

PLSC 083T Honors First Year Seminar
Lobbying, Power, and Democracy
Penn State University
Fall Term, 2008, M, W 4:15–5:30
Room 122 Pond Building

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Office hours: M, W, 3:00–4:00 and by appointment

This class focuses on the roots of political power in American society and government. Readings will focus on political science classics on the topic of power as well as recent works focusing on Washington policymaking. Students will learn about lobbying, Presidential and congressional influence on the policy process, social movements, and corporate power. We will discuss what social groups mobilize for political influence and why some do a better job of this than others. Teaching will be linked with the web site and research project conducted by the instructor, available here: <http://lobby.la.psu.edu>. Of particular interest will be why some social groups, such as students, are chronically *under-mobilized* in politics, whereas others, such as bankers, are highly active. Students will write many short papers on various policy topics throughout the term, always focusing on who is mobilized to express their voices in government and who is not. Assignments will also involve frequent class discussion including group-based debates where different groups defend different positions on assigned policy topics.

As a first-year seminar, part of the goal for the class is to introduce you to the type of work expected here at Penn State, and to introduce you to the resources available to help you perform at that level. Further, you should consider this class a good opportunity to discuss such things as study habits, how to pick courses, how to get to know your professors, and how to find your way in the big U; we can talk about such matters a little bit each week, so come with those questions and prepared to discuss them as well.

The main thing, however, is that I'll try to teach by example. Courses at Penn State require a lot of preparation by the students, ahead of class, so I'll insist that you come to class having done the readings. I have not "dumbed-down" these readings from what I might assign upper-class students, so you'll be getting a representative sample here of what classes might be like in the Political Science Department. Further, a lot of what you'll do in our Department is write, so I'm going to make you write six papers. Each will be relatively short, just 4-5 pages double-spaced, but by doing a lot of them I'll be able to give you some feedback on both the substance and the form of how to write a good paper. We'll discuss plagiarism as well; it's important to know right at the beginning of your experience here what that is and where the gray areas are so that you know what you are doing in terms of citing your sources properly, including web-based sources.

Readings and topics are laid out in the weekly assignments at the end of this syllabus. The main idea is that you'll read first one of my favorite books in political science, even though it was published way back almost 50 years ago. While the examples are totally outdated, you'll be surprised at how much of what the author wrote still is relevant. So push through the examples about President Truman, and things that happened in 1947 and such, and focus on the ideas; you'll find those ideas are well explained and still extremely relevant. (Some of the history is interesting, too!) Then you'll read some specific articles and then a book manuscript that will be published next spring. This book, of which I am one of five co-authors, is about whether lobbyists tend to get what they want, and why or why not. It is the report of a research project we have been conducting for almost ten years and which is based on the web site: <http://lobby.la.psu.edu>. We'll use that site a lot in class as well.

So, given all that, you'll have a pretty broad introduction to power in America, who has it, who doesn't, and how political scientists approach such questions.

Assignments will be as follows: First, class participation is an absolute must. There are only about 20 of you in the class, so I'll know your names and expect you to be in class each time, having done the readings and ready to participate. You don't have to have understood all the readings; it's fine to come to class with questions or points where you'd like some more clarification of the ideas. But you have to do the readings ahead of time, and come to class ready to ask questions as well as to answer those questions posed by others. Sitting quietly is a very bad habit.

Second, you'll write six short papers, as indicated below. Papers require no extra research beyond the required readings, but will require that you become expert and truly knowledgeable about the cases on the lobbying web site that we will discuss in class. But I want you to learn how to write a good essay, developing a theme, clearly answering the question you pose, with evidence. So we'll focus a lot on that and I'll give comments so each paper should get better over the semester.

Third, I'll often have *very* simple assignments or quizzes in class; these will be graded on a scale of 2 (full credit); 1 (half credit); 0 (unacceptable or not handed in). I'm an easy grader so if you do the assignment you'll get a perfect grade on this set of things. Then again if I have a quiz in class and you skip that day, oops, two points lost. Such things can add up and if you note the equation below, the combination of class participation and these short assignments will make up 40 percent of your total grade. This is a seminar, so you need to be here, ready to participate, period. These quizzes will be unannounced and we'll have as many of them as I feel like we need, fewer if everyone seems well prepared all the time, more if there seem to be free-riders.

