

Lobbyists & Special Interests in New York Government
RPOS 204Y Selected Problems in Pol Sci
Office Hours: By appointment via email, or call 442-3112

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TTH 10:15:00_AM-11:35:00_AM BB 129
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to explore the role of lobbying as part of a larger strategic campaign for influencing the political and statutory process. The role lobbyists play in the legislative arena can be compared to that of lawyers in the judicial arena. Just as lawyers provide the Trier of fact (judge or jury) with points of view on the legal issues pertaining to a case, lobbyists do the same providing local, state, and federal policymakers with points of view on public policy issues.

Students will explore and understand some basic principles for effective lobbying, including ethical standards, campaigning, and the role of the media as well as learn strategies for effective lobbying with a chance to apply and practice them in a simulated classroom format.

This course satisfies the University's General Education Oral Discourse requirement. Thus, the class includes assignments and exercises in which students will communicate ideas, attend to an audience, and actively engage comments and questions.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All required readings are available on Blackboard within folders for each scheduled class day.
Assigned readings are to be completed PRIOR to that scheduled class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Graded in-class activities and assignments will be part of the course grade worth 15%. Such activities will include: pop quizzes, submission of guest lecturer questions (see below) and class participation. Missing class means the student earns an automatic "0" credit for the activities or assignments missed. However, this course has the following NO FAULT safety valve: You may drop 1 in-class assignment grade. So, if you must miss class for any reason, it will be possible to drop the zero you would automatically receive for missing an assignment that day. If you do not use your safety valve for missed classes, you will be able to use your safety valve to drop any low score you make even when you DO attend. **Plan carefully for classes that you know you will need to miss. Work, religious practice, sports team travel, military duty, club activities, fraternity/sorority obligations, family responsibilities, assignments for other courses, and even brief illnesses, etc, - these are your responsibility to manage by using your safety valve.**

Oral Presentations: We will examine several high profile legislative issues in New York State. Students will be required to work in groups. There will be two oral presentations, one mid semester worth 15% and one end of semester worth 25%.

Papers: There will be several written assignments during the semester:

Memo: Depending on which side of an issue the student's group has been assigned, each student will be required to prepare a Memorandum in Support or in Opposition. The Memo is worth 10% of the final grade

Action Plan: The group will jointly develop an action plan to lobby the New York State Government. The Action Plan, due mid-semester, will be worth 15% of the final grade.

Political Ad: Each student will be required to produce an advertisement, either written, verbal or visual to bolster their group's position. The Ad is worth 10% of the final grade.

Floor Notes: The group will jointly develop "floor notes" used to brief a member of the Legislature preparing to debate their bill on the floor of the House. The "floor notes" are worth 10% of the final grade.

Guest Speakers: Several times throughout the semester speakers will be invited in to speak to the class on relevant topics. Students will be required to submit a minimum of three questions for each of these speakers. Submissions of these questions are graded as an "in-class activity" discussed under "Attendance" above.

Cell Phones and Lap Tops: Please make sure your cell phone is turned off as soon as class begins. I view using and checking your cell phone during class as disruptive behavior. I do not allow students to use lap top computers during class.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are on their honor to be ethical and honest in carrying out all the assignments and requirements of this course. Any violations of this code, such as cheating, copying, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of one's own work, will meet with the appropriate penalties and discipline as outlined in UAlbany regulations. If you have an unclear picture of what constitutes plagiarism, or the limits of acceptable group collaboration, please ask me for clarification. It is also the responsibility of every student to report any observed instances of cheating and plagiarism. Disciplinary actions for such offenses are severe, and include loss of course credit, suspension and expulsion from the University.

Special Needs Policy: Students who have special needs due to learning or other disabilities will be accommodated, and should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students who request accommodation will be asked to provide appropriate documentation.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL INFO</u>
August 27, 2015	Introduction – What is Lobbying?	
September 1, 2015	Lobbying and the Constitution	
September 3, 2015	How a bill becomes a law (in NY)	
September 8, 2015	Group Assignment Discussion	
September 10, 2015	Who Gets Lobbied (in NY) Pt. 1	
SEPTEMBER 15, 2015	NO CLASS	ROSH HASHANAH
September 17, 2015	Who Gets Lobbied (in NY) Pt. 2	
September 22, 2015	Who Lobbies Pt. 1	Memo Due
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015	NO CLASS	YOM KIPPUR
September 29, 2015	Who Lobbies Pt. 2	
October 1, 2015	Media/Public Relations	Lecturer Questions Due
October 6, 2015	Guest Lecturer	
October 8, 2015	Mid Term Prep	

OCTOBER 13, 2015	MID TERM DAY 1	ACTION PLAN DUE
OCTOBER 15, 2015	MID TERM DAY 2	
OCTOBER 20, 2015	MID TERM DAY 2	
OCTOBER 22, 2015	NO CLASS	
October 27, 2015	Final Group Discussion	
October 29, 2015	Political Campaigns	Lecturer Questions Due
November 3, 2015	Guest Lecturer	
November 5, 2015	Post Election Discussion	
November 10, 2015	Ethics Pt. 1	Ad Due
November 12, 2015	Ethics Pt. 2	
November 17, 2015	Future of Lobbying	Lecturer Questions Due
November 19, 2015	Guest Lecturer	
November 24, 2015	Final Prep	
NOVEMBER 26, 2015	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING
DECEMBER 1, 2015	FINAL PRESENTATION DAY 1	FLOOR NOTES DUE
DECEMBER 3, 2015	FINAL PRESENTATION DAY 2	
DECEMBER 8, 2015	FINAL PRESENTATION DAY 3	