PRESSURE GROUPS  
Department of Political Science  
Tuesday 5:10 pm - 7:00 pm  

HOWARD UNIVERSITY  
Classroom: Douglas Hall - Room 105  
Office Hours: Tuesday 7:10 pm - 7:45 pm  
or Call for an appointment  
Email: devance.walker@montgomerycountymd.gov  

Fall 2003  
Office: (240) 777-2032  
Cell: (301) 943-9769  

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is an examination of history, purposes, strategies, and influences of pressure groups on the political processes in the United States. It is a course in the field of American Government and Political Behavior. Students are expected to learn about the role of pressure groups in politics and policy development. Students will review the historical perspective of the political interests, learn about the role of pressure groups in the political system, formulate an understanding of influences and lobbying techniques, and explore how these influences affect political behavior. The research assignments require students to present assessments on the role of pressure groups in the American society.

TEXTS:  


ASSIGNMENTS and COURSE EVALUATION:  

I. Readings and Projects: All students must read the required texts and other reading assignments prior to class meetings. Class participation affects course grades. Students will also complete two (2) projects. These projects are worth 60 percent (30 percent for each project) of the final grade.  

Project 1 - Analyze the relationship between pressure group(s) and a successful candidate for political office.
**Required inquiries:**

- Describe your methodology for your research
- Explain the significance of the political office held by the elected official
- Describe the position/office role in policy development
- Identify the contributing groups to the campaign or officeholder
- Explain the reasons for the contributions or support to the officeholder
- Summarize your findings

**Project 2** - Each student will select an existing pressure group and analyze its approaches to influence public policies. This examination will include the background of the organization, legal and organizational structure, purpose of the group, program activities, constituents or clients, budget, and summary of the findings.

**II. Class Participation** - Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions. The classroom is an education setting to foster learning through lectures, debates, and presentations. If extenuating circumstances do not allow you to participate, you must inform the instructor prior to class. *Your participation is worth 15 percent of the final grade.*

**III. Chapter Presentations** - Each student must lead the class discussion on a chapter in the text, *Inside the Campaign Finance Battle.* The chapter will be assigned to the student at the beginning of the semester. The student is expected to use handouts or additional resources to explain the meanings and contents of the chapter. *This assignment is worth 25 percent of the final grade.*

**CLASS DATES and ASSIGNMENTS**

**August 26** - Introduction of class participants, review of the syllabus, rules of the class, and an overview of the course

- What are the expectations?
- How will the class operate?
- What are the course requirements?
- How will grades be determined?
- What are the reading assignments?

**Sept. 2** - Historical and theoretical framework for political behavior as pressure groups

- What are pressure groups?
- Why did these groups develop?
- What theories contribute to political behavior?
- What is the nature of politics and pressure groups?
Additional readings: V.O. Key, Jr. - "Pressure Groups"
Article - "Interest Groups Today"

Sept. 9 - Michael Rious, Senior Legislative Assistant
To the Honorable Albert Wynn, U.S. Congressman


Sept. 16 - The issue of campaign ethics

- What role do ethics play in campaigning or holding political office?
- How do we describe civic responsibility versus self-interest?

Sept. 23 - Utilization of research for pressure groups

- How important is research to pressure groups?
- What institutions are sources for data/information?
- What kind of research data emanates from these institutions?
- How are these institutions or associations affiliated with pressure groups?

Sept. 30 - Guest speaker: Herman Taylor
Member of the Maryland House of Delegates

Topic: "Running a Successful Campaign through Supporters"

Oct. 7 - Interest groups: from campaigning to lobbying

- What role does lobbying play in the democratic process?
- Is lobbying necessary?
- Why do candidates need interest groups?
- What is a PAC?

Article by Tom Bolt & Associates - "What is Lobbying?"
GAO Report - Statement of Milton J. Socolar, Special Assistant to the Comptroller General, "Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act of 1946 Is Effective"

Public Act 104-65 - "Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995"

GAO Report - "Federal Lobbying: Lobbying the Executive Branch"

GAO Reports - "Information on States' Lobbying Disclosure Requirements" and "Comparison of Foreign Lobbying Registrations"

Oct. 14 - Campaign financing and political parties

- What is soft money?
- What is the relationship between interest groups and political parties?
- How does the growth of soft money impact political parties?
- What are the federal regulations on campaign financing?

Oct. 21 - Issue advocacy and campaign financing

- What is the essence of political party and interest group electioneering in federal elections?
- How do you describe the issue advocacy and integrity of the political process?
- How does the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law affect political parties?

Project 1 due and class presentations

Oct. 28 - Views of organized groups and political consultants on campaign financing

- How would advertising help the National Association of Manufacturers lobby the U.S. Congress?
- What is the affect of the Reform Act on the Associated Builders and Contractors
- How are issue advertisements designed to target federal candidates?

Nov. 4 - Campaign finance: public opinion and corruption

- What are the public attitudes toward campaign finance practice?
- What are some public views of soft money?
- Will the Reform Act reduce the appearance of corruption in American politics?

Nov. 11 - The donors perspectives' on campaign financing


- Why do large contributions provide unequal access
- Why would corporate America feel contributions are given under pressure?
- How are large contributions used to influence legislation?

**Nov. 18** - Officeholder perspectives' on campaign financing

- What are the consequences of members soliciting soft money?
- Why would a claim be made that the U.S. Congress "is mired in corrupt soft money?"
- Is corruption an issue in American politics?

**Nov. 25** - The electorate's responsibilities and pressure groups

- Why should the electorate monitor pressure group behaviors?
- What contributions does the political consultant make to the political process?

Guest speaker: Union Leader (TBD)
AFL-CIO

Topic: "The Role of Unions in the Political Process"

**Dec. 2** - Last day of class

**Project 2 due and class presentations**

**Course Rules and Procedures**

1. **Attendance** - Lectures and discussions are vital to understanding this course. Attendance is a must. If any student has extenuating circumstances, the student must contact the instructor prior to the class meeting to obtain an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to complete all class assignments. Two unexcused absences will result in a reduction in the final course grade.

   Students are to be on time for classes. If the student must make a choice between being late and not coming to class, the instructor prefers the former. Any student thirty (30) minutes late should call the instructor prior to class.

2. **Assignments** - All assignments must be completed by the due dates in order to receive full credit for the assignments. Written (typed) work may only be submitted later than the due date with the approval of the instructor. Late written work may affect the final grade.
All work will be written with correct grammar and punctuation. Students need to purchase a grammar resource book. Students need to cite the source of information in written assignments.

**Students need to retain copies of all submitted work assignments.** Students may consult with the instructor about grades and progress in the class.

3. **Class Participation** - Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions. All comments are welcomed. The classroom is an educational setting to foster learning through debates, lectures, and presentations.

4. **Incomplete Grades** - The instructor, under extenuating circumstances, may submit an Incomplete grade for students, who failed to complete one or more requirements of the course by the end of the semester. Students, who do not complete assignments, will receive an Incomplete grade or a failing grade.

5. **Contacting the Instructor** - The students can contact the instructor by telephone at (240) 777-2032 (24 hours a day). The students may leave messages.

6. **Cell Phones** - The students must turn off the cell phones while in class.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


