

PLSC 083S.1
First Year Seminar: Power in America
Penn State University
Fall Term, 2007, M, W 4:15–5:30
Room 220 Thomas Building

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

This is a class about power, lobbying, and public policy in the US federal government. It assumes that you are just starting college, so this will likely be your first political science class. We'll read a mixture of things, ranging from a text book to a classic (but old!) book published in 1960, to some work so new it hasn't even been published yet. (You'll also read some of my own work, possibly an obnoxious idea to you, but at least if you don't like it you can say so directly right to the author; how often to you get the chance to do that?)

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; you'll read a fair bit, almost 4 books worth over the semester. 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 a text book published just last year that covers a lot of the vocabulary and ways that political scientists have come up with to study what lobbyists do. It's pretty dense, but there are interesting parts, believe me. Second, you'll read 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 a book I just finished and which will be published in January. (Note: The co-authors are another professor in the Department, and a PhD student here who could have been your TA in some other course.) It is related to a very successful lobbying campaign for a most unlikely source: people on death row. We'll talk (in some detail!) about how the death penalty has come to be associated with the concept of mistakes and errors, whereas say 20 years ago these ideas were not so prominent in the debate. It's an interesting case, it stirs people's passions, but it can be used to illustrate lots of theories of how policies change in our country. I'll focus on the general theories because that's my thing. But we'll have time to talk about the substance of the debate as well, and you should learn a lot about the substance of it as well as about the theory of lobbying and policy change. Finally, at the end of the semester, you'll read two papers from a book project about whether lobbyists tend to get what they want, and why or why not. The two chapters we'll focus on have to do with how conflicts in Washington are structured, and why we found surprisingly low correlations between having a lot of money and getting what you want. 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.

One running discussion we may have throughout the term is why college students are so poorly mobilized into politics and public affairs. As part of that discussion, I will try to make arrangements for some Penn State lobbyists to come visit class to talk with you. Details on that will come later.

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. I'll distribute the topics for the papers, based on the readings, a week or two before the assignments are due. Papers require no extra research beyond the required readings. 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 not because I'm mean (though I am a professor!), but because a seminar is not a seminar if you don't participate. This is a seminar, so you need to be here, ready to participate, period.

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.

Books for purchase:

1. Schattschneider, E. E. 1975 [1960]. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers
2. Nownes, Anthony J. 2006. *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get it)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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/OI.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 27 and 29. Intro, no readings

- Note: No class on Wednesday Aug 29

Week 2. Sep 3 and 5. An introduction to lobbying

- Note: No class on Monday Sep 3, Labor Day
- Nownes, Ch 1, Studying Lobbyists and Lobbying

Week 3. Sep 10 and 12, More introductions, some vocabulary, and some theory

- Nownes, Ch 2, Lobbying and Lobbyists in the US: A Primer
- Nownes, Ch 3, Public Policy Lobbying, Part I

Week 4. Sep 17 and 19, Theories of lobbying

- Nownes, Ch 4 Public Policy Lobbying, Part II
- **First paper due on Monday Sep 17.**
- Note: special arrangements to be made for Wed Sep 19 (Baumgartner out of town)

Week 5. Sep 24 and 26, How lobbyists work in local communities and for corporations

- Nownes Ch 5, Land Use Lobbying
- Nownes Ch 6, Procurement Lobbying
- **Second paper due Wed Sep 26**

Week 6. Oct 1 and 3, Review of the theoretical perspectives

- Nownes Ch 7, Recap and Final Thoughts

Week 7. Oct 8 and 10, A theory of “conflict expansion”

- Schattschneider Ch 1, The Contagiousness of Conflict
- Schattschneider Ch 2, The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System
- **Third paper due, Wed Oct 10**

Week 8. Oct 15 and 17, 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

Week 9. Oct 22 and 24, 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
- **Fourth paper due, Wed Oct 24**

Week 10. Oct 29 and 31, A theory of “attention-shiting” and background on capital punishment

- Baumgartner, Frank R., Suzanna De Boef, and Amber E. Boydston. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*. New York: Cambridge University

Press. (Available on-line at course web page.) Ch 1, Innocence and the Death Penalty Debate

- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 2, The Death Penalty in America

Week 11. Nov 5 and 7, A real challenge: lobbying for people on death row!

- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 3, A Chronology of Innocence
- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 4, The Shifting Terms of Debate
- Fifth paper due, Wed Nov 7

Week 12. Nov 12 and 14, Demonstrating the impact of framing on actual results

- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 6, Public Opinion
- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 7, The Rise and Fall of a Public Policy

No Class during the week of Nov 19-23, Happy Thanksgiving

Week 13. Nov 26 and 28, Assessing how the death penalty was revolutionized

- *The Decline of the Death Penalty* Ch 8, Conclusion
- Sixth paper due, Wed Nov 28**

Week 14. Dec 3 and 5, How political conflicts in Washington are organized

- Baumgartner, Frank R., Beth L. Leech, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, and David C. Kimball. The Structure of Policy Conflict. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 20-23, 2006. (Available on-line at course web page.)

Week 15. Dec 10 and 12, Why the wealthy do not always win (surprising reasons)

- Leech, Beth L. Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, and David C. Kimball. 2007. Does Money Buy Power? Interest Group Resources and Policy Outcomes. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 12-15, 2007. (Available on-line at course web page.)