

Boston University Washington, DC Programs

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Spring 2013 Semester
CAS PO 321/COM CM 556
Strategies for Issue Development and Policy Change
Meeting Time: Thursdays 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR

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Course Description and Objectives

This course focuses on the specialized forms of communication that political professionals use to win public support for their issues, candidates and policy positions, and teaches concrete strategic planning skills for those interested in influencing public policy using both inside and outside strategies. This course will also be useful for students seeking to learn about the democratic implications of these techniques, or how to report on them from a journalist perspective. Designed for advanced undergraduates or graduate students in Communications, Journalism, Sociology and Political Science, students will learn the pros and cons of all the major strategies for producing political change: 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.

Campaigns - whether partisan or nonpartisan; whether the goal is short-term or long-term; or whether the purpose is to inform citizens, mobilize communities, gain support for a new policy idea, or to win an election - are all about changing the future in a desired direction. The class will examine strategies to move policy forward that occur both outside of government and inside of government, and will review the theories as well as the practicalities of implementing such strategies.

The course will be conducted in a seminar fashion, and course participation is essential to the success of the class. We will use case studies and real life examples to learn about the different approaches - including how they work, and the pros and cons of each.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the actors who participate in the policymaking process in Washington
- Critically identify strengths, challenges, and problems with the different approaches to influencing the policymaking process
- Read academic material critically and synthesize main points
- Write analytically, drawing on scholarly and journalistic sources of information
- Articulate ideas in a group setting
- Make a formal presentation

Office Hours

I will be available to students to meet on Thursdays after class, as well as during a short break between the first and second hour of class, or by appointment.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

The course will be graded on 100 points. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Class Participation: 15%

Midterm Exam: 25%

1st Research Paper: 25%

Final Research Paper: 35%

CLASS PARTICIPATION

15%

While everyone is expected to be prepared and participate thoroughly each week, each student will be assigned at least one lecture and will be expected to be responsible for offering four to five discussion questions on the reading material for that lesson. Students will circulate their questions via email to the entire class at least 24 hours before the class meets so that the other students and the professor have time to think about the proposed discussion topics.

The participation grade is based upon the discretion of the instructor and includes the following factors: attendance, punctuality, quality of participation in the classroom, and the quality of the work put in when it is the student's week to develop discussion questions.

MIDTERM EXAM

25%

A two-hour in-class written exam that will consist of short identifications and longer essays.

FIRST RESEARCH PAPER

25%

The first research paper (8-10 pages) will be an analysis of the tactics used in an issue that passed in Congress. 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.

FINAL PAPER

35%

The final paper (10-15 pages) will be the development of a plan to accomplish a specific policy change on an issue of your choosing. 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.

Full details about the papers will be presented to the class at the start of the semester.

The final grade scale is determined as follows::

A+ = 97-100; A =93-96; A- =90-92

B+ =87-89; B =83-86; B- =80-82

C+ =77-79; C =73-76; C- =70-72

D+ =67-69; D =63-66; D- =60-62

F =59 and below

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."

Any and all forms of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Boston University Study Washington Academic Center program director.

Required Texts (Note: These may be updated)

Course texts will be available for purchase at the Politics and Prose bookstore and 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.

Note: **Politics and Prose** is located at 5015 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. This is one mile north of the Van Ness stop on the Metro Red Line at Van Ness (you can also take the L1, L2, or L4 bus from the Van Ness Metro Station). (<http://www.politics-prose.com>).

Herrnson, Paul. *The Interest Group Connection, Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington*, 2nd Edition. CQ Press, 2005.

Dye, Thomas. *Top Down Policymaking*, Chatham House Publishers, 2001.

Goodwin, Kenneth. *Lobbying and Policymaking*, CQ Press, 2013

Course Schedule

January 24: **Introduction to Class: Overview, Assignments, Expectations and Approach**

Reading Assignment:

Read syllabus, come prepared with questions
Dye - Chapter 1

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

Student and professor introductions
Discussion of syllabus/class expectations
Overview of Policymaking Processes in Washington

January 31: **Agenda Setting**
Guest Speaker: *Pollster*

Reading Assignment:

Goodwin - Chapters 2 and 3

Washington: The Real No-Spin Zone -

http://lobby.la.psu.edu/documentation/APSA_2007_no-spin-zone.pdf

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

Framing the Message
Timing of policy fights: Proactive vs. Reactive
Polls and Focus Groups

February 7: **Using Earned Media to Influence Legislative Policy**
Guest Speaker: *Communications Director for an Issue Group*

Reading Assignment:

Manship School Guide to Political Communication,
“Issue Advocacy” by Ben Goddard , 217-225[on Blackboard]
“Earned Media,” by Bud Jackson, 201-208 [on Blackboard]

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

Developing a Press Plan
Use of Surrogates
Free Press Events
Editorial Boards
Social Media

February 14: **Covering the Policymaking Process**
Guest Speaker: DC Journalist

Reading Assignment:

Dye - Chapter 6

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

The Media's Role in Policy Reform

February 21: **Using Paid Media to Influence Legislative Policy**
Guest Speaker: Media Consultant

Reading Assignment:

Review Ads on *Blackboard*

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

Issue Advertising

February 28: **Showing Public Support: Organizing the Grassroots to Influence Policy**
Guest Speaker: Alicia Kolar Prevost, Deputy Campaign Manager, Clean Air Defense Campaign

Reading Assignment:

Readings on *Blackboard*

Topics for Lecture and Discussion:

Targeting

Coalition building

Tactics & Tools

March 7: **Working the Halls of Congress: Lobbying**

Reading Assignment:

Dye - Chapter 5

Herrnson - Chapter 7

Brief History of Lobbying Congress:

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/common/briefing/Byrd_History_Lobbying.htm

Topics for Lecture and Discussion:

Who are lobbyists?

What rules do they have to follow?

How do they develop their strategy?

March 14: NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

March 21: **Influencing Policy Change Through Legislative Strategies**
Guest Speaker: Allison Herwitt, Legislative Director, Human Rights Campaign

Reading Assignment:

Herrnson - Chapters 13, 14, 15

Topics for Lecture and Discussion:

Congressional hearings

Rulemaking: Public comments

March 28: MIDTERM EXAM

April 4: **Advocating for Policy Change Through Electoral Politics**

Reading Assignment:

Herrnson - Chapters 2, 3,4

Citizens United v. FEC, (558 U.S. 50 (2010))

<http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-205.pdf>

BISC Report: <http://ballot.org/sites/default/files/layout3.pdf>

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

Role of interest groups in electoral politics

Policymaking through ballot initiatives

Influence of money and campaign finance rules – impact of *Citizens United*

April 11: **Utilizing the Courts to Influence Policy**

Reading Assignment:

Herrnson - Chapter 17

http://blogs.stlawu.edu/govt302/files/2012/08/Wasby-Civil-rights-litigation-by-organizations_-_constraints-and-choices.pdf

Topics for Lecture and Discussion

How courts have historically been utilized to influence policy

The role of judges and the confirmation process

The intersection between the courts and Congressional lawmaking

April 18: **Tying it All Together: Case Study: Health Care Reform**
Guest Speakers: Presenter from each side of the health care reform fight
Review Ads on *Blackboard*

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112460630>

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/2725/lobbyists-swarm-capitol-influence-health-reform>

April 25: **Class Presentations**

May 2: **Wrap-Up & Goodbyes**