

POLS 2043

**PRESSURE GROUPS AND POLITICAL
LOBBYING**

**2007
Semester One**

COURSE GUIDE

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PRESSURE GROUPS AND POLITICAL LOBBYING

COURSE CONTENT

This course looks at pressure groups and political lobbying with an emphasis on Australian public policy. The context is contemporary Australian politics and the policy process.

The course addresses the role of both so-called sectional and/or producer groups, such as business associations and trade unions, and so-called promotional and/or issue groups, such as the environmental and women's lobbies. It also addresses other groups and institutions, such as churches, corporations, and professional associations.

The course addresses differing styles of interaction between groups and governments, such as consultative strategies, political lobbying, public opinion management and direct action. Groups have choices and some use a full range of strategies. Governments have their own strategies and can encourage, coopt and undercut groups.

Special attention is given to political lobbying and the lobbying "industry" here in Canberra. Lobbying is studied from various perspectives: its legitimacy; its techniques; its practitioners; its place in the political process; its regulation; and its impact on public policy.

The list of tutorial topics indicates the way the course will unfold. We will examine a large number of case studies.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The premise of the course is that pressure groups are important political actors and therefore worth studying. As the object of a university course they are also somewhat unusual in that students in the course may be members or affiliates of interest groups. This brings a rich vein of political experience into the course.

The aim of the course is to understand pressure groups and political lobbying as part of the political process of a liberal democracy. This involves understanding both the detail of groups and lobbyists and also their broader role in society and politics.

These activities are well reported in the media. One objective of the course is to be able to understand this reportage and to place this reporting in its political context.

This course aims at relatively disinterested analysis and strives for balanced assessments. However, students will have positive and negative views of certain groups and disagree about the ethics of lobbying. I'll be delighted if this enlivens our discussions.

COURSE READING

The textbook for this course is **Lobbying in Australia** by Julian Fitzgerald (Rosenberg, 2006), available from the Co-Op Bookshop. There is also a large **Reading Brick** of critical readings and reports, including some of my own chapters and articles. All of the required reading for tutorials is contained in these two sources. I strongly recommend you purchase copies for yourself. You will find that we will use them constantly and they will be of great use too for your assignments. Treat them as a rich source of material that you can mine on a regular basis.

COURSE SCHEDULE

There will be two 50 minute lectures and one 50 minute tutorial per week. There will be thirteen weeks of lectures. There will be ten weeks of tutorials (**no tutorials in week 1, week 7 or week 13**). There will be individual consultation in **weeks 7 and 13**.

Lectures will be given on Mondays at 3 .00 pm and Thursdays at 3 .00 pm in COP G031. A lecture outline will be distributed at each lecture. Lectures will be recorded.

The course guide and the lecture outlines as they become available will be posted on the course web site.

There will be a choice of tutorial times **depending on student numbers** on Mondays (4.00pm), Tuesdays (9.00am and 4.00pm), Wednesdays (9.00am and 12.00pm) and Thursdays (4.00pm). Each student is expected to attend one tutorial per week. There will be marks for attendance and participation.

TIMETABLE

First lecture: Monday 19 February

First Tutorials: Week of Monday 26 February

First Assignment: Essay due on either Thursday 5 April OR Monday 23 April

Term Break: Monday 9 April until Friday 20 April

Week 7: No Tutorials, 2-5 April

Week 13: No Tutorials, 28 May-1 June

Examination Period: 9-25 June

Optional Second Essay: Due before the Examination period begins

PROPOSED ASSESSMENT

The final form of assessment will be discussed in class. I believe that students should be assessed in a variety of ways so that different skills and aptitudes are rewarded. I propose the following scheme.

A. One 2,500 word essay (50%).

The essay questions are included in this course guide. The essays are due either on **Thursday April 5 OR Monday April 23. There are separate questions for each date.** **Late essays** will be penalised unless prior permission has been obtained for an extension of time to submit. Permission must be requested in writing on the official form. The **penalty is two percentage points** subtracted from the assessed mark for the essay for each calendar day (or part thereof) by which the essay is overdue.

B. One end-of-semester examination (45%).

The 90 minute exam will comprise ten unseen questions from which two are to be answered. The questions will test a student's general knowledge of the course.

