

Political Science 672

Interest Groups

Texas A&M University, Spring term 1998

Wednesdays, 9–11:50 AM

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Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 3–4 PM and by appointment

This course will cover a range of theoretical and empirical literature on interest groups in American politics. Topics covered will include who joins groups and why, collective action dilemmas, social movements, lobbying, groups in election campaigns, the growth of the interest-group system over time, the policymaking roles of groups, policymaking systems, and theories of democracy based on representation through the group system. In addition, we will consider the development of the literature on groups over the decades and its impact on the broader discipline.

Each week in the following list of readings includes a major book on one aspect of the interest-group system or a series of related articles and chapters. Class participation and writing assignments will be organized as follows: Each week, I will distribute a list of discussion points for the following week's readings. Each student will be asked to prepare a paper of a maximum of 5 pages in length (double-spaced) about every other week. Each student must write seven of these short papers during the semester, but you have some freedom to choose the weeks when you write. These papers will be due in my mail box at noon on Tuesdays, the day before class. The topics will be chosen to encourage students to consider various aspects of the research reported in the book or readings for that week, how these relate to readings that we will have accomplished in previous weeks, or criticisms of the work. The list of paper assignments will then also constitute an agenda for discussions in the seminar. Students not writing a paper that week should nonetheless consider the topics as they do the reading, and come to class prepared to discuss each of them, as well as other topics that occur to them. Students writing papers in a given week will be asked to initiate discussion in class, or to explain parts of their papers.

Students will also write a term paper. For first-year students, this should be a critical and analytical literature review covering a particular area of the interest-group literature. Topics might include such things as research on overcoming the collective action dilemma; policy subsystems; lobbying tactics; why individuals join groups; normative elements of interest-group democracy; social movements; the pluralism and elitism debate; interest groups and political parties; political action committees and electoral politics; or any other major aspect of the literature. Literature review papers should cover all the major pieces of published work on the topic and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the research. They should establish a summary of the state of knowledge in the field and analyze the reasons why researchers have come to the conclusions they have reached. Further, these papers should end

with an assessment of the directions that future research should take. There is no specific requirement in terms of length, but these should be substantial reviews, allowing you to cover in considerable detail a body of literature in an area that interests you. As a rule of thumb, I would be surprised to see any papers shorter than 30 pages.

Those students who choose to may write an original research paper, a detailed research design, or another type of empirical paper. This may be especially appropriate for more advanced students. These original research projects should review the relevant literature, pose an important research problem or series of questions, and address them with original analyses, using an existing dataset, with an original data collection effort, or with a research design and proposal. Those students considering an empirical research paper should decide on a topic within the first few weeks of the semester and discuss the topic with me in detail, since these papers tend to involve considerable investments in time. I will expect to meet with each student several times during the semester in my office to discuss term paper proposals, review outlines, and to suggest further readings. I encourage you not to work in isolation, but to discuss your project with me as many times as you like.

Grades will be calculated according to the following formula. Note the importance of class participation:

25%	Class participation
35	Short papers during the term
40	Term paper (due on the last day of class)
100%	Total

Books for purchase:

- Banaszak, Lee Ann. 1996. *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 1998. *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gaventa, John. 1982. *Power and Powerlessness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1991. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert L. Nelson, and Robert H. Salisbury. 1993. *The Hollow Core: Private Interests in National Policymaking*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Weekly topics and reading assignments:

Week 1. January 21. Introduction

No readings

Week 2. January 28. Classics of Pluralism

- Truman, David B. 1951. *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, ch. 1, 3-7, 16 (pp. 3-13, 45-210, 501-36.)
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press, ch. 1, 8, 12, 19, 24-28 (pp. 1-8, 89-103, 163-5, 223-8, 271-325.)
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1960. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, ch. 1-4, 8 (pp. 1-77, 129-42).
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1966. A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy. *American Political Science Review* 60: 287-95.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1966. Further Reflections on "The Elitist Theory of Democracy." *American Political Science Review* 60: 296-305.
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1966. A Reply to "Further Reflections on 'The Elitist Theory of Democracy.'" *American Political Science Review* 60: 391-2.
- McFarland, Andrew S. 1987. Interest Groups and Theories of Power in America. *British Journal of Political Science* 17: 129-47.

