Interest Groups POS3463

Pollock / Spring 2014

Office	302 Phillips Hall
Office hours	TTh 8-8:50 a.m. / 12:00 noon-3:00 p.m.
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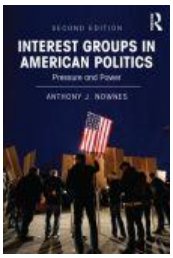
Book	Anthony Nownes, *Interest Groups in American Politics* (2nd ed)



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, Nownes, covers all major topics in interest group politics: mobilization, maintenance, lobbying, policy, and influence. Supplemental readings provide in-depth analyses and case studies. These readings illuminate key points made by the basic text.

Requirements:

Exams (90 percent). You will take three exams during the term: February 6, March 20, and April 29. You will take the first two exams in-class. You will take the third exam online. (The third exam will open Sunday, April 27 at 9 a.m. and close Tuesday, April 29 at 1 p.m.)

If you know that you will be unable to take any of the exams on the scheduled dates: Drop the course. No early exams and no make-up exams will be given. No "extra credit" work will be assigned or accepted.

How the exams will be weighted: Your best exam score will count *40 percent* of your course grade. Your next-best exam score will count *30 percent* of your course grade. Your worst exam score will count *20 percent* of your course grade.

If you want to look at your exam: Come to my office during office hours. *If you have a question about how your exam was graded*: Bring the following materials to my office—your textbook, your notes on the reading, and the notes you have written during lecture.

Attendance (10 percent). Attendance is required and will count *10 percent* of your course grade. Do not arrive late for class. Do not depart early from class. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each day.

I do not give extra credit.

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

>=90	86-89	80-85	76-79	70-75	66-69	60-65	<=59
A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	F

Schedule for the term:

Week	Topic:	Reading:∞
Jan7	Interest groups in American politics	Nownes ch1 Madison, The Federalist #10 Lowery and Gray, "A Neopluralist Perspective on Research on Organized Interests"
Jan14	Evolution of Groups	Nownes ch2 Cigler and Loomis, "The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics"
Jan21	Group mobilization	Nownes ch3 Hayes, "The New Group Universe" Nownes and Cigler, "Big-Money Donors to Environmental Groups: What They Give and What They Get"
Jan28 Feb4	Group maintenance I	Nownes ch4 Bosso and Rodrigues, "Emerging Issues, New Organizations: Interest Groups and the Making of Nanotechnology Policy"
Feb6	**Exam 1**	
Feb11	Group maintenance II	Gray and Lowery, "A Niche Theory of Interest Representation" Heaney, "Identity Crisis: How Interest Groups Struggle to Define Themselves in Washington" Nownes, "The Population Ecology of Interest Group Formation: Mobilizing for Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States, 1950–98"
Feb18	Direct lobbying I	Nownes ch5: pp. 89-102 Chin, Bond, and Geva: "A Foot in the Door"
Feb25	Direct lobbying II	Nownes ch5: pp. 102-138 Godwin et al, "Is Corporate Lobbying Rational or Just a Waste of Money?"
Mar11 Mar18	Groups in elections	Nownes ch6 Guth et al, "Getting the Spirit? Religious and Partisan Mobilization in the 2004 Elections"
Mar20	**Exam 2**	
Mar25	Indirect lobbying	Nownes ch7 Patterson and Singer, "Targeting Success: The Enduring Power of the NRA" Merry, "Emotional Appeals in Environmental Group Communications"
Apr1	Groups and political parties	Nownes ch8
Apr8	The question of group influence	Nownes ch9 Strolovitch, "A More Level Playing Field or a New Mobilization of Bias? Interest Groups and Advocacy for the Disadvantaged"
Apr15	Interest groups in perspective	Nownes ch10
Apr29*	**Exam 3**	*Open: Sunday, April 27 at 9 a.m. Close: Tuesday, April 29 at 1 p.m.

∞Additional reading may be assigned at instructor discretion.