
PSC 401L: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND PRESSURE GROUPS

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Office Hours: Mon 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Tues 11-12 and 2-4

Weds 8-10 a.m.

And by appointment

SUMMARY

In this course students will learn about the variety of ways that citizens can participate in and influence their government and have an effect on public policy. The emphasis this semester will be on (1) group participation (e.g., interest groups), (2) individual participation beyond voting, and (3) how institutions of government can increase or decrease participation and political efficacy.

GRADING

Exams (25% each, 50% total): There will be one mid-term and one final exam. They will consist of one essay question and ten short answers. A study guide will be passed out one week prior to each exam. The midterm will be held on October 13th and the final on December 15th.

Final Project (40%, broken up throughout the semester): All assignments related to the final project must be on time for any credit and must be typed...no matter how short the assignment is. Please keep a copy of each assignment for yourself as they will not be returned until the final project is graded at the end of the semester.

Be aware that feedback on the various project assignments will only be given if I see egregious errors or omissions. Otherwise, they will be treated as a work in progress and I will just use them to make sure you are going in the right direction. The more detail you provide in each component you turn in throughout the semester, the more I will be able to direct you prior to your writing of the final paper.

Participation (10%): All students must actively participate in class discussions. In order to do so, you must have completed the readings prior to coming to class.

OTHER INFORMATION OF WHICH YOU SHOULD BE AWARE

Cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty will, at the least, result in a failing grade in this class. Self-plagiarism is cheating and will result in a failing grade as well.

Students with disabilities often have special needs. If you are a student with physical, educational or other disability-related needs, please make me aware of any accommodations you require. I am more than happy to work with you in any way necessary. All discussions of this nature will be confidential.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Nownes: *Pressure and Power*
- Alexander: *Classics of Interest Group Behavior*
- Macedo, et al.: *Democracy At Risk*
- Miscellaneous readings as assigned.

COURSE OUTLINE

Aug 24: Introduction to Course: In Depth Discussion of Semester Project

SECTION 1: INTEREST GROUPS

WHAT ARE INTEREST GROUPS?

Aug 26: Chap. 1 and 2 Pressure and Power
 Chap. 1, 2 and 3 Classics

HOW/WHY DO GROUPS FORM?

Aug 31: Pluralists
 Chap. 3 Pressure and Power
 Chap. 4, 5 and 6 Classics

Sept 1 Anti-Pluralists and Others
 Chap. 7 through 14 Classics

Sept 7 NO CLASS: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

WHAT DO INTEREST GROUPS DO?

Sep 9 Nonlobbying activity
 Chap 4 Pressure and Power

Sep 14 Formal Lobbying
 Chap 5 Pressure and Power

Sep 16 Informal Lobbying
 Chap 6 Pressure and Power

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DUE ON SEP 16: Name/characteristics of the group you will be studying. Names of the individual students in your study group (5% of project grade).

Sep 21-23 Campaign contributions
 Chap 7 Pressure and Power
 Newspaper articles to be assigned

Sep 28 Indirect Lobbying
 Chap 8 Pressure and Power

WHAT TYPE OF INFLUENCE DO INTEREST GROUPS HAVE?

Sept 30 On Democracy
 Chap 9: Pressure and Power
 Chaps 15-17 Classics Oct 6-8 On Policy

Chaps 18-22 Classics

Oct 5: Review for midterm

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DUE ON OCTOBER 5TH: A brief outline of how you plan to answer questions 1-3 on the final project and a bibliography of the sources you will cite for this section of the project. (15% of project grade)

Oct 7 Mid-term

SECTION 2: MASS PARTICIPATION

WHAT IS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO DEMOCRACY?

Oct 12 The nature of citizen participation in the U.S.

Sidney Verba. 2006. "Fairness, Equality and Democracy: Three Big Words." *Social Research: An International Quarterly of Social Sciences* 73(2) 499-540.

Oct 14-19 Who participates and who doesn't (from *Voice and Equality*)

Oct 21-26 Recent trends in participation

Chap 1: Democracy at Risk

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DUE ON OCTOBER 26TH: A brief outline of how you plan to answer questions 4-5 on the final project and a bibliography of the sources you will cite for this section of the project. (15% of project grade)

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (OR LACK THEREOF)?
WHAT REFORMS CAN BE OFFERED?

Oct 28-Nov 2 At the national level

Chap 2: Democracy at Risk

Nov 4-9 At the local level
Chap 3: Democracy at Risk

Nov 11 NO CLASS: VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY

Nov 16-18 Non-political participation
Chap 4: Democracy at Risk

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT DUE ON NOVEMBER 18TH: A brief outline of how you plan to answer questions 6-7 on the final project and a bibliography of the sources you will cite for this section of the project. (15% of project grade)

Nov. 23-25 Conclusions and Reforms
Chap 5: Democracy at Risk

Nov 30 Participation among the young (lecture from *A New Engagement: Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*)

FINAL PAPER DUE ON NOV 30th: 50% of project grade

Dec 2-5 Topic to be determined: options may include deliberative democracy, comparative political participation, etc. A reading will be assigned at least one week in advance.

FINAL EXAM IS MONDAY DECEMBER 14TH FROM 4:30-6:30 P.M.