

Political Science 3031: Political Parties & Interest Groups Spring 2011

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
CLRE 207

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Description

A democratic system requires that citizens keep at least a certain amount of control over what government does. Yet, we know that many Americans are not much interested in government, much less in making the effort to keep it under control. How can we be sure that democracy will survive when most of the population would rather not bother to control its government?

One possible answer: In American politics, *intermediaries* such as political parties and organized interests can keep our government responsive. They can give voice to the concerns and ideas of large numbers of people who might otherwise remain unheard. Parties can simplify our choices in elections by providing us with a slate of candidates, and can bring together elected officials who have similar policy preferences and help them get those preferences passed into law. By supporting and endorsing candidates, organized interests can tell their sympathizers which candidates are most likely to do what the group wants, and groups can put pressure on office-holders to get certain proposals passed.

This course examines how political parties and organized interests describe American political life. What are these political intermediaries capable of doing in a democracy, what do they actually do in American politics, and what would a variety of reformers have them do differently?

Course Reading

There are three required books, and additional required readings available online as listed on the syllabus.

- Marc Hetherington and William Keefe, *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*, 10th ed. (CQ Press, 2007) **OR** Marc Hetherington and Bruce Larson, *Parties, Politics, and Public Policy in America*, 11th ed. (CQ Press, 2010)
- Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox, *The Interest Group Society*, 5th ed. (Pearson Longman, 2009)
- Bertram J. Levine, *The Art of Lobbying: Building Trust and Selling Policy* (CQ Press, 2009)

Course Requirements

2 take-home quizzes (10% each)	20%
Quiz 1 distributed on Feb. 8 th , due in class on Feb 15 th	
Quiz 2 distributed on Mar 29 th , due in class on Apr 5 th	
Research paper, due Apr 14 th	30%
In-class midterm exam, Mar 1 st	25%
Final exam (Mon, May 2 nd , 1:30 – 4:00 pm)	25%

Class Policies & Expectations

- **Policy on Use of Electronic Devices in Class:** Laptop computers can be very distracting to both the users and other students. Many students complain every semester when those around them are using their computers for non-class purposes. In order to support a quality classroom experience for all, the use of electronic devices, including laptops, for non-class-related purposes is prohibited. A failure to comply with the restrictions on laptop use can result in a student losing the privilege of using the laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.
- **Attend class, pay attention, do the readings and be open-minded.** The class is designed to build on both lecture and reading materials; exams will cover both, and doing one is not a substitute for the other.
- **Contact the course instructor and/or TA with any questions or concerns.** Individual meetings are valuable to all concerned. It is highly recommended that you meet one-on-one at some point during the semester to discuss progress on the required research portfolio.
- **Academic honesty.** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Students with Disabilities

Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability should let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met.

Information on Disability Services: <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Let me know as soon as possible any schedule conflicts due to religious observances. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Behavioral Standards

As noted above, both students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. See university policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Discrimination & Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Amorous Relationships (found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>) apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

PSCI 3031, Political Parties & Interest Groups

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Introduction: Groups in American Politics

Jan 11 Course introduction

Jan 13 Groups in American politics

Jan 18

- Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 1
- James Madison, Federalist 10, available at <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federal10.htm>
- Alexis de Tocqueville, "On the Use That the Americans Make of Association in Civil Life," from *Democracy in America* (1835), excerpt available at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/805328.html>

II. Political Parties & American Politics: Historic Roots

Jan 20 Studying political parties

Jan 25 Historic roots of the American political party system

- Hetherington & Larson, Chap. 1

III. Describing the Contemporary American Political Party System: Basic Organizational Features

Jan 27 A two-party system

Feb 1

- Hetherington & Larson, Chap. 2

Feb 3 Decentralization of political party organization

Feb 8

- Hetherington & Larson, Chap. 3

Take-home quiz distributed

Feb 10 Majoritarian tendencies in the two-party system

IV. Why this Particular Political Party System? Constitutional, Legal & Organizational Rules

Feb 15 Rules for electing Congress & the two-party system *Take-home quiz due*

Feb 17

- Hetherington & Larson, Chap. 4
- Douglas Amy, "How Proportional Representation Elections Work," Proportional Representation Library, 2005, available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/polit/damy/BeginningReading/howprwor.htm>

Feb 22 Rules for electing the President & the two-party system

- U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, "U.S. Electoral College," available at <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html>
- William Kimberling, Office of Election Administration, Federal Election Commission, "The Electoral College," revised May 1992, available at http://www.fec.gov/pdf/elec_coll.pdf

- 24 Political parties & the organization of Congress
 - Hetherington & Larson, Chap. 5

Mar 1 **MIDTERM EXAM**

V. Interest Groups & American Politics

- Mar 3 The role of interest groups
 - Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 2

- Mar 8 The challenges of collective action
- Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 3
 - “The Free Rider Problem,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, May 21, 2003, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/free-rider/>

