Interest Groups (POS3463.0001)
Pollock / Spring 2012

Office	302 Phillips Hall
Office hours	T,Th 8-8:50; 10:30-11:45
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Books	Lowery and Brasher, *Organized Interests and American Government;* Selections from Cigler and Loomis, *Interest Groups Politics* (purchase online)

Interest groups occupy a paradoxical place in American politics—essential to pluralist democracy, yet widely seen as a threat to it. By one perspective, interest organizations are manifestations of the underlying biases in the social structure. By another perspective, groups are signs of inclusiveness and democratic mobilization. This course explores the theoretical and empirical bases for these (and other) competing views of interest groups. The basic text, Lowery and Brasher (LB) covers all major topics in interest group politics: organization and maintenance, lobbying and policy, and proposals for reform. Selections from the edited volume, Cigler and Loomis (CL), presents in-depth analyses and case studies that illuminate key points made by the basic text. Additional readings are posted. Other, unposted readings may be assigned.

Exams (90 percent). You will take **three online exams**, which collectively will count for 90 percent of your course grade. Your best exam score will count 35 percent of your course grade, your next-best exam score will count 30 percent, and your worst exam score will count 25 percent. Availability windows for the exams are scheduled in the syllabus. Scheduling and time parameters for the exams:

Exam	*Open day / date / time*	*Close day / date / time*
1	Th / Feb9 / 11 a.m.	Sun/ Feb12/ 11 p.m.
2	Th / Mar15 / 11 a.m.	Sun / Mar18 / 11 p.m.
3	Mon / Apr23 / 11 a.m.	Th/ Apr26/ 1 p.m.

Note: No class will be held during exam availability windows.

The exams will present questions one at a time. Once you answer a question, you may not revisit it. Within the availability window, there is no limit on the amount of time you may take to complete the exams. **However, you must take each exam during the scheduled availability window.** Once the window closes, I will not reopen it. No class will be held during exam availability windows.

Quizzes (10 percent). You will take **three online quizzes** during the term. Quizzes will be announced, but they are not scheduled in the syllabus. Individual quiz scores will not receive differential weights. I will aggregate your quiz scores and weight the sum at 10 percent of your course grade. *If you have a question about how an exam or quiz was graded*: Bring the following materials to my office—your textbooks, your notes on the reading, and the notes you have written during lecture.

Attendance. Attendance is required. Do not arrive late for class. Do not depart early from class. Take careful and complete lecture notes. If you wish to discuss how your exams were graded, then lecture notes are required (see preceding paragraph).

Grading Scale. Your course grade will be determined by this numeric scale:

>=90	87-89	80-86	77-79	70-76	67-69	60-66	<=59
A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F

Schedule for the term.

Class	*Topic*
	Interest Groups in American Politics
Jan10-12	LB ch1
Jan17	James Madison, *Federalist* 10 (posted)
	Group mobilization and maintenance
Jan19-31	LB ch2
	Michael Hayes, "The New Group Universe" (posted)
Feb2-7	CL ch1: Cigler and Loomis, "The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics"
	CL ch5: Nownes and Cigler, "Big-Money Donors to Environmental Groups"
Feb9-12	**Feb9 11 a.m.: First Exam opens / Feb12 11 p.m.: First exam closes**
Feb14	CL ch16: Bosso and Rodrigues, "Emerging Issues, New Organizations: Interest Groups and the Making of Nanotechnology Policy"
Feb16	CL ch2: Patterson and Singer, "Targeting Success: The Enduring Power of the NRA"
	Interest Group Communities
Feb21	LB ch3
Feb23	CL ch12: Heaney, "Identity Crisis: How Interest Groups Struggle to Define Themselves in Washington"
Feb28-Mar1	CL ch4: Strolovitch, "A More Level Playing Field or a New Mobilization of Bias? Interest Groups and Advocacy for the Disadvantaged"
Mar6-8	*Break*
Mar13	Sheehan, et al, "Ideology, Status, and the Differential Success of Direct Parties Before the Supreme Court" (posted)
Mar15-18	**Mar15 11 a.m.: Second Exam opens / Mar18 11 p.m.: Second exam closes**
	Interest Groups and the Public
Mar20-22	LB ch4
Mar27	CL ch7: Guth et al, "Getting the Spirit? Religious and Partisan Mobilization in the 2004 Elections"
	Lobbying the Legislature
Mar29-Apr3	LB ch5
Apr5	CL ch11: Godwin et al, "Is Corporate Lobbying Rational or Just a Waste of Money?"
Apr10	Chin, Bond, and Geva, "A Foot in the Door" (posted)
Apr12	Hall and Wayman, "Buying Time" (posted)
	Lobbying the Executive
Apr17	LB ch6
	Lobbying the Courts
Apr19	LB ch6
Apr23-26	**Apr23 11 a.m.: Third Exam opens / Apr26 1 p.m.: Third exam closes**