

POLS 3388
Lobbying and Interest Groups
Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. April A. Johnson
Class Time: Mon/Wed 5:00pm-6:15pm
Class Location: Social Sciences Building, Room 3025
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Course Description and Objectives

Groups of likeminded individuals working together for legislative and/or societal change are the lifeblood of a democratic system. This course examines historical and modern types of interest groups and their functions within the American political system. In particular, we will study election-related activities of interest groups, interest group relations with political parties, special interests and the judiciary, the development and influence of political action committees, pursuits of grassroots organizations, and lobbying efforts related to both the legislative and executive branches. Throughout the semester we will also highlight a variety of prominent interest groups and major areas of issue advocacy. The format of this class primarily reflects that of a seminar, as we devote a significant amount of time to discussing and understanding current political events. Critical thinking and a vibrant class discussion are essential to the structure of this course (3 credit hours). *Prerequisites: POLS 1101 American Government*

Learning Objectives

At the end of this semester you should have a greater understanding of:

- 1) Theories of interest group formation and practical strategies/challenges to group maintenance.
- 2) The evolution and impact of special interests throughout U.S. history.
- 3) Influential players in today's political landscape.
- 4) The intimate relationship between money and interest group activities.

Required Texts

Nownes, Anthony J. 2013. *Interest Groups in American Politics* (2nd Edition). Routledge: New York. ISBN: 9780415894265

Evaluation of Course Objectives

Discussion Posts: Each week students will respond to one discussion prompt posted within D2L. The prompts will introduce students to that week's topic, ask students to respond to the required readings, and/or encourage students to reflect on how the material relates to the current political environment. *Due dates for each response are posted in D2L.* Keep in mind that this is politics- often times there are no right or wrong answers. Responses are primarily graded on how deeply the student contemplates the issues, how thoroughly they address the prompt(s), and completion of each reaction by the deadline. Responses should be anywhere from two to five paragraphs in length. See the Discussion Posts Rubric in D2L for specifics on grading.

Discussion Post Reactions: In addition to contributing your own thoughts to each week's discussion prompt, students will comment on at least one post made by your fellow classmates. I encourage you to respond to different students throughout the semester. Comments may include: shedding additional light on a topic, asking the student to clarify their position(s)/argument(s), providing a counterargument, citing supporting/opposing evidence, tying the post to a topic previously mentioned, and so on. *Discussion boards will close at the designated deadline each week, therefore you will need to make your comment(s) before this deadline as well.* Note that the professionalism with which students conduct themselves will be monitored by the instructor. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates when posting and commenting on reactions. Disagreement or criticism of another's point of view should be expressed in a civil and educated manner. Reactions should generally be two to five paragraphs in length. See the Discussion Posts Rubric in D2L for specifics on grading.

Group Project: Students will complete one, semester-long project in which they recruit, organize, and sustain their own in-class interest group. Each group will be tasked with successfully tracking, researching, and lobbying for/against three current proposed bills within the 2018-2019 Georgia General Assembly. Three checkpoints, consisting primarily of written papers, will be implemented throughout the semester. This means that although you will be working in groups each student's performance is graded individually. Instructions for checkpoints will be handed out roughly two weeks before each is due.

Attendance/Participation/Professionalism: Students are given one excused absence per semester. In general, however, I expect students to come to each class, to be attentive, and to be engaged in both lectures and discussion. *Please note that showing up late and/or leaving early is disruptive to the classroom flow (meaning- don't do it!).*

Attending class does not equate to participating in it. Participation includes asking questions about the readings (write down questions as you read!), answering questions posed by the instructor, and responding to the comments made by your classmates. I encourage all students to think critically and to share their insights and inquiries with the class.

In addition to attendance and participation, students will be assessed on the professionalism with which they conduct themselves. Professionalism means that students are focused on course material, accountable for their own learning, and respectful in their communication both inside and outside of the classroom. Incivilities such as texting, chatting, or excessive classroom disruptions will lower your grade in this course.

Readings: There is no getting around it- you MUST read for this course! Because lectures follow a seminar-like format it is *your* thoughts, perspectives, and reactions to the readings that fuel the course. In addition to the designated textbook there will be a *significant* amount of required readings posted on D2L. It will be evident in your discussion posts, in-class participation, and written work who has comprehended the material. So stay current (and even ahead) with the readings!

Distribution of Grades

Group Project Checkpoint I 15%

Group Project Checkpoint II 20%

Group Project Checkpoint III 20%

Discussion Posts 15%

Discussion Post Reactions 15%

Attendance/Participation/Professionalism 15%

Grading Scale

A	90-100	C	70-79	F	59 or below
B	80-89	D	60-69		

Electronics Policy

Above all, please be respectful to both the instructor and your fellow classmates when using electronic devices. While electronics are not prohibited in the classroom, students generally [do better by taking handwritten notes](#) and [minimizing digital distractions](#). In order to maximize your in-class learning, attentiveness and participation I highly recommend unplugging. If a student's use of electronics is consistently problematic/disruptive I will ask them to leave the classroom.

Policy for Missed or Late Work

Missing or late work/attendance will be accepted only under extenuating circumstances and with proper (medical) documentation. Students will generally not be allowed to make up missing coursework/attendance due to transportation, weather, family and/or personal issues, though certain exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe religious holidays must notify the instructor of the date(s) they will be absent within the first two weeks of class. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to honor the request and not penalize the student for missing the class. If an examination or project is due during the absence the instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the assessment at an earlier date.