- Mar 10 Building interest group relationships
 - Berry & Wilcox, Chaps. 4 & 5

VI. Lobbying

- Mar 15 Insider & outsider lobbying
- Mar 17
 - Berry & Wilcox, Chaps. 6, 7 & 8

SPRING BREAK

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|--------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Mar 29 | Evaluating the role of lobbying | <i>Take-home quiz distributed</i> |
| Mar 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 9 ▪ Levine, Chaps. 1, 2 & 3 | |

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| Apr 5 | Lobbying techniques | <i>Take-home quiz due</i> |
| Apr 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Levine, Chaps. 4, 5, 6 & 7 | |

VII. The Political Landscape Affecting Both Political Parties & Interest Groups

- Apr 12 Evaluating contemporary politics and polarization
Apr 14 *Research paper due*
Apr 19, 21, 26, 28
- Morris Fiorina, "What Culture Wars?," *Hoover Digest*, October 30, 2004, available at <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/6699>
 - Hetherington & Larson, Chaps. 6 & 7
 - Berry & Wilcox, Chap. 10

FINAL EXAM: Mon, May 2nd, 1:30 – 4:00 pm

**** Class schedule subject to change ****

Required Research & Writing Assignment:
INTEREST GROUP LOBBYING STRATEGY

The goal of this assignment is to create a thoughtful, specific and realistic strategy to advance a national public policy interest. The paper should include four broadly considered sets of information: first, discussion of a public policy issue that an interest group might select as the focus of lobbying efforts; second, an analysis of political party positions with respect to your issue of interest, and prospects for building a bipartisan approach; third, a plan for building an interest group lobbying effort aimed at influencing U.S. congressional decision making; and fourth, an outsider lobbying strategy for building popular support. Your responses to each part of the assignment should reflect the knowledge you are gaining throughout the course from both lectures and readings. The research paper is due in class on Thursday, 14 April.

Papers will be graded on research (demonstrating that all relevant information was located and used); analysis (appropriately interpreting the information and developing an argument using that information); and presentation (paying attention to the details of careful writing, including style and editing for errors). Papers should be single spaced to conserve paper. In general papers should be in the 5 to 10 page range, single-spaced. Longer is not necessarily better. Responding to each aspect of the paper requirements, as described below, is the most important factor in grading and in this light it would be helpful to have the paper organized with headings and subheadings. It is strongly advised that students begin to think through this assignment early in the semester. Students should feel free to raise general questions about the writing assignment during class at any point in the semester and to regularly visit office hours to discuss development of the project.

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

A. The Public Policy Issue. Successful lobbying depends in large part on the lobbyist having good information and using it effectively. That information is both technical and political in nature – understanding the complexity of the policy issue and how best to address that issue; and knowing who to work with and how in order to advance your policy goals.

1. **Introduce your issue.** Select an issue of interest to you that belongs in the national legislative debate – a matter that would be lobbied in the U.S. Congress. Describe and discuss the issue. What is the “problem” that needs to be changed? Keep in mind that successful lobbying is fairly focused in nature. Justify the need for advocacy by identifying a general area of concern (for example, energy); explaining the “problem” (e.g., too much reliance on foreign energy sources); and providing a suggested direction for addressing that issue (e.g., focus more resources on development of renewable resources).
2. **Mapping the interest group world with respect to your issue.** Who should be interested in this issue – both in favor of your position and against – and why? What actual groups are advocating with respect to this issue at the national level? Who is missing from the array of potential interests, or are all “sides” equally represented in the interest group debate? (For example, with respect to energy we might expect interested parties to include oil and coal companies, alternative energy companies, oil exporting countries, oil/gas producing states, environmentalists, national security experts and interests, energy scientists, transportation experts, agricultural/biofuels experts, and others. Are all of them actively lobbying on this issue?) To assess who is actually involved in lobbying on your issue you might review media sources, search online for interest groups taking positions on this issue, examine who is testifying before Congress, etc. (citing specific groups and any position statements in footnotes or with clear reference to items in your bibliography). It may be the case that not all “sides” really are actively lobbying. How would you explain uneven lobbying if this seems true with respect to your issue?