3. Tutorial Participation (5%).

Participation will be measured according to: (a) Attendance. Attendance at tutorials should be regarded as an obligation; (b) Participation in discussion. Students are expected to show evidence of having read and understood the required reading and will be asked to introduce discussion on one occasion.

4. Options

A second essay may be submitted in lieu of the examination. It must be submitted prior to the examination (date to be determined). A second set of essay questions will be distributed at the beginning of May.

Please take notice of University Guidelines on Non-Sexist Language and the Faculty Policy on Plagiarism and Associated Problems. Assistance for Disabled Students will be made available as required.

The Marking Scale is, as follows: 80%+=High Distinction; 70-79%=Distinction; 60-69%=Credit; 50-59%=Pass; 49% or less =Fail.

FIRST ESSAY QUESTIONS

OPTION 1 (Due April 5)

- 1. “Far from being opposed to lobbyists’ attempts to influence policy and legislation, the Commonwealth Public Service and Government welcome the activities of lobbyists” (Fitzgerald, 16). Is this true? If so, why is it true?**
- 2. In comparing the relationships between the Hawke-Keating and the Howard governments and pressure groups and lobbyists are the similarities more important than the differences?**
- 3. Write a critical review of the Australia Institute discussion paper, “Silencing Dissent” and associated publications. What are the most significant issues?**
- 4. Critically analyse the Client Solutions 2006 Survey of Politicians’ Lobbying Preferences. What are its most significant themes?**

OPTION 2 (Due April 23)

- 1. Critically analyse the strategy and tactics of either the business community or the labour movement towards the Howard government’s industrial relations reforms (WorkChoices).**
- 2. Write critical profiles of the composition, lobbying strategies, skills and impact of any two of the following: the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Social Service, the Women’s Electoral Lobby, or Catholic Health Australia.**
- 3. To what extent have the activities of pressure groups and commercial lobbyists contributed to the decline in confidence in the ethics of public policy?**
- 4. Is Ian Marsh’s distinction between interest groups and issue movements helpful conceptually? Do Marsh’s groups and movements approach their intervention in public policy making differently**

TUTORIAL TOPICS

NO TUTORIALS IN WEEK ONE

Week Two (February 26)

Getting Started: Scanning the Issues

Required Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, Lobbying in Australia, Introduction

Discussion Starters:

“Lobbying-often undetected and unreported-has become an increasingly important part of the political process in the national capital. Long before bills reach the Parliament, lobbyists have been active in the defence and advancement of their clients interests. They do this both formally and informally, meeting senior public servants, departmental secretaries, ministerial advisers, Senators and members, parliamentary secretaries, ministers and, if they have enough clout, the Prime Minister himself”.

K. Nicholas, “Frantic Jockeying for the Telstra Tart”, **Australian Financial Review**, January 22-23 2005, **READING BRICK 1**

Discussion Starters:

“The kowtowing has been furious, the schmoozing elaborate and the networking extensive”.

“So, the romancing has been a long sweaty business. As such, making a prominent appearance at important Liberal Party functions has been mandatory”.

Election Materials, Federal and ACT Elections, October 2004, **READING BRICK 2**

Discussion Starters:

“Vote for the candidates and parties which offer a better Australia for all of us. This is WEL’s guide to the policies”.

“The Church does not tell us for whom to vote, nor does it endorse any political party”.

“The Howard government does not deserve your vote” (ANTAR).

“Our campaigns in individual seats, supporting pro-life members or opposing pro-abortion members, were mostly successful” (RTLA).

A.MacGregor, “Community despite Geography”, **Griffith Review**, Summer 2004-2005, **READING BRICK 3**

Discussion Starters:

“Big trees grow from small seeds”.

“Organising and mobilising people in the virtual diaspora community presents its own complexities. There’s no instruction manual”.