Disability Policy

Students who require accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams, designated note takers, etc.) to complete and participate in this course are welcome. However, in order for the instructor to recognize these accommodations students must officially document their disabilities with the office of Student Disability Services. *Note: Students seeking accommodations should do so within the first week of the semester, as testing and documentation often takes time. The instructor will not grant accommodations retroactively.* Please visit the Student Disability Services website at sss.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Electronic Communication

Communication for this course will be sent to your official university email address. ***It is your responsibility to read the email in your official university email account and to do so in a timely manner (at least twice per week).*** If you choose to forward your official university email to another off-campus account, faculty are *not responsible* for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts.

Writing Assistance

The KSU Writing Center helps students in all disciplines improve their written work. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you on topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty and adherence to KSU’s Student Codes of Conduct is expected at all times. Any student found to have engaged in academic misconduct such as plagiarism, collusion, or submitting non-original work is subject to disciplinary sanctions from the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. The term “collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with any other person in preparing work offered for academic credit. Students are advised that faculty routinely use online software (e.g., Turnitin, SafeAssign) both to prevent plagiarism and to assist in verifying when/if it has occurred.

If I suspect that a student has committed plagiarism, even if it is his or her first time, the student will receive a zero on the assignment and an incident report will be filed with the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. For more information about plagiarism and prevention go to www.plagiarism.org. To view the Kennesaw State University Student Codes of Conduct visit <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>.

Miscellaneous Policies

[Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement](#)

[Ethics Statement](#)

[Confidentiality and Privacy Statement \(FERPA\)](#)

[Sexual Harassment Statement](#)

[Course Accessibility Statement \(ADA statement\)](#)

[University – Student Rights Statement](#)

[Campus Carry Information](#)

Enrollment Status Statement: Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to amend or correct this course syllabus as necessary.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Week 1 Mon 1/8 Wed 1/10	Perceptions of Interest Groups, The Playing Field	* <i>Federalist 10</i> (Madison) * Representing Interests (Lowery and Brasher) - Chapter 1 (Nownes)
Week 2 Mon 1/15 Wed 1/17	* <i>MLK Jr. Holiday Mon 1/15- No Class</i> Assembling Your Group	---
Week 3 Mon 1/22 Wed 1/24	Theoretical Approaches, Formation and Maintenance	* Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organization (Clark and Wilson) - Chapter 3 (Nownes) * Organization Mobilization and Maintenance (Lowery and Brasher)

Week 4 Mon 1/29 Wed 1/31	A Brief History	- Chapter 2 (Nownes) * The Growth of Corporate Lobbying (Drutman)
Week 5 Mon 2/5 Wed 2/7	Lobbying 101, Group Meeting	* The Ideal Lobbyist (McGrath) * 11 Habits of Highly Effective Lobbyists (Markarian) * Lobbyist Regulation (4 linked pages)
Group Project Checkpoint I Due Sunday February 11 by 11:59pm		
Week 6 Mon 2/12 Wed 2/14	The Twisted Tale of Campaign Finance Regulation	- Chapter 6 (Nownes) * Money in Politics Timeline * The Rise of Dark Money (Drutman)
Week 7 Mon 2/19 Wed 2/21	Electoral Politics	- Chapter 8 (Nownes) * Sources of Congressional Candidates' Funds (Richter and Werner) * Interest Group Interests in Congressional Primaries (Boatright)
Week 8 Mon 2/26 Wed 2/28	Legislative Pressures, Bureaucratic Involvement	* Organized Interests and the Legislature (Lowery and Brasher) - Nownes pgs. 89-114 * The Tea Party as an Interest Movement? (Loomis)
Week 9 Mon 3/5 Wed 3/7	How Do We Make This Work? Practical Strategies and Case Studies	* Interest Group Policy Agendas (Halpin) * Changing Policies/ Changing Hearts and Minds (Haider-Markel and Sylvester) * National Religious Lobbying (Hertzke)
Week 10 Mon 3/12 Wed 3/14	Miscellaneous Interest Group Activities, Alternatives to Direct Lobbying, Group Meeting	- Chapter 4 (Nownes) - Chapter 7 (Nownes)
Group Project Checkpoint II Due Sunday March 18 by 11:59pm		
Week 11 Mon 3/19 Wed 3/21	Case Study: The NRA	* A Brief History of the NRA * Film: Gunned Down The Power of the NRA

Week 12 Mon 3/26 Wed 3/28	Unions and Corporations	* History of the AAUP * Organized Labor (Francia) * The Big Influence of the Big Box (Ruetschlin and McElwee) * Working the Angles: The Job of a Corporate Lobbyist (Healy)
Week 13 Mon 4/2 Wed 4/4	<i>Spring Break</i> <i>No Class</i>	---
Week 14 Mon 4/9 Wed 4/11	Grassroots Organizations and Local Politics	---
Week 15 Mon 4/16 Wed 4/18	Pressure Groups and the Courts	- Nownes pgs. 114-118 * Organized Interests and the Judiciary (Lowery and Brasher) * Who Pays for Judicial Races? (Bannon et al.)
Week 16 Mon 4/23 Wed 4/25	Assessing Interest Group Influence, Are Reforms Necessary?	- Chapter 9 (Nownes) - Chapter 10 (Nownes) * Advocacy in an Era of Inequality (Loomis and Nownes)
Week 17 Mon 4/30	Semester Wrap Up, Final Group Meeting	---
Group Project Checkpoint III Due Sunday May 6 by 11:59pm		

*Posted in D2L

To view academic deadlines visit <http://registrar.kennesaw.edu/>