Political Party Positions and Prospects for Building Bipartisan Support

1. **Overview of political party positions with regard to your lobbying issue.** To what extent is your issue one that the two major political parties care about, either in support or opposition? Describe the positions of the two major parties. Are there other political parties in the U.S. taking a strong position on this issue? Be specific in your response. Your assessment should consider a variety of sources, which might include the 2008 party platforms, information currently available on the national party websites, statements by the president and party leadership in Congress, 2010 midterm election candidate discussion. Is this an issue that is specifically addressed in any of these forums? Is it an issue broadly embraced by all or most party members, or more narrowly described (reflecting regional interest, technical expertise of committee members, individual policy interest, etc.)? If it is not an issue receiving specific discussion by party officials, can you deduce a likely party position given the orientation of the parties towards similar issues? Or, is this a party-neutral issue? Be sure to discuss both major political parties and back up your discussion with evidence (cited in footnotes or with clear reference to items in your bibliography).
 2. **Framing a bipartisan issue.** Based on your assessment of current political party positions and your policy issue, how easy or difficult would it be to frame a bipartisan issue advocacy effort? In responding, be sure to consider the initial positions of the two major parties with respect to your issue and current priorities of the parties in Congress and the administration. On what specific points would the two parties agree, and on what would they disagree, and why? In what ways would your policy goals need to be changed in order to gain bipartisan support? To what extent would a compromise position satisfy your policy interests? Be sure to explain and defend your comments.
- C. **Developing a Plan for Lobbying the U.S. Congress.** How can you build an interest group lobbying effort to achieve policy change (drawing on the knowledge gained with respect to political interest groups and the art of lobbying) that is sensitive to the current polarized nature of politics which makes any kind of agreement very difficult? Think of this as a professional lobbying strategy proposal that you would submit to an interest group (either existing or fictional) to launch or strengthen a lobbying effort focused on your policy goal.
1. **Review current legislation affecting your issue.** What legislation, if any, has been introduced in the current (112th) Congress, or was considered in the 111th Congress with respect to your issue of interest? One of the most valuable and reliable resources in terms of tracking legislation of the U.S. Congress is a database maintained by the Library of Congress, commonly referred to as “Thomas” (in honor of Thomas Jefferson), available at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. Virtually all of the information you’ll need on legislation – including bill text, bill status, bill summary, information on individual members and committees – is readily available through Thomas. The Thomas homepage has a word/phrase search box for identifying legislation in the current (112th, 2011-2012) and recently-completed (111th, 2009-2010; and prior) Congresses. To complete this part of the assignment:
 - a) Do a search of the Thomas website for legislation affecting your interest area. You may have to try several different key words to locate appropriate legislation. Depending on the nature of your issue, you may or may not find legislation that directly addresses the problem you have identified. If not, focus on identifying legislation that affects your issue in broad terms. (For example, if your specific interest happened to be the development of biofuels, you may not find a bill that directly addresses this. However, you might very well find legislation focused on the broad category of energy issues.) In some cases, multiple bills have been introduced pertaining to a particular issue of interest.
 - b) List all bills that are related to your issue of interest. Specifically, list bill number; title; date introduced; principle sponsor (name, representative of what state, party);

whether there are any cosponsors and, if so, how many; to which committee(s) has the bill been referred for consideration; and current status (which might range from referral to committee to final passage into public law).

- c) If there are multiple bills related to your issue of interest, select one or two that seem especially relevant – because you agree with what is being advanced by the legislation; the bill focuses on issues similar to your concerns and could be amended to more directly address your concerns; or you disagree with the goals of the legislation and believe that it needs to be defeated in order to best serve your policy interests. Be sure to explain your selection.
- d) If there is absolutely no legislation related to your issue of interest, use the Thomas website to identify a committee in both the House and Senate with jurisdiction over your issue of interest, and note who on that committee would be good targets for your lobbying efforts. Explain why you would focus efforts on these particular members. (Consider leadership position on this and/or other committees, party membership, geographic representation, personal characteristics of the members, stated interests or voting record of the members, etc.).

2. **Identify appropriate targets to be lobbied.** Based on the preceding information about who is already interested in your issue, the current level of interest, and the status of legislation in this area, determine who you need to influence, or who can influence your lobbying target (i.e. policy decision makers, or those who have significant influence with such decision makers). While a lobbyist might hope to positively influence all lawmakers, success depends on influencing certain key individuals. Whose support is most needed in order for you to gain success in your policy area? What motivates these individuals or what influences their positions? Who influences these policy makers or individuals in influential positions? What are some of the opportunities and limits faced by decision makers in this policy area? Be sure to make use of the Levine text, Chapter 2, to understand what types of lawmakers would make good targets for your lobbying efforts, including congressional staff members, and what you, the lobbyist, might have to offer in terms of furthering their legislative goals.

3. **Develop an insider lobbying strategy.** Based on all of the above information – your policy issue, the nature of your group, and who and what influences the decisions – what specific information, activities and messages would you advise an interest group to use to gain support for your policy interests? For this, you'll want to especially consider from the Levine reading:

- Political “capitol” – gains and losses
- Inside the door (and beyond)
- The lobbyist's ask
- Designing and executing a lobbying campaign

D. **Building a Grassroots Organizing Plan:** While many interest groups focus their lobbying efforts on building relationships with key decision makers, outside lobbying can be equally important in terms of building support for policy interests. Given the nature of your issue, the positions that various groups are taking with respect to this issue, and the level of interest and attention to this issue by decision makers, key interest groups, the media and others in American society, what would you suggest in terms of building grassroots support? Be specific, drawing on ideas from class and readings (including Berry & Wilcox, Chaps. 3 & 7).

E. **Bibliography.** Be sure to fully cite your sources. Note that a listing of web addresses alone is insufficient bibliographic information. Use a standard citation format.