Interest Groups, Lobbying and the Political Process Syllabus

318-001

(Online - Summer 2020)
3 Hours
Tuesday/Thursday
4:30 - 6:35 pm

Instructor: Dr. David K. Rehr
Professor
Telephone: 703-819-9396 (m)
Email: Drehr@gmu.edu
Office: Online
Office Hours: By appointment
Meeting Times: Tuesday 6:30 – 7:15 pm CALLS by appointment

Communication:
The best way to connect is via email. You can expect a response within 24 hours, but often within a matter of minutes, depending on schedules. You can also make an appointment before/after class.
Academic Integrity

All members of the Schar School of Policy and Government community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined here as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. For more information, see the Honor Code: http://sls.gmu.edu/honor/

Attendance:

The expectation for the class is that regular online attendance is strongly encouraged. Any student missing a class must contact Professor Rehr prior to the beginning of the class. Unauthorized absence(s) may be reflected in the final course grade. Students should be prepared for each class, having read the required readings and anticipate potential questions for guests.

Use of Electronic Devices During Class:

Use of electronic devices during class is discouraged, except for laptops needed for online learning.

Recording Class Lectures and use of social media:

Publicizing course material, comments or comments of guest speakers on social media is not permitted. The only exception is the posting of pictures (no video or audio) if desired by the Professor. This will allow free and unencumbered discussion and exchange of ideas. Professor Rehr may grant exceptions under unusual and exceptional circumstances.

Disability Accommodations:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.
Course Evaluation:

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the online course. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting:

Thys Van Schalk
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Schar School of Policy and Government
mvanscha@gmu.edu
(703)-993-8227

Class Expectations:

This class will consider a number of policy, perspectives on ‘power’ and value-laden issues when discussing special interest groups, lobbying and the political process. Students are encouraged to engage in respectful and engaging debate. Professional courtesy and appreciation for all points of view are essential to becoming a success in Washington, DC, or wherever your career takes you, even when you meet someone who may hold contrary strong personal principles or convictions. Seeing the world from a 360-degree perspective allows leaders to make the best decisions for the client, organization, or political position he/she represents.

Course Description and Overview

The course is designed to provide undergraduate students with the historical and legal background of special interests, lobbying and the political process at all levels of government. Students will gain some practical skills and insights necessary to succeed in government advocacy. The goals of this course are to review how citizens exercise the First Amendment right to petition their government and redress grievances, form interest groups, understand how to effectively lobby on behalf of a cause, com, review some of the laws and regulations affecting lobbying, and comprehend the competitive landscape of public policy. The seminar course format will also touch upon advocacy before the Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, and State & local government, as it relates to special interests, lobbying and the political process.

The course will also feature likely guest lecturers (depending on their availability) from interest groups, congressional staff, individuals, and former Executive Branch officials who will share their perspectives on special interest groups, lobbying, and how lobbying has impacted the creation of laws and regulations. It is the goal of this course to effectively train students in all the essential ideas necessary to understand special interest groups, lobbying, and what part each plays in the American political process.
**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to participate in class and complete assignments on time and within guidelines, and finish assigned readings before class when due. Papers will be accepted via email plus please mark them by Assignment, aka ASSIGNMENT #1, etc.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the constitutional origins of lobbying and why redressing government is part of the 1st Amendment;
- Explain the develop of modern lobbying;
- Explain the various types of interest groups and their motivations for lobbying;
- Understand and describe the various lobbying tools special interests use to succeed;
- How special interest "influence" really works;
- Understand success in an interest group.

**Grading:**

This is a graded course. The final percentage will be determined by the following percentages: 70% based upon total points available through written assignments; 15% active class participation; and 15% on final online presentation.