Summary of grading and assignments:

Class participation	20%
Six short papers (10 points each):	60
Short assignments and quizzes in class (2 points each, graded 0/1/2)	20
Total:	100%

Late assignments: Just don't go there. It's a very bad habit so I'm going to try to break you of it before it even starts. Of course, official university excuses count. Any other reasons, you'll be marked down 1 full letter grade per day (including weekends). So that means, email me the assignment as soon as it is ready, even if we don't have class that day. Waiting a week to hand it in will mean you get a grade of zero for it. If you are sick, email me and we'll make arrangements. If you know you're going to miss an assignment or be out of town the day it is due, talk to me about it or email ahead of time. My advice will be: hand it in early.

Book for purchase:

1. Schattschneider, E. E. 1975 [1960]. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers

Book manuscript to download from class web site:

2. Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, Beth L. Leech, and David C. Kimball. 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming. Available as manuscript at: http://www.personal.psu.edu/frb1/Advocacy_July_19_2008.pdf.

Additional readings, as indicated on the syllabus, will be available on-line. All the links will be here: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/frb1/teachingmaterials.htm>.

Finally: Get in the habit of using your .psu email account. The university will regularly send you messages, and so may I if I need to reach you. Do not use your .psu account to sign up for things that can lead to lots of spam; you'll need this account over the next four years so get used to using it.

Please note the following announcements concerning University policies.

Academic Dishonesty¹

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Other violations include, but are not limited to, any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in regard to an examination, such as tampering with a graded exam or claiming another's work to be one's own. Violations shall also consist of obtaining or attempting to obtain, previous to any examinations, copies of the examination papers or the questions to appear thereon, or to obtain any illegal knowledge of these questions. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of a violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines.

¹Much of the text above has been directly obtained from the sections of the Princeton University website <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/rrr/99/pages/Ol.htm>) concerning academic integrity (Rights, Rules, Responsibilities introductory text as well as pages 55-69) as well as from the website of the Department of Economics at The Pennsylvania State University.

Disabilities

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

Visit our web site

The Political Science Department is in the process of upgrading its web site and will continue to do so during this and future academic years. In the undergraduate section you will find a wealth of information including course schedules, faculty office hours, faculty home pages describing their areas of teaching and research activities, answers to questions about advising, internship opportunities, announcements, and much, much, more. Check back often: we will continuously update our information about internships and career opportunities:
<http://polisci.la.psu.edu/>

Weekly assignments and topics

Week 1. Aug 25 and 27. Intro, no readings

- Note: No class on Wednesday Aug 27
- Get familiar with this web site: <http://lobby.la.psu.edu/>

Week 2. Sep 1 and 3. A theory of “conflict expansion”

- Schattschneider Ch 1, The Contagiousness of Conflict
- Schattschneider Ch 2, The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System

Week 3. Sep 8 and 10, How conflicts “socialize” and what difference that makes

- Schattschneider Ch 3, 4, Whose Game Do We Play, The Displacement of Conflicts
- Schattschneider Ch 5, The Nationalization of Politics

First paper due on Monday Sep 8. Explain the relevance of Schattschneider’s idea of “conflict expansion” by applying it to a particular case of recent political controversy.

Week 4. Sep 15 and 17, Evaluations of our democratic system

- Schattschneider Ch 6-7, The Limits of the Political System, What Does Change Look Like?
- Schattschneider Ch 8, The Semisovereign People

Second paper due Wed Sep 17. What is more important, Schattschneider’s idea that debates can be socialized, and therefore a political loser has the chance to win, or his other idea that there is so much bias in the pressure system that certain actors in American society are systematically shut out? Discuss both aspects of the theory, make reference to specific cases from the lobby web site that back up your point, and then justify a conclusion with evidence. Be as systematic as you can and make sure your conclusion is backed up by your evidence based on actual cases.

Week 5. Sep 22 and 24, The Collective Action Dilemma and Its Solutions

- Read the Wikipedia entries on:
 - Tragedy of the Commons (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy_of_the_Commons)
 - Free Rider Problem (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_rider_problem)
 - *The Logic of Collective Action* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Logic_of_Collective_Action)
- Walker, Jack L., Jr. 1983. The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America. *American Political Science Review* 77: 390–406.