Committee Bulletin, 2006 Survey of Politicians’ Lobbying Preferences, Executive Summary, **READING BRICK 4**

Discussion Starters:

“There was broad support among politicians for an increased organisation of lobbyists with 74% of respondents supporting the idea of a Register of Lobbyists, although 26% of parliamentarians stated that there was no need of this”

Week Three (March 5)

Patterns and Examples of Australian Pressure Groups

Required Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, **Lobbying in Australia**, Chs 1-7

Discussion Starters:

“There are hundreds of lobby groups in Australia ranging from powerful, well-resourced groups to small volunteer community organisations. In Canberra alone, there are over 150 lobby groups and specialised lobbying consultants, all seeking the ear of government. The industry has an income of over \$1 billion a year”.

J. Warhurst, “Interest Groups and Political Lobbying”, in A. Parkin, J. Summers and D. Woodward (eds), **Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia**, 8th ed., Pearson Education Australia, Ch. 17 **READING BRICK 5**

Discussion Starters:

“Citizens continue to put their trust in groups as the most practical way to try to exert an influence beyond either periodic voting in elections, individual effort, or joining a political party. Yet it must be acknowledged that organisations do not speak with equal voices and that some parts of society are not represented by organisations at all. This unevenness is both a cause and a reflection of the unequal distribution of power within Australian society”

I.Marsh, “A Pluralised Polity?” The Rise of Interest Groups and Issue Movements”, in **Beyond the Two Party System**, Cambridge University Press, 1995, Ch. 2, **READING BRICK 6**

Discussion Starters:

“Interest groups represent one mode of organised political representation. Their emergence was an unintended consequence of ‘top-down’ pressures or stimulus. A second, autonomous, ‘bottom-up’ development of political organisations has occurred with the emergence of issue movements or new social movements”.

J. Warhurst, “The Australian Conservation Foundation”, **Environmental Politics**, 3 (1), Spring 1994, pp. 68-76 [first half of the article], **READING BRICK 7**

Discussion Starters:

“The ACF is part of two traditions: popularising and professionalising on the one hand, and new and old politics on the other”.

“The environmental movement, unlike many other Australian movements, has no single peak association to represent it negotiations with government”.

Week Four (March 12)

The Lobbying Industry

Required Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, **Lobbying in Australia**, Chs 1-6

Discussion Starters:

“Just about every interest group able to do so finances an individual or company to keep an eye on the government’s legislative proposals and determine whether these have a

beneficial or adverse impact on them. But lobbying is more than reactive; it is also proactive”.

“An example of a professional lobby group would be Client Solutions, who offer to provide health advocacy for clients. Client Solutions is a comprehensive communications consultancy, specialising in public affairs and government relations”.

C.Lloyd, “Political Lobbying: Dynamite or Gentle Persuasion?”, in P. Cullen, **No is Not an Answer: Lobbying for Success**, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991, **READING BRICK 8**

Discussion Starters:

“Although perhaps not the oldest profession, the art or craft of political lobbying is as old as the practice of government itself”.

“...effective lobbying depends on a strong research and information base”.

“Increasingly, the integrated public relations firm providing information, lobbying and PR services has become the norm of independent lobbying, partly displacing the solo operators who were pre-eminent in shaping the craft from the late 1960s”.

M.Darke, “Lobbying by Law Firms”, **Australian Journal of Public Administration**, 56 (4), December 1997, pp. 32-46, **READING BRICK 9**

Discussion Starters:

“...lobbying may ultimately become the main role of lawyers in Canberra”.

“There are three particularly noticeable features of law firm lobbyists. First, they prefer administrative over political lobbying. Second, they have access to a considerable array of specialist knowledge on law and policy in areas of government activity affecting business interests. Third, certain technical skills that lawyers possess are useful in the lobbying process”.

Week Five (March 19)

Groups and Trade Unions in the Hawke Era: Pluralist and Neo-Pluralist Theories

Required Reading:

T. Moore, "Hawke's Big Tent: Elite Pluralism and the Politics of Inclusion", in S. Ryan and T. Bramston (eds), **The Hawke Government**, Pluto Press, 2003, pp. 112-127, **READING BRICK 10**

Discussion Starters:

"Over time, Labor's elite pluralism suffered from a naïve faith in state bureaucracy, entrapment by neo-liberal economic orthodoxy, tendencies to elitism and the co-option of leaderships, the alienation of grass roots members and the exclusion of people who did not identify with a special interest".

