

Issues and Policies in American Government – Business-Government Relations/ Washington Campus

GOV 312L - Spring 2016

Instructor

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Office Hours: I am in my office a lot, and I am open to drop-ins whenever I am in my office, but it is best to set-up an appointment given that my schedule changes week to week.

Teaching Assistant

Jamie Klein (LBJ School MPP Student)

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Class Description:

This class will explore the theory and practice of business-government relations, with particular focus on federal government policymaking in Washington. Students will meet in Austin during the latter half of the spring semester to explore relevant literature on business-government relations, including material on the legislative policy process, the regulatory process, interest group theory, lobbying, the social responsibility of business, and campaign finance. In May, students will attend a one week session in Washington, DC to meet with policymakers and their staffs, lobbyists and others to learn more about the nuts and bolts of business-government relations in Washington. The Washington component of the program will be organized by an organization called “The Washington Campus.” In addition to deepening students’ understanding of the politics of the policy process and the intricacies of business-government relations, this class will also help students develop their critical thinking and communication skills.

Class Meetings:

This class will consist of four class meetings on campus during the spring semester to be held in CBA 4.328 (6pm-9pm Tuesdays, March 22, April 5, April 19, and May 3) AND a mandatory trip May 23-27 to Washington, DC where you should expect to be in class all day, i.e. from 8a to 5p.

The Washington sessions will be held at a location still to be determined in the downtown area—most likely near the MacPherson Square, Farragut West, and Farragut North subway stops.

Fees:

In addition to normal registration fees, students must pay an additional \$1250 fee to The Washington Campus (TWC) organization to cover logistics and other services provided by TWC. That fee is due before the second class meeting on April 5. Students should pay the fee directly to the TWC using this URL:

<https://asoft8186.accrisoft.com/washcamp/index.php?src=forms&ref=2016-05-23+Texas+Undergraduate&id=2016-05-23+Texas+Undergraduate>

Students are also responsible for fees associated with travel to Washington DC and accommodations/meals in Washington DC. These may make sense to coordinate with other students.

Grades

Course grades will consist of four components:

1. Class participation – 20%. This includes attendance at all four Austin sessions and all the Washington week sessions, as well as engagement in class discussions and activities. Attendance is required at all of the sessions, but is not sufficient to earn a good participation grade as it is only worth a score of 5 out of 10 for a given day. Because there are so few class meetings for this class, missing a session will have a significant adverse effect on your attendance grade.
2. Class preparation – 15%. Before each of the four Austin classes, the professor will circulate a list of questions about the readings. Each Austin class will begin with a short quiz consisting of a subset of those questions. The quizzes are designed merely to test whether students have done the readings. If students have done the reading, they should easily be able to answer all of the questions correctly. The lowest of the four quiz grades will be dropped.
3. Group projects – 30%. In the first class meeting, students will form groups. Each group will focus on the political and policy issues facing a certain industry (telcom, energy, pharmaceuticals, etc.). During and after the remaining three Austin classes, the groups will devise a short (2 page or less) strategy memo for their industry. During the final class session in Austin, students will do a short presentation on their group work.
4. Final exam – 35%. At the conclusion of the final day of classes in Washington, there will be a final exam based on the material covered in the Washington sessions.

Note on timing of grades for transcripts

Although this class is listed as a Spring Semester class, it runs into the summer. This means that final grades cannot be assigned during the Spring Semester. Hence, a placeholder grade or 'Incomplete' grade will be assigned. Every effort will be made to update official transcript grades in a timely manner; however, this may take until after the Fall 2016 Semester begins for the University to process.

Electronic communication:

The official syllabus for this course will be located on Canvas. It may be updated over the course of the semester and you will be expected to keep current with the Canvas site.

Laptops, Tablets, Cell Phones, Etc.:

Use of laptops or tablets is discouraged. Please consider taking pen and paper notes. If you are found doing anything non-class related including e-mailing, you will receive a zero participation grade for a given day. The use of cell phones or other electronic communication devices in class is prohibited.

Plagiarism:

Please read in its entirety the following article from the August 1, 2010 *New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/education/02cheat.html?scp=1&sq=plagiarism&st=cse>. All students are expected to do all of their own individual work individually (without help from others) unless the work is a group project, and not to plagiarize written work. Please review the UT tutorial on plagiarism by here: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>. Cheating or plagiarism will be grounds for dismissal from the class or a failing grade for the class.

Disability Accommodation Notice:

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

READINGS

Mar 22 – Interest Groups and Interest Group Formation

James Madison, *Federalist No. 10* (1787)

Mancur Olson, “The Logic,” Chp. 2 of *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (1982)

Kay Scholzman, “Who Sings in the Heavenly Chorus? The Shape of the Organized Interest System,” *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties* (Maisel and Berry, eds., 2010)

Kenneth Godwin and Barry Sheldon, “What Corporations Really Want From Government,” *Interest Group Politics* (Cigler and Loomis, eds., 1998).

Apr 5 – Policymaking Institutions: Congress and the Bureaucracy

Sarah Binder, *Stalemate* (2003), Chs. 1 & 2 (2003)

Cornelius Kerwin, “The Substance of Rules and the Reasons for Rulemaking,” in *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy*, Ch. 1

Gerald Garvey, *Facing the Bureaucracy*, Chs. 1 & 2 (1993)

Apr 19 – Lobbying (and Bias?)

Rogan Kersh, “The Well Informed Lobbyist: Information and Interest Group Lobbying,” in *Interest Group Politics* (Cigler and Loomis, eds, 2007)

Jason Webb Yackee and Susan Webb, “A Bias Toward Business? Assessing Interest Group Influence on the U.S. Bureaucracy,” *Journal of Politics* 68(1): 128-39 (2006)

Edward Walker, “Industry Driven Activism,” *Contexts* 9(2): 44-49

May 3 – Campaign Finance

Richard Hall and Frank Wayman, “Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees,” *American Political Science Review* 84: 797-820 (1990)

Stephen Ansolabehere et al., “Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17:105-30 (2003)

Frank Baumgartner et al., *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*, Chp. 10 (2009)

Washington Sessions (May 23-27) – Agenda TBD