discussed but that seem important. In the latter case it may be something we will be getting to, or may not. In either event, *you should think of your goal as to explain to the rest of the class what they would learn from the book.* I expect to make the best papers available to the entire class, on the blackboard site.

The reports should be prepared in two parts. The first will be an oral presentation to classmates, for class discussion. These presentations will be made on either October 30 or November 1. Students should send me, by 8 p.m. on October 29, an outline of the main points they expect to make in their oral presentation. I will try to provide some comments that evening. Both my feedback on your outline and the class discussion should alert you to matters you might consider for your final versions. The finished papers will be due to me by e-mail by **Noon on Sunday, November 5**.

These papers should be no less than 1600 words long. *The assignment will count for 20% of your grade.* I will consider the quality of the outline and your contribution to class discussion of the book when I grade the assignment.

3) Advocacy Analysis Project

This project will involve writing an analysis of the advocacy or public policy concerns of an organization. This means, first, that you should understand the organization's interests: what public policies might affect it, or what public policies its leaders might, in pursuit of the organization's mission, want to influence. Second, you will want to understand what resources the organization can use for advocacy. That includes understanding what an organization can do to attract its members or supporters to work for those advocacy goals. A third factor is what governments, or what parts of what governments, the organization might target for its efforts. A fourth is what allies or rivals the organization might face. A fifth is what stage of the policy-making or decision-making processes the organization would do best to target, and what that might accomplish.

This project then requires a series of steps.

1) Choose an organization. **You should send me a one-page memo about your choice by Wednesday, September 20.** In this memo briefly describe the organization you have chosen, why, and what you think its main advocacy concerns will be.

2) Gather basic facts about the organization (which will include things like its core tasks, its budget, who does its work, whether it has customers or members, and so on). Send me a memo that summarizes these facts by class time on **Monday, October 16.** Note that the length of this memo is likely to depend on the organization you have chosen.

3) **Your final analysis will be due by 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 17, submitted by e-mail.** There is no reason, of course, why you could not submit it earlier.

I strongly encourage you to meet with me after you submit each of the first two stages. I will provide written feedback on them, but it might be more helpful if we talk. I am available during my office hours but should also be able to schedule meetings at other times.

I also am willing to review and comment on first drafts of the final papers. Of course I need sufficient time to read a draft and prepare comments. So I will promise that if I receive a draft by December 11, I will provide comments by December 14.

Naturally I would not object to, and would in fact encourage you to do your project about an organization with which you already have experience or connections.

The advocacy analysis project will count for 30% of your grade. Reports submitted for POSC 306 should be no less than 2500 words long. Reports submitted for POSC 406 should be no less than 3500 words long. In each case, if you have more to say, please go ahead and write more.

4) Class Participation

Many of the issues raised in this course call on you to form your own judgments – my job is to help you do so carefully and rigorously. So it would be great if you can help each other through discussion.

Participation will count for 10% of the overall grade. This is meant to reward contributions to discussion and encourage class attendance. Students who attend regularly but are not active in discussion will receive as a participation grade no less than the same grade they earn for the rest of their work. If students miss six or more class sessions, without a reason I have approved, the participation grade could be lower than their average for the rest of the class. Particularly good participation will receive an "A" for participation, regardless of the student's grades on the rest of the work.

In other words, good participation could raise your grade; steady but quiet participation can't hurt it; and skipping a lot of classes could hurt a little bit.

GRADING FORMULA

To summarize, grades will be calculated as follows:

- * First exam: 20%
- * Second exam: 20%
- * Book review: 20%
- * Memo project: 30%
- * 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 exceptions will be made if a student does not notify me before missing an assignment, or cannot document the reason, or if the reason is not sufficient.

If a student misses an exam without a documented and acceptable reason, I will give a make-up before the next class, but deduct the equivalent of an entire grade (e.g. an A- becomes a B-). If a student does not make up the missing exam before the next class, there will be a further penalty. In either case, of course, I will be forced to write a different exam for that student.

A student who is absent from their book review presentation, without a documented and acceptable reason, will be docked the equivalent of one grade (e.g. from A- to B-) for the project. That seems to me like a minimal sanction, given that they would not have completed one part of the project.

