

Professor McAvoy
Political Science 329
Fall 2007

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American Interest Group Politics

Public participation is an important component of contemporary politics and policy making. This class critically engages students with theories and debates that surround concepts of participatory politics and its impact on policy and public opinion. We will be particularly concerned with the social and political context of group politics, focusing on basic questions such as: what conditions facilitate or hinder the emergence of interest groups? how are interest groups organized? why and how do people join these groups? how do activists choose tactics and strategies? and, how does group politics affect social and political change? In order to answer these questions in concrete terms, students will conduct research on political groups and provide presentations of their findings to the class.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn to:

- Assess and evaluate existing theories about activism and political participation
- Conduct original research on group politics
- Synthesize and organize information for oral and written presentation

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete:

- 1). A midterm examination (20%)
- 2). A ten to fifteen page paper based on an organization that you research (20%).
- 3). An oral presentation to the class based on interest group research (15%)
- 4). In-class presentations and debates (10%)
- 5). Quizzes (10%)
- 6). Assessment of Presentations (5%)
- 7). Final Examination (20%)

Speaking Component

Because a speaking-intensive course focuses on learning of content through active engagement in oral communication, the class will be interactive. You will be encouraged to share ideas, argue viewpoints, and engage in meaningful discussion. Individual improvement is a key component in the course. You will learn to analyze and evaluate your skills and set goals for improvement. You will receive constructive feedback from your instructor and peers.

Resources to Help with Presentations

The University Speaking Center is designed to help you improve your oral communication skills. You have the opportunity to practice your individual or group presentations and work with a trained consultant. The Center is located in 3211 HHRA Building. To schedule an appointment, call 256-1346. It is open Monday through Wednesday from 10am - 8pm, on Thursday from 10am

- 6pm, and on Friday from 9am -12noon. They also have a webpage with links to articles and other reference materials, www.uncg.edu/cst/speakingcenter

Required Texts

The following texts are available from the UNCG bookstore or on-line.

Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds. 2007. *Interest Group Politics*, 7th ed. Congressional Quarterly Press.

David Lowery and Holly Brasher. 2004. *Organized Interests and American Government*. McGraw-Hill.

Christopher Buckley, *Thank You for Smoking*. The novel upon which the recently released movie is based. This book is readily available at bookstores, libraries, and on-line book sellers.

Expectations

I expect that everyone will maintain a classroom conducive to learning. I like an informal atmosphere, but it must be orderly. Thus, everyone is expected to behave with basic politeness, civility, and respect for others. In particular, talking in class is ok if it's part of a class discussion or with me. Private communications are not. Neither are reading extraneous materials, using electronic equipment, or sleeping.

Honor Code:

I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university's academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at: <http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

Specifically pertinent to this course are the following rules:

1. "Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise."

2. "Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."

Do NOT engage in either cheating or plagiarism. The penalties for both offenses range from the need to re-do assignments to expulsion from the University, depending upon the severity of the cheating or plagiarism offense.

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes either cheating or plagiarism, please see me *immediately*.

Course Schedule

I. Introduction, Theories and Concepts

Week 1 (Aug. 20-22)

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 1 & *Federalist #10*

II. Group Origins

Week 2 (Aug. 27-29) Organization and Mobilization

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 2

“Introduction : The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics ,” Burdett A. Loomis and Allan J. Cigler, Chapter 1 in *Interest Group Politics*

“A More Level Playing Field or a New Mobilization of Bias? Interest Groups and Advocacy for the Disadvantaged,” Dara Z. Strolovitch, Chapter 4 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 3 (Sept. 6) Workshop on Class Presentations

Chapter 2: “Your First Speech.” from *Between One and Many: the Art and Science of Public Speaking*,” Steven R. Brydon and Michael D. Scott Available from UNCG E-reserves.

Chapter 11: “Delivery Skills” from *The St. Martin’s Guide to Public Speaking*,” Joseph S. Tuman. Available from UNCG E-reserves.

