Boston University Washington Programs
Summer 2013 Semester

Strategies for Issue Development and Policy Change
Meeting Time: Thursday Evening, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.; Select Friday Afternoons, 1:00-4:00, as Noted on Syllabus

Course Instructor
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Course Description and Objectives

This course focuses on the strategies and tactics that organized interests use to influence public policy, with a focus on both “inside” and “outside” strategies. Examples of inside strategies include lobbying policy makers and courts, forming political action committees, and attempting to influence elections. Outside strategies, such as mobilizing the public to influence policy leaders, garnering free media, and attracting public support, will also be examined.

The material in this course is designed with advanced undergraduates or graduate students in mind. The course is situated in the political science literature; however, the material examined is appropriate for political science, sociology, communications, and journalism students. Students will grapple with defining an organized interest; learn the nuances of all the major strategies for
influencing, and attempting to influence political outcomes; agenda setting and message framing strategies; communications and public relations strategies; public policy strategies; electoral strategies, and organizational strategies. Students will learn which types of groups and leaders engage in which strategies, and at what stage of the policy process they are most likely to be effective based upon the context and the policy goal.

Course participation and engagement is essential to the success (and your enjoyment!) of the class. Students are expected to read the course material and engage the professor and each other in discussion. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to identify the actors who participate in the federal policymaking process, analyze strategies employed to influence the direction of public policy, critically read scholarly materials, and write and present material.

Office Hours

I am available to meet students on Tuesdays before or after class, as well as during a short break between the first and second hour of class, or by appointment. I am also available on email, or by telephone for students who would like to consult with me about material or assigned work.

A note on email: email is an important way that we will communicate with one another. When submitting work by email, you must receive a confirmation email from me (i.e., “I received your paper,” or the work is not considered received on time.

Course Assignments

The course will be graded on 100 points. The grade breakdown is as follows (see below for a detailed description):

- Class Participation: 25%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Research Paper: 20%
- Final Research Paper: 30%

CLASS PARTICIPATION 25 percent

All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. You will be graded on the quality of your participation.

In addition to routine participation, students will prepare and circulate two-page overviews of the readings for two different course meetings. We will select these readings on the first day of class. Students will receive feedback on their reading summaries and will be assigned a “check minus,” “check,” or “check plus” for their work. This work will factor into your overall participation grade.
Each student will also prepare three discussion questions, based on the readings and observations from the news media, when appropriate, for each course meeting. Questions will be sent by email, or posted on BlackBoard, at least 24 hours before the class meets.

The participation grade also factors in a student’s attendance and punctuality.

**MIDTERM EXAM**  
25 percent

All students will complete a two-hour in-class written exam that will consist of multiple choice questions, short identifications, and longer analytical questions.

**FIRST RESEARCH PAPER**  
20 percent

The first paper assignment asks you to think critically about two organized interest groups and the strategies they employ to influence public policy. The paper 10 pages (including citations and any appendices) will identify two organized interest groups that take stands on a political issue.  
1) Where do these two groups stand on this issue?  
2) How do these groups’ stands differ from one another, or from other political organizations, such as political parties?  
3) What do these groups do to get their stands on the issue adopted by government? What evidence do you find that they are lobbying, influencing the public, making campaign contributions, working to elect candidates, or using any of the other methods groups use to achieve their aims?  
4) Finally, assess whether they are successful.

Papers will need to be cited—follow whatever citation method you are accustomed to using, but adhere to it. You should plan to include both scholarly and journalistic sources. Your grade will be based on how well you respond to the assignment, including how thorough, creative, and well executed your response is, and how well-written the paper is, including grammar, typos, organization and structure.

**FINAL PAPER**  
30 percent

The final paper (15 pages) will be the development of a plan to accomplish a specific policy change on an issue of your choosing. You must identify the issue, and make a case for the correct strategy. You can operate from the stand-point of an existing group, or from a fictitious group. Students will be expected to present an oral presentation of their paper to the class. You will be evaluated both on how well-written the paper is, including grammar, typos, organization and structure; and on the quality of the analysis and the thoroughness of the information.