Lateness on the written book review report is subject to a reduction of half a grade for each 24 hours that it is late.

Each stage of the memo project is due on the date and time stated. Lateness on any stage will result in a deduction from the final grade for the project. The final stage of the memo must be completed on time, unless the student has requested and I have approved an Incomplete for the course. That means Incompletes must be requested before the assignment is due.

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.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The university has a series of procedures to help students and instructors when students face health or other issues that may require that course procedures be altered in the interests of fairness. I will gladly work with the ESS or other appropriate office to make appropriate accommodations, but I must rely on students to work through the ESS or other appropriate office to document these concerns.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES:

Note: I have selected what I consider particularly useful articles from a variety of sources. In order to avoid repeating bibliographical material below, I refer to some sources by shorthand:

* The assigned book is referred to as "Unheavenly Chorus."

* Various editions of Allan J. Cigler & Burdett A. Loomis, *Interest Group Politics*, all published by CQ Press, are referred to as "Cigler & Loomis," and the edition.

* Ken Godwin, Scott H. Ainsworth, and Erik Godwin, *Lobbying and Policymaking: The Public Pursuit of Private Interests* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013) is referred to as "Lobbying and Policymaking." Students especially interested in the topic might consider purchasing this book.

* 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 in 2004, is referred to as "Herrnson et al."

Topic 1 Introduction to the Policy Process and Policy Perspective on Politics

August 28: Introduction to topic and each other.
I will talk about some ideas that you can review later from a reading that I will post and hand out.

August 30: Roger L. Conner, "RADIO: The Life Cycle of a Public Policy Problem," ms. 2008. (8 pages)
Roger L. Conner, "Strategy and Stance: A Framework to Understand How (Most) Public Advocates Think." Ms. 2008 (14 pages)
Ken Godwin, Scott H. Ainsworth, and Erik Godwin, "The Policy Process." Chapter 3 in *Lobbying and Policymaking: The Public Pursuit of Private Interests* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013), pp. 49-73.

Topic 2. Introduction to Interest Organization in the United States

Sept 4: No Class, Labor Day

Sept 6: *Unheavenly Chorus* Chapter 10. "Political Voice through Organized Interests: Introductory Matters." Pp. 265-311

Sept 11: Frances E. Lee, "Interests, Constituencies, and Policy Making." Chapter 10 in Paul J. Quirk and Sarah A. Binder eds., *The Legislative Branch*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 281-313.

Sept 13: *Unheavenly Chorus* Chapter 11. "Who Sings in the Heavenly Chorus? The Shape of the Organized Interest System," pp. 312-346.

Book for review assignment should be chosen by today.

Topic 3. Types and Attitudes of Advocates

Sept 18: Alan Rosenthal, "The People Who Lobby," "State Government Relations," and "The Interests at Stake," chapters 2-4 in Rosenthal, *The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States 2nd ed.* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2001), pp. 15-78.

Sept 20: Roger L. Conner and Patricia Jordan, excerpts from "Attitudes, Advocacy, and Polarization: The New Iron Triangle of American Public Policy" ms., March 2010, (1-8, 24-43).
Nicholas Confessore, "Welcome to the Machine: How the GOP disciplined K Street and made Bush Supreme." *The Washington Monthly*, July/August 2003, pp. 31-37.

One-page memo about organization you intend to study is due today

Topic 4. *Who Participates? So Who is Represented?*

Sept 25: *Unheavenly Chorus* Chapters 12-13. "The Changing Pressure Community" and "Beyond Organizational Categories," pp. 347-392.

Sept 27: Robert H. Salisbury and Laretta Conklin, "Instrumental Versus Expressive Group Politics: The National Endowment for the Arts," in Cigler & Loomis 5th ed., pp. 283-302.

Paul E. Johnson, "Interest Group Recruiting: Finding Members and Keeping Them," in Cigler & Loomis 5th ed., pp. 35-62.

Oct 2: William P. Browne, "Exchange Theory and the Institutional Impetus for Interest Group Formation," in Cigler & Loomis 6th ed., pp. 313-329.