**Assignments and Valuation:**

Additional detail about each assignment is provided at the end of the syllabus. Below provides the name of each topic, the learning objective addressed, due date, and the maximum number of points available to the student. **All written papers should be at least 5 pages long (double spaced). Details on all semester assignments will be handed out during class or emailed to you via your gmu email account**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight (Total points)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain and offer your opinion on Madison’s argument about the importance of Special Interests in our Republic. How would Madison view his arguments today?</td>
<td>Students will better understand basic principles of constitutional principles, economic self-interest and economic foundations of the U.S. government.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on Tuesday, June 9, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect on your personal strengths and weaknesses as an advocate, in relation to emotional intelligence and leadership theories.</td>
<td>Students will exercise the professional skills expected of members of the advocacy &amp; lobbying profession.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on June 16, 2020.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a Special Interest Group with which you disagree politically: Describe how it was formed, what it advocates, how it operates, and what lobbying results it has achieved.</td>
<td>Students will better understand the motivations of citizens engaged in the lobbying process.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on June 23, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a Special Interest Group, which mirrors your political philosophy, and describe how it was formed, what it advocates, and what lobbying results it has achieved.</td>
<td>Students will better understand the motivations of citizens engaged in the lobbying process that may have similar viewpoints. Students will learn about specific groups or organizations they are interested in engaging.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on July 7, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose a state or federal elected official and explain how he/she won their election campaign.</td>
<td>Experience dynamics involved with elections and how the experiences may impact the opinions held by elected officials.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on July 14, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Choose, follow and explain a legislative coalition</td>
<td>Students will learn “how to” build, expand, or leverage a specific group of interests to advance public policy.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on July 21, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Pick two favorite advocacy tools used by special interest groups, compare and contrast it use and how it impacts the decision-making of elected officials. comment on whether it has been effective for the interest groups.</td>
<td>Students will become more familiar with lobbying tools used by professional lobbyists at all levels of government.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on July 28, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Final Assignment – Choose from one topic (Dr. Rehr will provide list) and explain the importance as it relates to</td>
<td>Enhance oral advocacy skills through successful completion of final presentation before professor and peers.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on August 4 or 15</td>
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<td>PowerPoint is ready to present on August 4 or</td>
<td>15</td>
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coalitions, lobbying, or the political process. Power Point presentation required.

| Class Participation | Active engagement online, surveys and paragraph personal input throughout the class. | Engagement Viewed throughout the course. | 15 |

**Grading Percentages:**

A+ - 100-95%
A  - 94-90%
B+ - 89-85%
B   - 84 – 80%
C   - 79 – 75%
D   - 74 – 69%
F   - Percentage below 69%

**Required Reading:**


**Supplemental:**


**Tentative Course Calendar**

*The instructor(s) reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress and the availability of invited guest lecturers. All guest lecturers mentioned are tentative and subject to their availability. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.*
Each class will focus on one topic. Expect to stay until 6:35 pm each class session. Time adjustments may be made on syllabus topics.

Summer 2020 Course

June 2

Class #1 – Course Overview – Do Special Interests Impact Law and Regulations? What roles do Lobbyists Play?

Topic and Content Covered

Introductions
Learning expectations
Syllabus review

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

None

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

What are student and professor expectations for class?

How should laws be made?

What do think lobbyists Do? And what do they do not do?

Is it ethical to influence Congress, State Government, or Local Government?

How do we decide good public policy issues from bad public policy issues?

How to we manage, organize, solicit, interpret, and take action on the perspectives of 200 million Americans?

June 4

Class #2 – What are special interest groups? How do they organize and what are their objectives.
**Topic and Content Covered**

How interest groups are organized
Different types of groups
How does economics play into interest groups
Examples of prominent groups
Determining their mission

**Lecture Objectives Addressed**

Questioning motivation behind interest groups
Membership vs publicly financed interest groups

**Required Reading**

None

**Guest lecture**

Executive of major interest to explain how it recruits members, allocates resources, enacts mission, and communicates with governing board and members

**Class Questions and Discussion Issues**

What are some of the least and most popular interest groups you are familiar with or are a member?

What do like about interest groups and what do you dislike?

**June 9**

Class #3 - The historical foundation of interest groups and lobbying

**Topic and Content Covered**

Origin of ability of citizens to redress the government
Historical construct of influence
Founding Fathers’ view of special interest groups
Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will understand basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, Economic Foundations, Ethics and Professional Responsibility.

Students will be able to apply basic economic concepts to the law.

Required Reading:

Resolutions of the Continental Congress (1 page)

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DOCID+@lit(jc00132))

Examination of Dr. Benjamin Franklin in the House of Commons

https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-13-02-0035

The Constitution of the United States of America, First Amendment.

James Madison, Federalist No. 10.

James Madison, Federalist No. 51.

Class Questions and Discussion issues:

What were the conditions that led to allowing citizens to redress their grievances before government?

What conditions are needed for Madison’s view on interests to work correctly?

Would the Founding Fathers be surprised by today’s advocacy environment?

June 11

Class #4 – Why do we cover emotional intelligence and authentic leadership? Why is it important to this course? How does this benefit our understanding of Interest Groups, Lobbying, and public policy? (Only one topic this evening so we can thoroughly discuss and understand)

Topic and Content Covered

Understanding how to assess our authentic leadership
Looking at emotional intelligence as a vehicle for personal success with interest group involvement, lobbying, and impacting the political process.
Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of their strengths and challenges with respect to political leadership and activism.