Instructions to access these readings are at:

<http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/resources/ereserve/>

Week 4 (Sept. 10-12) Organization and Mobilization, cont’d

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 3 and 4

“Interest Organization Communities : Their Assembly and Consequences,” David Lowery and Virginia Gray, Chapter 6 in *Interest Group Politics*

“Targeting Success : the Enduring Power of the NRA ,” Kelly D. Patterson and Matthew M. Singer, Chapter 2 in *Interest Group Politics*

III. Interest Group Activities

Week 5 (Sept. 17-19) Lobbying

Thank You for Smoking, by Christopher Buckley.

Week 6 (Sept. 24-26) Lobbying Congress

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 5

“Does K Street Run Through Capitol Hill? Lobbying Congress in the Republican Era ,” Burdett A. Loomis, Chapter 18 in *Interest Group Politics*

“Lobbying Boom ” from CQ Researcher database available through UNCG’s Library webpage.

Week 7 (Oct. 1-3) Lobbying the Executive

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 6

“American Interests in the Balance? Do Ethnic Groups Dominate Foreign Policy Making?” Eric M. Uslaner, Chapter 13 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 8 (Oct. 8-10) Lobbying the Courts

Lowery & Brasher, Chapter 7

“Where Have All the Interest Groups Gone? An Analysis of Interest Group Participation in Presidential Nominations to the Supreme Court of the United States,” Karen O'Connor, Alexandra B. Yanus, and Linda Mancillas Patterson, Chapter 13 in *Interest Group Politics*

Midterm Exam, October 10th

Week 9 (Oct. 17) PACs

Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 7, E-reserve.

“527s: the New Bad Guys of Campaign Finance,” Diana Dwyre, Chapter 9 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 10 (Oct. 22-24) Parties & Elections

Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, Chapter 3, E-reserve.

“Interest Group Money in Elections,” M. Margaret Conway, Joanne Connor Green, and M. Margaret Conway, Chapter 8 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 11 (Oct. 29-31) Parties and Elections, cont'd

Michael Malbin, Anthony Corrado, and Raymond LaRaja, “Will the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 Strengthen the Political System?” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol 24. No. 3, 599-608 (2005). Available via Electronic Journals on the UNCG Library webpage.

IV. Examples of Interest Group Politics

Week 12 (Nov. 5-7) Religion and Politics.

“The Spirit Willing: Collective Identity and the Development of the Religious Right,” John C. Green, in *Waves of Protest*. Available from E-reserves.

“Getting the Spirit? Religious and Partisan Mobilization in the 2004 Elections,” James L. Guth, Lyman A. Kellstedt, John C. Green, and Corwin E. Smidt, Chapter 7 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 13 (Nov. 12-14) Group Politics and Business Interests

“Is Corporate Lobbying Rational or Just a Waste of Money?” Erik K. Godwin, R. Kenneth Godwin, and Scott Ainsworth, Chapter 11 in *Interest Group Politics*

“The Well-informed Lobbyist : Information and Interest Group Lobbying,” Rogan Kersh, Chapter 17 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 14 (Nov. 19) New Directions in Interest Group Politics

“Nonprofit Organizations as Interest Groups : the Politics of Passivity,” Jeffrey M. Berry, Chapter 10 in *Interest Group Politics*

“Big-money Donors to Environmental Groups : What They Give and What They Get,” Anthony J. Nownes and Allan J. Cigler, Chapter 5 in *Interest Group Politics*

Week 15 (Nov. 26-28)

Presentations on Group Politics Research

*Research Papers are Due at the Time of the Presentation

Week 16 (Dec. 3-5)

Presentations on Group Politics Research

Week 17 (Dec. 10) Conclusions

Lowery and Brasher, Chapter 8

“Organized Interests, Political Parties, and Representation : James Madison, Tom Delay, and the Soul of American Politics,” Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, Chapter 19 in *Interest Group Politics*

Final Exam: Monday, December 17, noon to 3pm