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

Topic 5: *Ideas and Interests*

Oct 4: Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications." Chapter 7 in Paul A. Sabatier ed., *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007). Pp. 189-210 plus notes.

Oct 9: Christina Wolbrecht and Michael T. Hartney, "Ideas About Interests': Explaining the Changing Partisan Politics of Education." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 12, No. 3 (September 2014), pp. 603-630.

Oct 11: ***First Exam (whether in-class or take-home to be determined)***

Topic 6: *"Problems," "Solutions," and "Information."*

October 16: Frank R. Baumgartner, "Interest Groups and Agendas," Chapter 27 in Sandy Maisel and Jeffrey M. Berry eds., *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups* (Oxford U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 519-533.

Summary of basic facts about the organization you are studying for your advocacy analysis should be submitted by beginning of class

October 18: R. Kent Weaver, "The Role of Policy Research." In Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*. (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2000), pp. 135-68.

October 23: No Class, Fall Break

October 25: Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, "Who Passes Business's 'Model Bills'? Policy Capacity and Corporate Influence in U.S. State Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 12, No. 3 (September, 2014), pp. 582-602.

Topic 7: Five Cases (Book Reviews)

Please send outline of book presentation to Professor White by e-mail by 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 29

Oct 30: Book Discussions, Schedule to be Determined

Nov 1: Book Discussions, Schedule to be Determined

**Submit book reviews to Professor White by Noon on Sunday, Nov 5
(by e-mail, naturally; and of course earlier is fine)**

Topic 8: Influencing Institutions

Nov 6: *Unheavenly Chorus* Chapter 14, "Political Voice Through Organized Interest Activity," pp. 393-443

Topic 8a: Legislatures: The Inside and Outside Games

Nov 8: Joe White, "What Legislators Want" ms. (12 pages).
John C. Green and Nathan S. Bigelow, "The Christian Right Goes to Washington: Social Movement Resources and the Legislative Process," in Herrnson et al. pp. 189-211

Nov 13: Kelly D. Patterson and Matthew M. Singer, "Targeting Success: The Enduring Power of the NRA," chapter 2 in Cigler & Loomis, 7th ed. (37-64)
Richard L. Hall and Richard Anderson, "Issue Advertising and Legislative Advocacy in Health Politics," chapter 10 in Cigler & Loomis 8th ed. (221-242).

Nov 15: Paul S. Herrnson, "The Interests Campaign." Chapter 5 in Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington* 7th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2015), pp. 131-168, plus notes.

Topic 8b: Executives and Courts

Nov 20: Suzanne J. Piotrowski and David H. Rosenbloom, "The Legal-Institutional Framework for Interest-Group Participation in Federal Administrative Policymaking," in Herrnson et al. (258-81).

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

Nov 22: **Optional Class Meeting**

But required reading, so please do read: Anthony J. Nownes, "Land Use Lobbying," Chapter 5 in Nownes, *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get It)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 103-147.

Nov 27: Frank N. Laird, "Learning Contested Lessons: Participation Equity and Electric Utility Regulation," *Review of Policy Research* 25 (5), 2008 (429-48).

"Interest-Group Participation, Strategies, and Success in the Regulatory Process," Chapter 5 in *Lobbying and Policymaking*, pp. 93-112.

Nov 29: Wayne V. McIntosh and Cynthia L. Cates, "Cigarettes, Firearms, and the New Litigation Wars: Smoking Guns Behind the Headlines," in Herrnson et al. (341-364).

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

Topic 9: Budgeting

Dec 4: Roy T. Meyers, "Strategies for Spending Advocates," in Roy T. Meyers ed., *Handbook of Government Budgeting*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), pp. 548-566.

Joe White, "Making Connections to the Appropriations Process," in Herrnson et al., pp. 164-188.

Dec 6: **To Be Determined:** Either we will do an in-class final exam, or we will have a concluding discussion and review, and I will then hand out the questions for a take-home final exam. We will discuss these alternatives and choose one well in advance of this date.

December 17: Memo Project Should be Sent by E-mail to Professor White by 5:00 p.m.