POSC 6221/233  
Interest Groups  
Fall 2009  
Tuesday 4-6:30 PM

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Mon, Wed 11-1, Tuesday 9-12

Overview
This course is designed to provide an in-depth survey of key political science works related to the study of interest groups. The focus of our efforts will be two-fold: 1) the organization of groups and 2) interest group lobbying, with the purpose of preparing you to conduct research on interest groups, to incorporate theoretical concepts and conceptual frameworks into your other classes and comprehensive exams, and to prepare you for future endeavors within and beyond academia. By the end of this class you should have a firm understanding of the major works and debates in the field of interest groups, you will have written an original research paper that is theoretically grounded and empirically supported, and you will have reflected on the role of interest groups in the larger political system.

Requirements
I expect you to attend every class and to have completed all of the readings prior to the start of class. You should be prepared to discuss and debate the readings in class.

You will take a midterm exam and complete a 25-30 page research paper that tackles a pertinent research question, engages a scholarly debate, and demonstrates the capacity to conduct research.

Please consult the University’s guidelines on Academic Honesty at http://www.marquette.edu/cur_students/bulletin.shtml.

Course Materials
Books have been ordered at the Bookmarq and Sweeneys and are also widely available online. Supplementary readings will be archived on D2L. We will utilize the resources of D2L for extending class discussions and presenting research findings.

Book List

**Remaining readings can be found on D2L course page.**

**Weekly Schedule**

September 1 – Introduction to Interest Groups

September 8 – Interest Group Theory
- Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, Chapters 1-3
- Lowery and Gray, “A Neo-Pluralist Theory of Interest Groups”

September 15 – Collective Action, Part I
- Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action*, Chapters 1, 2, 6
- Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, Chapters 4, 5

September 22 – An Organizational Alternative to Collective Action
- James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, chapters 1-5, 10-12

**Research Paper Topics Due**

September 29 – Collective Action, Part II: The Critics

October 6 – Collective Action, Part III: The Next Generation

**Research Paper Literature Reviews Due**

October 13 – Behavior within Interest Group Communities
- James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, Chapter 13

October 20 – Interest Groups and Political Development
- Elisabeth Clemens, *The People’s Lobby* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), chapters 1, 2

October 26 – Take Home Exam Due by 5pm

October 27 – Interest Groups in Politics

**Summary of Empirical Research Due**

November 3 – Interest Group Lobbying
- Baumgartner and Leech, *Basic Interests*, Chapter 7

November 10 – Lobbying Strategies

November 17 – Business Lobbying Strategies

November 24 – Venue Selection as Lobbying Strategy

December 1 – Lobbying from a Comparative Perspective

December 8 – Wrap up and research presentations

**FINAL PAPERS DUE BY THE END OF FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH**
Grades
Midterm Exam – 20%
Term Paper – 50%
Participation – 30%

Research Paper Assignment

Your research paper will constitute the greater part of your work for this class and thus should be attended to with the greatest of care and appreciation. The component parts of your paper will be assembled over the course of the semester, and then will be combined and refined in the last weeks. A good research paper is always the product of extensive deliberation, so we will be getting an early start on your projects to maximize our time.

Your topics should be developed with an eye toward the core debates within the interest group field, but are otherwise not limited in terms of theoretical or empirical topic areas. When you submit your topics to me, you should have a well-developed question that in nearly all cases will be accompanied by a testable hypothesis. Of course this means that you will want to become sufficiently familiar with your topic before choosing it to be able to identify an appropriate research question.

The literature review that you submit will consist of relevant theoretical and empirical work that dovetails with your research paper. You will likely ground your argument in an existing theoretical paradigm, though you may find it necessary to move beyond the current state of the literature, but you should acknowledge your intellectual debts here by placing yourself in a scholarly conversation. On the empirical side, you should review the studies that have attempted to answer a similar question as you or who have examined the same topic but perhaps from a different perspective. This process allows you to demonstrate the relevance and contribution of your research to the study of interest groups.

The empirical research that you conduct can take any number of forms. It may be qualitative, quantitative, historical, cross-sectional, or case study. You may draw from secondary sources, primary sources, databases, interviews, etc. The important consideration is how well your empirical research allows you to evaluate your research hypothesis. What specifically does your empirical research allow you to answer and what will remain unknown after you finish your project?

Your final paper should be of journal length – about 25-30 pages, formatted and copy edited. Parenthetical citations are the standard, though if you prefer footnotes I won’t quibble. The paper should present your argument in a clear and straightforward manner, provide a literature review that places your research in its appropriate theoretical and empirical context, and present your data in an accessible manner. Summary tables and charts are encouraged where possible. Your discussion and conclusion should recognize the limits of your research and point the reader in the direction of future research that would better assess the question you presented at the beginning. Rough drafts submitted at least two weeks before the final due date are encouraged.