**POLS 3318.001: Interest Groups**

Dr. Joshua Ozymy  
Spring 2013  
Class Time: MW 3:30-4:45 CI 109  
Office Hours (BH 304): MW 2-3:30 & 4:45-5:30; T 3:20-4:20  
Contact Information: Joshua.ozymy@tamucc.edu, 361-825-2215

**Brief course description:**  
A survey of the literature on interest groups including: the role of interest groups in politics; types of groups and resources; internal dynamics; group strategies/tactics (including PACs); forms of indirect and direct lobbying; influence of groups in political arena.

**Format:**  
Participation is encouraged and expected. The class will be structured around instructor led lectures.

**Attendance policy:**  
You should attend every class. Poor attendance will hurt your participation grade considerably.

**Learning outcomes**  
A. Students will gain an understanding of the historical development of pressure groups in the United States  
B. Students will grasp the importance of interest groups in the electoral process  
C. Students will comprehend how interest groups shape opinions in the mass public.  
D. Students will understand how organized interests and lobbyists affect the political process

**Method of evaluating outcomes:**  
The instructor will gauge student learning primarily through formal testing via essay exams and a major writing assignment. Formal testing will be supported through a series of less-formal means including: thoughtful reading of the material by students demonstrated by class participation, instructor-student interaction in class, and discussion leader assignments, which will also contribute substantially to each student’s final grade.

**Course assignments and grading structure:**  
**10% of course grade: Participation**- demonstrated by attendance (randomly taken throughout the semester) and thoughtful class discussion

**10% of course grade: Discussion Leader (minor writing assignment)**- each student will be assigned at least one class session (but probably two) for which they will be responsible for reading the assigned material, turning in a written synopsis of the readings, and assisting me with class discussions and/or providing a class presentation.

**30% of course grade: Interest Group Case Study (major writing assignment)**- each student will write a paper representing an in-depth analysis of an interest group and then present the findings before the class at the end of the semester. The student will be required to research the history of the group, their policy platform, past achievements, and current activities.
30% of course grade: **Comprehensive Exam**- Comprehensive course exam in essay format.

20% of course grade: **Group Presentation**- Group presentation (PowerPoint) covering a selected subject matter related to interest groups.

A= 89.50 or above  
B= 79.50 to 89.49  
C= 69.50 to 79.49  
D= 59.5 to 69.49  
F= Below 59.5

**Books:**  
1. *Organized Interests and American Government* Lowery and Brasher ISBN# 007246786x  
2. *Pressure and Power* Nownes ISBN# 039595150x  

**Class Schedule:**

**Lower and Brasher- Interest Groups and American Government**

Week 1: Interest group communities and representation (LB Chapter 1/3)  
Week 2: Organized interests and the Legislative branch (LB Chapter 5)  
Week 3: Organized interests and the Executive branch (LB Chapter 6)  
Week 4: Organized interests and the Judiciary (LB Chapter 7)  
Week 5: Organized interests and the public (LB Chapter 4)  
*Wednesday is reserved as a research day. I will be available to students in my office and subsequent office hours to discuss research papers.*

**Nownes- Interest Groups in the U.S. States**

Week 6: Chapters 1 & 2  
Week 7: Chapters 5 & 6  
Week 8: Spring Break  
Week 9: Chapter 3, 4, and 7
deKeiffer-How to lobby Congress

Week 10: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 17: Becoming a lobbyists and doing your research/issue positions and action plans

Week 11: Chapters 5, 14, 15: Dealing with the Press/ Chapters 6, 9, 11, 12, 13: Successfully lobbying Congress
*Wednesday is reserved as a research day. I will be available to students in my office and subsequent office hours to discuss research papers.

Lindstrom-Marketing, Corporations, and Public Opinion

Week 12: first ½ book

Week 13: second ½ book
*Research papers due by Wednesday

Week 14: Summing up—chapter 18
*Final exam distributed on Friday and due on the university approved final exam day

Week 15: Group Presentations

Week 16: Group Presentations

**Student Responsibilities:**
TURN OFF CELL PHONES!!
Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated.
Learn something! Participate in class discussions.

**Students with Disabilities/Religious Needs:**
If you are a student with a disability or have special needs, please let me know during the first week of class. In addition, students observing religious holidays that conflict with class exams/presentations must let me know during the first week of class.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Honesty:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog.
**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)

2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.

3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.

4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.

5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.

6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.

7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)

8. Decision by Provost.

9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamus.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.