Purpose: This course principally introduces students to the political science and political economy literatures on interest groups. This will include developing an understanding of the makeup of the group system, the contribution decision, the internal politics of organizations, and the role that groups play with respect to political institutions. As the study of organized groups cuts across many subdisciplines in political science and political economy (one of the reasons that groups are often viewed as understudied is because there are very few scholars interested in groups in and of themselves), and includes certain elements of finance, this course might have a wide appeal.

Requirements: Course requirements include research presentations and a longer final paper—either original research, a detailed literature review, or a research proposal (roughly 15 pages will suffice).

Office Hours. I am located in Room 108 at Harkness (Department of Political Science/Wallis Institute of Political Economy). You can come by any time and I will see you barring extenuating circumstances. My phone number is x3-4903 and my e-mail is lrot@mail.rochester.edu.

Availability of Readings. Articles will be made available through Dropbox. There are several standard books that I would be happy to reference if students would like.

Grading. Grading will reflect your class participation and your final paper (weighted approximately 1/2, 1/2).
**Weekly Assignments**

*Week I: Introduction.* (Sept. 6th)

*Week II: Macro-Perspectives* (Sept. 13th).


Week III. Micro-Foundations (Sept. 20th).


Note: Please be familiar with the basic logic of collective action at least to the level of Olson (1965); if not, review Mancur Olson. The Logic of Collective Action, Chs. 1, 2, and 6. There are also a variety of other works in this tradition as well to which I would be happy to provide citations. Here are three recent reviews of collective action theory:


Week IV. Lobbying: Who Lobbies—Part I (Sept. 27th).


Note: On measures of group ideology, see:


For a broad modeling exercise, see:

Week V. Lobbying: Purpose and Strategies (Oct. 4th)


Week VI: Lobbying—Coalitions and Venue Selections (Oct. 11th)


Week VII: Impacts of Lobbying (Oct. 18th)


Week VIII. Personnel: The Revolving Door (Oct. 25th)


Week IX. Political Contributions—Motivations for Giving (Nov. 1st)


Week X. Political Contributions—Impacts (Nov. 8th)


Weeks XI-XII. Lobbying the Courts and Bureaucracy. (Nov. 15th – 29th).


No Class December 6th
Week XIII. Private Politics and Student Presentations (Dec. 13th).


Some Overview Pieces on Interest Groups (for your files):