Week 6. Sep 29 and Oct 1, Lobbying on a Sample of Issues: Some get all the attention

- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Beth L. Leech. 2001. Issue Niches and Policy Bandwagons: Patterns of Interest Group Involvement in National Politics. *Journal of Politics*. 63: 1191–1213.
- Become familiar with at least 5 issues of your choice at <http://lobby.la.psu.edu/> and pay attention to how many groups seem to be involved.

Third paper due, Wed Oct 1. Take one of the issues from the lobby web site. Explain the issue of concern to the various lobbyists. Is it a “public good,” a “private good,” or some mixture of both? Are the theories from last week useful in understanding these actual policy disputes? Explain in detail. Be careful in your use of terms and define any technical terms.

Week 7. Oct 6 and 8, Who Wins?

Each week from now to the end of the term, we’ll divide class time into two parts. In the first part, we’ll read and discuss a chapter of *Lobbying and Policy Change*, the book in which we analyze the cases and information housed at the lobbying web site. In the second part of class each day, we’ll discuss one of the cases. I’ll call on you and you’ll need to be able to present the case, what it’s about, who was involved, what their arguments were, etc. I may sometimes divide the class into two “teams” each charged with presenting one of the sides of the argument in the case. In this way, through the semester, we’ll get a feel for the analysis but also for about 10 of the cases in some detail. You can evaluate for yourselves whether the lobbyists promoting or distorting the public will.

- *Lobbying and Policy Change*, Methodological appendix (Monday and Wednesday)
- Cases: Hearing Screenings for Infants (Monday)
- Medicare Payments for Clinical Social Workers (Wednesday)

Week 8. Oct 13 and 15, The Power of the Status Quo

- Monday: Chapter 1 and Repeal of the Federal Estate and Gift Tax
- Wednesday: Chapter 2 and OSHA’s Proposed Ergonomics Standards

Week 9. Oct 20 and 22, The Structure of Conflict in Washington

- Monday: Chapter 3 and Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China
- Wednesday: Chapter 4 and Export Controls for Computers

Fourth paper due, Wed Oct 22. Pick any argument or bit of evidence in the 4 chapters you have read so far and evaluate whether it accurately explains one of the cases we have discussed. No argument will explain every case. Discuss the difference in the overall pattern of findings we report in the book and what one might conclude from an intensive study of a single case. Go into detail about the evidence and be careful in your use of terms.

Week 10. Oct 27 and 29, no class this week

Week 11. Nov 3 and 5, Parties, Elections, and Policy Change

- Monday: Chapter 5 and Revising the Application of Title IX to Sports
- Wednesday: Chapter 6 and Wind Energy Tax Credit

Week 12. Nov 10 and 12, Arguments, Tactics, and Protecting the Environment

- Monday: Chapter 7 and Bear Protection Act
- Wednesday: Chapter 8 and Roads in National Forests

Fifth paper due, Wed Nov 12. Same assignment as last time, but use the more recent chapters and the more recent examples. You may also use other cases than those discussed in class. Feel free to use more than one case. But, like last time, go into detail about your evidence.

Week 13. Nov 17 and 19, Spin, Money, and Policy Change

- **Monday: Chapter 9 and Airline Pilots Mandatory Age 60 Retirement Age**
- **Wednesday: Chapter 10 and Low Sulfur Gasoline Regulations**

No Class during the week of Nov 24, Happy Thanksgiving

Week 14. Dec 1 and 3, Who Wins and Why or Why Not

- **Monday: Chapter 11 and Elimination of the 3% Excise Tax on Phone Bills**
- **Wednesday: Chapter 12 and Prescription Insurance Coverage for Contraception**

Sixth paper due, Wed Dec 3. Our overall conclusion in the book is that money just cannot buy power, across the board. However, we note many examples when it does exactly that. Do you think we got the conclusion right? Give evidence that suggests that we did NOT get it right. Link our findings with the theory of Schattschneider, with which we started this course. Is the mobilization of bias the fundamental issue in American politics?

Week 15. Dec 8 and 10, Review, Discussions, and Evaluations

Come to class prepared with your own conclusions about what lobbyists do and what would improve the system. Is the issue with the mobilization of Americans into politics, or what lobbyists do once they have become mobilized?