Overview and Objectives

This course is a research seminar in political economy of special interests. Interest groups lie at the heart of politics and democratic process. Understanding why groups are organized and how they influence various public policies is critical to our understanding of political representation. This course examines the ways that citizens, firms, institutions, various types of governments attempt to make their voices heard in elections and public policy making processes both in the United States and other countries.

Requirements:

1. Participation (30%) Class participation is essential in this seminar. You must come prepared and discuss the readings for each week. Students are expected to submit a weekly memo that summarizes (i) question, (ii) data and method, (iii) argument, and (iv) includes at least one question for each assigned reading, before the class (by Wednesday 11:59 pm). No more than 2-pages (double-space, 12 point). You do not need to submit a memo in a week when you submit a referee report.

2. Referee Review Essays (30%) Students need to write two referee review essays. Students can choose two topics for reviews based on their research interests. However, first review essay should be submitted before we cover Topic 8. The length is 3~5 pages (double spaced).

3. On-page Proposal (5%): In this proposal, include either a figure (i.e., scatterplot, histogram, map, cartoon) or simple statistics or tables that clearly present your puzzle. State your research question clearly. Due: October 26th.

4. Final Paper (35%) A final paper can be either a research paper or a proposal that describes a research project that should identify a specific question or puzzle, discuss how you answer that question, lay out the necessary steps of the projects, and suggest how this project would advance the literature. In the last class (December 14th) students will present their paper. Final paper due is December 21st (Thursday), 5 pm.
Topics:

1. Introduction and Overview (9/7)

2. Theories of Special Interests (9/14)


3. Political Connections and Returns to Office (9/21)


4. Government Procurement (9/28)


5. Lobbying on Foreign Policy (10/5)


6. Globalization and Interest Groups (10/12)


7. **Knowledge Production (10/19)**


** October 26: Due for One-Page Proposal for Final Project **

8. **Campaign Contributions I: Motivations (10/26)**


9. **Campaign Contributions II: Outcomes (11/2)**


10. **The *Citizens United* and New Campaign Finance (11/9)**


11. Lobbying I: Mechanisms (11/16)


** No Class on November 23: Thanksgiving Holiday **

12. Lobbying II: Policy Outcomes (11/30)


13. Government as Interest Groups (12/7)


14. Student Presentation (12/14)