

Interest Groups and the Policymaking Process (GPGN 490)

Instructor: Brian Libgober

Location: Remote

Synchronous Class Meeting Time: Tuesdays 3:30-5:00 PM

Asynchronous Pre-Recorded Lectures: Posted to Canvas by Friday of Week Prior

Asynchronous Paired Discussion Assignments: Posted to Canvas by Friday of Week Prior

Instructor Email: blibgober@ucsd.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Overview

This course focuses on the role of interest groups in the policymaking process, largely but not exclusively focused on the American context. We will engage the topic from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including that of political science, philosophy, economics, and law. At the same time, the focus of this course is practical. We will explore problems of interest group politics by inhabiting the role of advocates and policymakers. Frequently, we will highlight contemporary issues and controversies surrounding interest groups and their role in policymaking.

Class Organization

In order to promote engagement and flexibility in light of the pandemic, this class will contain both synchronous and asynchronous components.

Asynchronous: Typically, there will be between 30-60 minutes of pre-recorded lecture and 30-60 minutes of off-line group and pair work.

Synchronous: Class time will run for approximately 60-90 minutes and will focus on discussion.

The pre-recorded lecture and asynchronous group work should be completed prior to the synchronous meeting for class discussion. These will definitely be posted no later than Friday of the week before we meet, and will usually be posted earlier whenever possible. The group or pair work will often involve discussing an assigned set of questions about the readings. We will tend to use class discussion time to apply the perspective gained through the asynchronous components to analyze particular cases and controversies.

Grading

- Class Participation – 10%
- Paper Proposal – 10%
- Interim Draft – 20%
- Seminar Paper – 40%
- Presentation – 20%

The Seminar Paper: A Case Study on the Making of a Public Policy

The primary deliverable for this course will be a case study you produce about the role of interest groups in shaping a particular public policy. Policies could be enacted via lawmaking, rulemaking, referenda, or any other policymaking forum, at any level of American government. You may study

policies that were actually enacted or could have been enacted. A degree of finality is best in selecting a case study, so it is best to avoid policies currently under consideration.

A successful seminar paper will:

- Identify the key interest group actors supporting and/or opposing the policy.
- Describe the strategies that these actors could have used to further their policy goals.
- Evaluate the strategic choices these actors made in light of their incentives, resources, capacities, and constraints.
- Analyze how the institutional environment influenced the ultimate policy outcome.
- Speculate as to how and why the outcome might have turned out differently.

There will be several intermediate assignments building toward the final case study. These include:

- A detailed paper proposal that will identify the subject of the case study, an initial bibliography of preliminary sources, and some preliminary hypotheses (500 words without bibliography, minimum 5-8 sources depending on source quality – a book counts for more than a newspaper article). The proposal is due at the end of Week 3.
- An interim draft. Essentially a rough draft, however you may replace some paragraphs and sections with short summaries of what you intend to do. The interim draft should read intelligibly as a paper and give a firm indication of what the final paper will look like. (8-12 pages, double-spaced). Due at the end of Week 7.

Presentations

For our final class session, you will have the opportunity to present your case study in brief. Presentation length will depend on enrollment, but in no event will be longer than 20 minutes per person. I will provide more direction on the presentations as the course progresses.

Course Materials

- Most readings are available for Download on Canvas
- There is a \$12.75 course pack for the case study materials for download at <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/786703>

Late assignments

The late assignment penalty is one percent per hour. Assignments more than 48 hours late require a University-approved and documented excuse.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating or dishonesty will face zero-tolerance, which in particular means that I will report all cases to UCSD's office of academic integrity. Students are encouraged to read and give feedback on each other's work. You must appropriately recognize and cite all sources for your work. Please get in touch with me if it is not clear how to do so. For further information on academic integrity and what constitutes plagiarism, please consult

<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu>

Class Schedule

Week 1 (January 5) – The Big Picture (Preview)

Readings

- Theodore Lowi, “Review: American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory,” *World Politics* 16, no. 4 (1964): 677, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009452>.
- Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, “Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems,” *The Journal of Politics* 53, no. 4 (1991): 1044–74.

Week 2 (January 12) – The Who, What, and Why of Organized Interest Groups

Readings

- James Q. Wilson, “Chapters 2 & 3,” in *Political Organizations* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 19–55.

Class Time

- Q&A About Asynchronous Material
- “Rails to Trails” and the Problem of Organizing Latent Interests
- “Heavenly or Unheavenly Chorus?” Debating the Interest Group Ecosystem.

Week 3 (January 19) – Interest Groups, Public Opinion, and Elections

Readings

- Jeffrey M. Berry, “Interest Groups and Elections,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Persuasion*, ed. Elizabeth Suhay, Bernard Grofman, and Alexander H. Trechsel, 2020, 339–57, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190860806.013.31>.

Class Time:

- Case Study by Daniel Diermeier, “Wal-Mart: The Store Wars” (Harvard Business Publishing, 2011).

Week 4 (January 26) – Legislative Lobbying

Readings

- Frank Baumgartner et al., “Does Money Buy Public Policy,” in *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*, 2009, 190–215.

Class Time:

- Case Study by Timothy Feddersen and Kimia Rahimi, “Nonmarket Action and the International Counter-Money Laundering Act (H.R. 3886)” (Harvard Business Publishing, 2012).

Week 5 (February 2) – Administrative Lobbying

Readings

- Thomas O. McGarity, “Administrative Law as Blood Sport: Policy Erosion in a Highly Partisan Age,” *Duke Law Journal* 61 (2012): 1682–1719. (i.e. Sections I & II only).

Class Time:

- Bethany McLean, “Payday Lending: Will Anything Better Replace It?,” *The Atlantic*, May 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/05/payday-lending/476403/>.

Week 6 (February 9) – Social Movements

Readings

- Bryan D. Jones, Sean M. Theriault, and Michelle Whyman. “Causes of the Great Broadening: The Role of Social Movements.” In *The Great Broadening*, 109–30, 2019.
- (Optional) Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, “Social Movements as Politics,” in *Social Movements, 1768-2008*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 1–16.

Class Time:

- Case Study: Black Lives Matter (<https://cases.open.ubc.ca/black-lives-matter/>)

Week 7 (February 16) – Think Tanks, Associations, and Other Experts

Readings

- Andrew Rich, “Think Tanks, Experts, and American Politics,” in *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 204–20.

Class Time

- Case Study by Daniel Diermeier and Shail Thaker, “The Politics of Tobacco Control: A History of the US Tobacco Industry” (Harvard Business Publishing, 2006).

Week 8 (February 23) – Interest Groups and the Media

Readings

- Lucig H. Danielian and Benjamin I. Page, “The Heavenly Chorus: Interest Group Voices on TV News,” *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 4 (1994): 1056, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111732>.

Week 9 (March 2nd) – Outside Lobbying

Readings

- Edward T. Walker, “Defining the Field,” in *Grassroots for Hire: Public Affairs Consultants in American Democracy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Class Time:

- Articles About Proposition 22

Week 10 (March 9th) – Putting It All Together/Presentations

Syllabus and Requirements Subject to Change