Week 3. February 4. Olson's Bombshell from Economics

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 4. February 11. Dealing with the Olsonian Dilemma

- Salisbury, Robert H. 1969. An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups. *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13: 1-32.
- Moe, Terry M. 1981. Toward a Broader View of Interest Groups. *Journal of Politics* 43: 531-43.
- Walsh, Edward J., and Rex H. Warland. 1983. Social Movement Involvement in the Wake of a Nuclear Accident: Activists and Free Riders in the TMI Area. *American Sociological Review* 48: 764-80.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1985. The Political Economy of Group Membership. *American Political Science Review* 79: 79-96.
- Crenson, Matthew A. 1987. The Private Stake in Public Goods: Overcoming the Illogic of Collective Action. *Policy Sciences* 20: 259-76.
- Rothenberg, Lawrence S. 1988. Organizational Maintenance and the Retention Decision in Groups. *American Political Science Review* 82: 1129-52.
- Dawes, Robyn M., John M. Orbell, Randy T. Simmons, and Alphons J.C. van de Kragt. 1986. Organizing Groups for Collective Action. *American Political Science Review* 80: 117-85.

Week 5. February 18. Non-Decisions and Power

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton Baratz. 1962. The Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56: 947–52.

Gaventa, John. 1982. *Power and Powerlessness*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Week 6. February 25. Mass Participation, Bias, and the Sources of Groups

Schlozman, Key Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. Participation's Not a Paradox: The View from American Activists. *British Journal of Political Science* 25: 1–36.

Baumgartner, Frank R., and Jack L. Walker. 1988. Survey Research and Membership in Voluntary Associations. *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 908–28.

Curtis, James E., Edward G. Grabb, and Douglas E. Baer. 1992. Voluntary Association Membership in Fifteen Countries: A Comparative Analysis. *American Sociological Review* 57: 129–52.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman. 1984. What Accent the Heavenly Chorus? Political Equality and the American Pressure System. *Journal of Politics* 46: 1006–32.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *PS* 28:664–83.

Lowery, David, and Virginia Gray. 1995. The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers. *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 1–29.

Salisbury, Robert H. 1984. Interest Representation: The Dominance of Institutions. *American Political Science Review* 78: 64–76.

Week 7. March 4. The Power of Citizen Groups

Jeff Berry special guest. Readings will include Berry's book manuscript, for comments and discussion. Note: Class will have to be scheduled on Friday March 6 in order to accommodate Prof. Berry. Book manuscript will be available at a local copy shop.

Week 8. March 11. Collective Action and Social Movements: A dissertation project

Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Spring Break: Week of March 18**Week 9. March 25. Another dissertation: Access and Influence**

Hansen, John Mark. 1991. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hall, Richard L., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees. *American Political Science Review* 84: 797–820.

Week 10. April 1. Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements

Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Week 11. April 8. The Importance of Policy Domains

Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert L. Nelson, and Robert H. Salisbury. 1993. *The Hollow Core: Private Interests in National Policymaking*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 12. April 15. Another Dissertation: How Women Got the Vote

Banaszak, Lee Ann. 1996. *Why Movements Succeed or Fail: Opportunity, Culture, and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 13. April 22. Comparative Studies of Social Movements and the Literature from Sociology

(Meet on Monday or Tuesday this week; Midwest Pol Sci Meetings in Chicago.)

McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Granovetter, Mark. 1978. Threshold Models of Collective Behavior. *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 1420–43.

Week 14. April 29. Review and critique of the state of the field

Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 1998. *Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Term Papers Due Today