

# **PSCI 4396: Money and Politics**

## **Course Information**

PSCI 4396  
Section 4396-003  
Fall 2014  
MW 10:00am-11:15am, JSOM 1.214

## **Contact Information**

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Hours: W 1pm-2pm, F 1pm-3pm, and by appointment

## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the role of money in the political processes in the United States. Topics include campaign finance law, lobbying and interest groups, campaign contributions and financing, earmarks, and others.

The importance of money in politics cannot be overstated - it is part of every facet of the political interactions. As citizens and voters you should be able to identify these interactions and their legal bases. Being informed with regards to these topics will help you make important political choices.

## **Student Learning Objectives**

On completing this core curriculum course, students will be able to:

- critically evaluate the role of money in politics on both state and federal level.
- analyze the current legal basis of campaign financing and lobbying, as well as its historical background.
- appreciate the complexity of the interactions and their effects on the citizens and voters.

## **Required texts and materials**

The following book will be the main text for this course:

Lowenstein et al. 2010. *Election Law: Cases And Materials*. 5th edition. Carolina Academic Press.

You do not need to buy this book - copies of the relevant chapters will be provided. If you decide to buy it, it is offered by a number of online retailers.

You should read carefully the material at least once before class - there will be extensive discussions and the second part of the course will be mostly seminar style, thus you are expected to participate actively.

## **Grading and Course Policies**

### **Grading**

There are **FOUR** major graded components to this course:

1. **Exam** (25% of final grade).
2. **Critical analysis short assignments** (25% of final grade).
3. **Class participation** (25% of final grade).
4. **Research Paper** (25% of final grade).

Note the grading criteria and plan accordingly for your success.

Grades are based on the standard grading scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, etc., with pluses / minuses at my discretion and based on class performance.

If you have any questions about your grade on an assignment, please wait until 24 hours after receiving your assignment before discussing the grade.

### **Exam**

Following the first month of lectures, on October 1, you will be given an exam that will test your knowledge and understanding of the material that was covered. The exam will be in-class and I will provide more information on it as the semester progresses. The exam will be the main portion of your midterm grade, so I advise you to do your readings regularly, this will help with your preparation for the exam.

### **Critical Analysis Short Assignments**

Each week, in the second part of the class (after the exam on October 1), two or three students (depending on enrollment) will be responsible for providing a critical perspective of the week's readings to the rest of the class and preparing some questions for discussion. These are not formal presentations, but exercises in stimulating thoughtful discussion. Plan to spend about 15 minutes in class discussing each reading. Keep your presentation short and concise. Just give us the essentials.

You will be required to submit by email a short discussion memo at least 24 hours prior to the class meeting. Late memos will incur a penalty. Your memo must contain two components:

1. Brief critical summaries of your chosen reading, wherein you answer the following questions: (1) What is the key claim or thesis? (2) Why do the authors think their claims are correct, i.e., what causal explanations and supporting logic do they provide? (3) Does the empirical evidence support the claim? (4) Are the author's claims logical or coherent, are they convincing? (5) Is the theory relevant to real-world politics? Does it solve real-world problems? (6) How good is the robustness of the article to the arguments and findings of other readings?

- Summaries must not exceed two pages per article or chapter. Feel free to use whichever spacing you wish, but please use a standard 10-12pt font.
- Avoid superficial summaries that gloss over the readings. A good summary should instead distill an article down to its most essential claims and unpack the logic of the supporting arguments. When writing a memo, it is your responsibility to make sense of the readings for your fellow students.

2. One or more questions to motivate seminar discussion. These should be questions that lend themselves to discussion rather than, e.g., questions of clarification. Please take these questions seriously, as we will devote class time to discussing them.

Students should expect to write two memos during the semester, though that number may change depending on enrollment. The memos collectively account for 25% of your grade. Memo grades are determined primarily by the quality of your summary. However, your in-class introduction to the reading(s) and your discussion question(s) will also affect your memo grade. If needed, I will post additional guidelines for the reading memos to our class eLearning page.

For those class meetings when you are not writing a memo (i.e., the majority of the meetings), you are responsible for thinking about their discussion questions, and preparing to contribute to the discussion.

## eLearning

You will post your discussion questions on eLearning at least 24 hours before the class so your classmates will see them and have time to prepare for the in-class discussion.

## Participation

The first part of the course (up until the exam on October 1) will mainly consist of lectures. The second part will combine lectures and seminar style discussions, where the students will present their critical analysis of the readings and

their discussion questions. Student participation is essential, more so in the second part of the course. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings in depth even if you are not presenting your assignment. In addition to the assigned readings, you should plan to read the student discussion questions each week (see above). My expectation is that every student will regularly contribute to the discussion (quality always trumps quantity). If you are uncomfortable with extemporaneous discussion, I recommend preparing some comments and thoughts ahead of time. Attendance is mandatory, and any unexcused absences will substantially lower your grade.

