Course Purpose: This course introduces issues concerning interest groups in American politics. Hopefully, the result is a substantive understanding of such organizations specifically and of the political system generally.

Office Hours: My office hours are on Tues. and Thurs. mornings from 11:00-12:00 in Harkness 108 (i.e., right after class). I will be available at other times (especially before 3 pm); I can be reached by phone at x34903 and by e-mail at lrot@mail.rochester.edu as well.

Requirements: Grading is based on a midterm exam (25%), a paper (10-15 pages; 25%—details to be furnished), and a final (50%). Those who are taking this course to fulfill their writing requirement will have some additional work (details to be provided).

Readings: Readings are required and should be read before class if possible to enhance the value of both the lectures and the discussion. I have the right to ask about things on the exams that were only covered in the readings. The following materials are in the bookstore:


Jeffrey M. Berry and Clyde Wilcox. The Interest Group Society, fifth edition.

John Wright, Interest Groups & Congress

These two cases should be downloaded (details to be furnished):


Stanford Graduate School of Business, “Strategic Activism: The Rainforest Action Network,” Case p44

Class Notes: Class notes will not be posted. I will post a lecture outline and copies of relevant figures and tables. The reason for this is that putting too much material on the web encourages students to not show up or to not pay attention. Not only do such students tend to do poorly in the class but the behavior of those who show up but pay little attention creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to learning.
Class Organization: While a lecture class, the class will be interactive. I encourage questions and discussion and will generally leave time at the end of each lecture for additional discussion. The dates on which material is covered are tentative; there may be some adjustments over the course of the semester and it is possible that I may be out of town for one session.

I. Introduction: What are Interest Groups and Why Should We Study Them? (Jan. 14th, 19th)

Readings:


Berry and Wilcox, Ch. 1

Wright, Ch. 1


Baumgartner, et al., Chs. 1-4.

II. Where did the Interest Group System Come From? (Jan. 21st, 26th)

Readings:


Wright, Ch. 2

Berry and Wilcox, Ch. 2
III. What Does the Group Universe Look Like Today? (Jan. 28th, Feb. 2nd)

Readings:


- Berry and Wilcox, Ch. 9.

IV. The Internal Organization of Groups: Formation, Maintenance, and Internal Workings (Feb. 4th, 9th, and 11th)

Readings:

- Scott H. Ainsworth, Analyzing Interest Groups, Ch. 2

- Berry and Wilcox, Ch. 3


V. *The Strategies of Interest Groups* (Feb. 16th, 18th)

Readings:

Baumgartner, et al. Chs. 6-11.

Berry and Wilcox, Chs. 4-8


VI. *Congress* (Feb. 23rd, 25th)

Readings:

Wright, Chs. 3-4


VII. *Executive Branch* (Mar. 2nd)

Readings:


VIII. Courts (Mar. 4th)

Readings:


IX. Exam Covering Sections I-VIII (Mar. 18th)

X. The Financial Connection—Introduction (Mar. 16th)

Readings:


XI. Who Contributes? (Mar. 23rd)

Readings:


XII. To What Avail? (Mar. 25th, 30th)

Readings:

Baumgartner, et al. Ch. 10.


XIII. Private Politics (Apr. 1st, 6th)

Reading/Cases:


Stanford Graduate School of Business, “Strategic Activism: The Rainforest Action Network,” Case p44


XIV. Public Policy (Apr. 8th, 13th)

Reading:

Baumgartner, et al., Ch. 11.


NO CLASS APR. 22nd—WORK ON PAPERS!!!!

XV. Systemic Impact (Apr. 20th, 27th)

Readings:

Baumgartner, et al., Ch. 12

Berry and Wilcox, Ch. 10

Wright, Ch. 6
Susanne Lohmann. 2003. “Representative Government and the Special Interest Politics: (We Have Met the Enemy and He is Us),” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15(3): 299-319.