Students will be able to better understand their unique narrative that will help them to more successful in their professional life.

Required Reading:


Class Questions and Discussion issues

Why is it important we understand being an Authentic Leader?

What are the elements of emotional intelligence?

Why is this leadership lesson important of our success in dealing with interest groups, lobbyists or impacting public policy.

June 16

Class #5 – How does the media cover the U.S. Congress and what impact does that coverage have on Interest Group advocacy efforts?

Topic and Content Covered

Media coverage of the U.S. Congress
Insights on building relationships with media outlets
Impact of media coverage on advocacy efforts

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Readings:

None.
Guest Speaker

Media expert who covers elected officials.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Are there formal and informal rules on dealing with the media?
How does media coverage propel advocacy efforts?
Can you trust the media to tell the right story?

June 18

Class #6 – An example of special interest group advocacy?

Topic and Content Covered

History of the interest group?
How does the organization function?
How is the organization's public policy determined?
How is results measured by members of the organization or the leadership?

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will exercise the professional skills when asking speaker questions and respecting the organization being discussed.

Required Readings:

None

Guest Speaker:

Special interest organization speaker.

Class Questions and Discussion issues:
What are the challenges faced by the organization to grow membership, interact with the media, and have an impact on public policy?

How did you become part of the interest group? How do you reconcile your own personal beliefs with the policy of the organization, especially if there are conflicts?

What tips would you offer to be an influential interest group in the minds of elected officials?

June 23

Class #7 – What it the marketplace for public policy ideas?

Topic and Content Covered

The competitive marketplace for advocacy

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Students will be able to apply basic economic concepts to advocacy and lobbying.

Required Reading:

Rehr, David, eBook, Cutting Through Congressional Clutter: Proven Ideas and Tips to Gain Influence and Be Heard, August 2018.

Class Questions and Discussion issues

What is the motivation for lobbying?

How should you think about advocacy competition?

What are the important criteria you should always consider when viewing advocacy competition?

How do you get noticed as a lobbyist?

Does advocacy and lobbying competition exist at the state and local level? What would be an alternative system?
June 25

Class 8 – What is the process by which ideas become laws? How does it actually happen?

Topic and Content Covered

Fundamentals of understanding the legislative process
Number of bills, resolutions introduced and those that become law
Using statistics to determine your ability to succeed
The legislative ‘shortcuts’ that help you get your result

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, policy analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

The Legislative Process on the House Floor: An Introduction (12 pages)
The Legislative Process on the Senate Floor: An Introduction (13 page)
View “Bill on Capitol Hill” (3:21)

View Congress.Gov videos on the legislative process. (about 25 minutes)

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:

How does the legislative process actually work?
Are there short cuts or alternative ways to meet legislative goals?
How can statistics help a lobbyist better understand his/her enacting legislative priorities?

June 30

Class #9 – Where does Congress go for information? What does a day look like for a Member of Congress and/or their staff?

Topic and Content Covered
Presentation of THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS REPORT, updated findings

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

None.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:

Where do congressional staffs look for information?

What sources of information do congressional staffs value?

Do lobbyists and congressional staff view some sources of information differently?

What are the advantages to a lobbyist if he/she knows where congressional staffs look for information?

July 2

Class #10 – How Interest Groups leverage research to advance public policy?

Topic and Content Covered

Why survey research is important in legislative advocacy
Discovering the strengths/weaknesses of your adversaries
Using “Thomas” as a lobbying tool

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Readings:

None.

Guest Speaker

Member of research organization to explain how they impact discussion on public policy
Class Questions and Discussion Issues:
What kind of research should lobbyists consider using?
How does a lobbyist differentiate research in promoting a public policy?
Does packaging of information matter to Elected Officials and/or staff?

July 7
Class #11 – The importance of choosing the ‘right words’ to impact public policy?

Topic and Content Covered
How to think about branding your legislative campaign
The importance of how to frame issues
Discussion of various legislative ‘frames’ and models

Learning Objectives Addressed
Students will demonstrate an understanding of legal research, legal analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:
How Members/congressional staffs see the world?
Why do words matter?
Is there a balancing act between using the ‘right words’ and authenticity in public policy?

July 9
Class #12 – How to view Interest Group money in politics? Is there too much or too little? Does Interest Group money impact election outcomes?