**BU Plagiarism Policy**

You are responsible for reviewing and understanding Boston University’s policy on plagiarism:

"Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally
appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those works, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or sources, other than that created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension or expulsion."

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Any and all forms of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Boston University Study Washington Academic Center program director, Dr. Walter Montano.

**Required Texts (Note: These may be updated)**

The assigned reading will be taken from the following textbooks and from other required readings available on JSTOR that are noted on the syllabus. The books are available for purchase from the campus bookstore or Amazon.com or similar online book sellers.


Additional readings will also be assigned from various journals or books. These readings are mandatory and will be discussed in class, referenced in papers, and included on the midterm exam.

Students are also strongly encouraged to read a good daily newspaper so they can follow the examples used in lectures and offer their own in class. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are good places to start, but students should feel free to read which ever daily new sources they are accustomed to reading. Periodically, web readings may be assigned from these sources.

Course texts will be available for purchase on Amazon.com. Other readings will be available on Blackboard for the class and/or distributed in class. A copy of the textbooks will be available at the Boston University Washington Center Office for use at the office.

**Course Schedule**

**Thurs. June 6:** *Introduction to Course: Overview, Assignments, and Expectations*
- How to Read an Academic Article
- How to Write a Two-page Readings Overview

**Reading Assignment:**
Read syllabus, come prepared with questions!

**Fri. June 7:** *Organized Interests and the Policy Process*

Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 1, *Introduction: The Changing Nature of Interest Groups* (Loomis and Cigler)

Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 9, *Bridging the Gap Between Political Parties and Interest Groups* (Heaney)

Schaffner and Sellers, Chapter 1, *Introduction* (Schaffner and Sellers)

**Thurs. June 13:** *Why and How Do Organized Interests Form and “Survive”? Who is Represented by Organized Interests (and Who Isn’t)?*

**Reading Assignment:**
Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 3, *Reappraising the Survival Question* (Halpin and Nownes)

“Public Interest Groups and the Road to Survival”
Anthony J. Nownes and Allan J. Cigler
*Polity*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Spring, 1995), pp. 379-404
“Assessing the Importance of Financial and Human Capital for Interest Group Sector Strength across American Communities”
Maryann Barkaso, Jessica C. Gerrity and Brian F. Schaffner
British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July 2011), pp. 557-580

“An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups”

Thurs. June 20: Message Development and Debate Framing

Reading Assignment:
Schaffner and Sellers, Chapter 3, Partisan Framing in Legislative Debates (Harris)

Schaffner and Sellers, Chapter 4, Building a Framing Campaign (Gerrity)

Schaffner and Sellers, Chapter 10, Framing Research, The Next Steps (Iyengar)


Thurs. June 27: Organized Interests and the Public—Outside Strategies

Reading Assignment:
Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 8, Interest Group Television Advertising in Presidential and Congressional Elections (Franz)

Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 10, Issue Advertising and Legislative Advocacy in Health Politics (Hall and Anderson)

Schaffner, Chapter 8, Great Communicators? The Influence of Presidential and Congressional Issue Framing on Party Identification (Wagner)


Fri. June 28: One-on-One Meetings with Students (Will schedule time with students)
Thurs. July 4: **Writing Workshop**

We will all participate in an in-class workshop to discuss and share information about paper drafts, questions, best practices in writing a research paper, citation styles, and more. This is not optional.

Thurs. July 11: **Organized Interests and Congress**

**Reading Assignment:**
Cigler and Loomis, Chapter 11, *Gridlock Lobbying* (Jennifer Nicoll Victor)


Legislation, Political Context, and Interest Group Behavior

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Fri. July 12: **Midterm Exam**

Thurs. July 18: **Organized Interests and the Legislative and Executive Branches**

**Reading Assignment:**


Fri. July 19: **Campaign Finance and the Rules of Electoral Participation**

*Reading Assignment:*
“Individual Campaign Contributions and Candidate Ideology”


*Reading Assignment:*


Thurs. Aug. 1: **Class Presentations of Final Papers** (Final Paper is Not Due Until Finals Week)