## Research Paper

The biggest portion of your final grade is a take-home research paper, due in-class during the last lecture. The topic of the research paper will be chosen by you following a prior discussion with the instructor. I will provide more information on this assignment as the semester progresses. Your research paper should be no less than ten pages and no more than twelve pages, double spaced and with a standard 12pt font. Late papers incur a 10% penalty per day.

There will be class time allocated to a discussion on how to write a research paper and what structure the paper should follow. Furthermore, I encourage the students to submit drafts or portions of their papers prior to the due date for feedback, which can greatly improve the final versions of their papers.

## Attendance

Class attendance is required. I will take attendance throughout the term. You are responsible for any announcements made or information given during class.

## University Policies

University course-related policies about e-mail, course withdrawals, grievance procedures, incomplete grades, disability services, and holiday policies are at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

## Course conduct and expectations

1. Note that this syllabus is not a contract. It is subject to change at my discretion. While we may be studying political science, this class is not a democracy.
2. Grade disputes must follow university policies about how to contest a grade. If you contact me to contest a grade I will immediately refer you to the University policy and will follow it to the letter.
3. *You are expected to be pro-active in anticipating and planning for any absences or problems you will have in completing course work.* Make arrangements for possibly missed work prior to the due date is preferable and more likely to be successful than doing it after the due date. Plan for absences and missed work accordingly.

## Course Calendar

The dates listed for each topic are approximate and will depend on how quickly we move through material. You should read the material for each date *before* class. Also note that you will need to check eLearning periodically for updates and announcements. Readings are listed under the lecture topics below.

- 25 August: Introduction
- 27 August: CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW  
The Buckley Framework – Lowenstein et al. Ch 12
- 1 September: **Labor Day — NO CLASS**
- 3 September: Spending Limits after Buckley – Lowenstein et al. Ch 13
- 8 September: Spending Limits after Buckley – Lowenstein et al. Ch 13
- 10 September: Contribution Limits – Lowenstein et al. Ch 14
- 15 September: Citizens United – Lowenstein et al. Ch 14
- 17 September: Public Financing – Lowenstein et al. Ch 15
- 22 September: Public Financing – Lowenstein et al. Ch 15
- 24 September: Campaign Finance Disclosure – Lowenstein et al. Ch 16
- 29 September: Campaign Finance Disclosure – Lowenstein et al. Ch 16
- 1 October: **EXAM**
- 6 October: Frontline – “Big Sky, Big Money”
- 8 October: CAMPAIGN SPENDING AND WAR CHESTS  
Green, Donald Philip, and Jonathan S. Krasno. 1988. “Salvation for the Spendthrift Incumbent: Reestimating the Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 884-907.
- 13 October: Jacobson, Gary C. 1990. “The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 34: 334-362.
- 15 October: Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M. 1996. “A Dynamic Analysis of the Role of War Chests in Campaign Strategy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 352-371.
- Midterm grades due**
- 20 October: Gimpel, James G., Frances E. Lee, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. 2008. “The Check Is in the Mail: Interdistrict Funding Flows in Congressional Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52 373-394.
- 22 October: Research Session
- 27 October: VOTE BUYING, INFORMATION EXCHANGE OR SOMETHING ELSE?  
Baron, David P. 1989. “Service-induced campaign contributions and the electoral equilibrium.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 104(1):45.
- 29 October: Brunell, Thomas L. 2005. “The relationship between political parties and interest groups: Explaining patterns of PAC contributions to candidates for Congress.” *Political Research Quarterly* 58(4): 681-688.
- 3 November: Snyder, James M. 1989. “Election goals and the allocation of campaign resources.” *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, Vol. 57, No. 3: pp. 637-660
- 5 November: Ainsworth, Scott and Itai Sened. 1993. “The Role of Lobbyists: Entrepreneurs with Two Audiences.” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 3: 834-866.

- 10 November: Hall, Richard L. and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100, No. 1: 69-84.
- 12 November: EARMARKS  
Lazarus, Jeffrey. 2010. "Giving the People What They Want? The Distribution of Earmarks in the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Journal of Political Science*, 54: 338353.
- 17 November: Research Session
- 19 November: No Class
- 24-30 November: **Fall Break/Thanksgiving**
- 1 December: WHOM TO LOBBY – SUPPORTERS OR OPPONENTS?  
Austen-Smith, David and John R. Wright. 1994. "Counteractive Lobbying." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 1: 25-44.
- 3 December: Hojnacki, Marie and David C. Kimball. 1998. "Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 4: 775-790.
- 8 December: CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES OR THE FLOOR  
Hall, Richard and Frank Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3, pp. 797-820.
- 10 December: **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.