Topic and Content Covered
What role does money play in the public policy process
Are campaigns influenced by contributions
What is the research and reality of campaign support
How would individuals get elected without campaign contributions
What campaign finance reforms, if any, should be considered

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/campaign-finance-reform
https://act.represent.us/sign/money-politics-problem/

Topic and Content Covered

The role of money in politics
Is it a tool for influence
Leveraging money as an advocacy tool
Various campaign finance reform ideas and their impact
Changing the competitive “Interest Group” playing field

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Does money play a role in Influence Group influence?
What is the best least imperfect system of electing our leaders?
How do you create a level playing field among interest groups with campaign finance reform?

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Are calls for campaign finance reform authentic or do Interest Groups just want to change the balance of available tools?
Do we recognize the imperfect status of elected leaders, while still preserving freedom of speech in our current campaign finance system?

July 14

Class #13 – What advocacy tools are being used to influence the Congress? (Part 1)

Topic and Content Covered
How research is being used in advocacy
The importance of building personal relationships
What is a public policy coalition
Creating multi-member coalitions
Following practical rules for successful coalitions

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Reading:


Stephanie Vance, The Influence Game: 50 Insider Tips from the D.C. Lobbying World that will get You to Yes., pp. 1-81.,

http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/coalition-building

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

How do you build relationships with members of Congress and staff?

Do most coalitions follow the 80/20 rule? How do you keep them focused on your legislative priorities.

July 16

Class #14 – What advocacy tools are being used to influence the Congress? (Part 2)

Topic and Content Covered

Mobilizing constituents back home to deliver the right message
Available internal U.S. Congress resources

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

Stephanie Vance, The Influence Game: 50 Insider Tips from the D.C. Lobbying World that will get You to Yes., pp. 95-155.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Which internal congressional resources are most used by Members of Congress and their staffs?

What are the challenges to effective ‘grassroots’ engagement with Members of Congress?

How does social media impact constituent engagement?

July 21

Class #15 – What advocacy tools are being used to influence the Congress? (Part 3)

Topic and Content Covered

The importance of external visibility (Capitol South Metro, Building signs, etc.)
Effective Washington Fly-in’s
Earned media in advocacy

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of legal research, legal analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Readings:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/586d5c4ce4b0d359c42adb75

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Does external visibility impact successful advocacy?

How can so-called ‘Fly-In’s’ become more effective and what should be done?

How do you build relationships with media outlets to advance your advocacy efforts?

July 23
Class 16 – Why Interest Groups need to understand the culture and rules of the U.S. Congress to be successful?

**Topic and Content Covered**

How the House and Senate operates  
The culture of the equal but not so equal institutions  
How elected leaders view their constituents

**Learning Objectives Addressed**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, and problem solving.

**Required Readings:**

None.

**Guest Speaker:**

U.S. Congress staffer

**Class Questions and Discussion Issues**

Is the Senate more complex than the House in advancing legislation?  
Do elected leaders’ personalities play a significant role in advocacy?  
How do Senators and House members interact?

**July 28**

Class #17 – What are the practical experiences Interest Group advocates have experienced in their professional careers?

**Topic and Content Covered**

Current and former lobbyists explain how the system operates  
Tips on effective advocacy  
Career development and enhancement  
Discussion of reality of U.S. Congress

**Learning Objectives Addressed**
Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Readings:

None.

Guest Speaker:

Interest Group advocate to discuss their experiences and insights.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

How does the process work in reality?
What ways would you suggest to build relationships with Members/staff?
What advice you give law students who are interested in Capitol Hill?

August 4

Class #18 – Positioning you Interest Group Organization and Differentiation of your public policy issue: Practical considerations?

Topic and Content Covered

How to think about your Interest Group
Reviewing a check-off list of determining your influence
How do you stay ‘top of mind’ with Elected Officials

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will consider how to remain ethical to their individual values, while they impact public policy through lobbying.

Reading Requirements:

Stephanie Vance, The Influence Game: 50 Insider Tips from the D.C. Lobbying World that will get You to Yes., pp. 95-171.

Guest Speaker

Former Hill leadership staffer and lobbyist
Class Questions and Discussion Issues

How do you measure general Interest Group influence

Why is it important to remember Lord Acton’s phrase, “Power Corrupts and Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely”

Are there simple things that can make you a more effective Interest Group Advocate

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Are there formal and informal rules on dealing with the media?

How does media coverage propel advocacy efforts?

Can you trust the media to tell the right story?

August 7

Class 19 – What did I learn from my studies? (Final presentation)

Students will present up to 7 minutes (timed) findings and lessons learned from selected topic. Power Point is required