D. Peetz, **Unions in a Contrary World**, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 8, **READING BRICK 11**

Discussion Starters:

"Why the decline in union membership?"

"Why has the decline been so severe in Australia compared with other countries?"

"Is there a future for unions in Australia?"

Week Six (March 26)

Contemporary Debates about Democracy: Groups under the Howard government

Required Reading:

S. Maddison and R. Dennis, "Democratic Constraint and Embrace: Implications for Progressive Non-Government Advocacy Organisations in Australia", **Australian Journal of Political Science**, 40 (3), September, 2005, pp. 373-389. **READING BRICK 12**

Discussion Starters:

"At present, the democratic functions that NGOs perform, including their contributions to policy debates, remain significantly undervalued"

"Indeed, many advocacy NGOs feel that they are much less able to speak freely and openly than they were prior to 1996"

J.Warhurst, J.Brown and R.Higgins, "Tax Groupings: The Group Politics of Taxation Reform", in M.Simms and J.Warhurst (eds), **Howard's Agenda**, University of Queensland Press, 2000, Ch. 21, **READING BRICK 13**

Discussion Starters:

"There were two types of group intervention. The most significant involved the broad parameters of the issue: whether there ought to be tax reform and, if so, what the characteristics of the new system should be. The second was more narrowly self-interested and involved which goods and services would be included in/excluded from the government's proposed GST if it went ahead".

P.Mendes, "Protecting the Safety Net: A Case Study of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and the Welfare Reform Debate 1999-2003", **Journal of Economic and Social Policy**, 8 (2), Winter 2004, pp. 25-40, **READING BRICK 14**

Discussion Starters:

"...the government has, under the influence of public choice theory, actively sought at times to exclude and marginalise ACOSS".

"ACOSS attempted to redirect the Howard government's welfare agenda away from a narrow emphasis on work incentives and labour market participation towards a broader emphasis on the adequacy of income security payments and other opportunities and supports".

NO TUTORIALS IN WEEK SEVEN

Week Eight (April 23)

More on Corporatism, Lobbying and Partnerships under Labor

Required Reading:

D. Altman, "Representation, Public Policy and AIDS", in M.Sawer and G.Zappala (eds), **Speaking for the People: Representation in Australian Politics**, Melbourne University Press, 2001, Ch. 9, **READING BRICK 15**

Discussion Starters:

“As the largest non-government organisations dealing with the epidemic, the AIDS Councils carried the role of ‘representing’ both a larger gay community and those affected by HIV/AIDS, not all of whom were gay. This has been the source of continuing friction, often expressed by women (both straight and gay), who have tended to play a role in the councils far greater than the epidemiology would suggest”.

“The nature of corporate representation is that only those with the energy and resources to work through major organisations will be heard”.

S.Short, “Community Activism in the Health Process”, in A. Yeatman (ed), **Activism and the Policy Process**, Allen and Unwin, 1998, Ch. 6, **READING BRICK 16**

Discussion Starters:

“Whilst the notions of ‘community development’ and ‘community-based management’ were fundamental to the grassroots nature of community participation under the Whitlam government of 1972-75, the notion of ‘consumer consultation’ became increasingly popular in Australia under the Hawke and Keating Labor governments from 1983 onwards”.

D.Downes, “Neo-Corporatism and Environmental Policy”, **Australian Journal of Political Science**, 31 (2), July 1996, pp. 175-190, **READING BRICK 17**

Discussion Starters:

“The ecologically sustainable development (ESD) process represented Australia’s most concerted attempt to form a broad environmental strategy”.

“The extension of the neo-corporatist approach to involve non-economic interest organisation representatives such as those from environmental organisations, sits uncomfortably with many neo-corporatist theorists”.

“The ACF and WWF demonstrated through their involvement in ESD that they are sufficiently professionalised to work effectively in a bureaucratic structure”.

M.Sawer and A. Groves, “The ‘Women’s Lobby’: Networks, Coalition Building and the Women of Middle Australia”, **Australian Journal of Political Science**, 29 (3), November 1994, pp. 434-459, **READING BRICK 18**

Discussion Starters:

“The claims of the women’s lobby to represent the views of the women of Australia depend on a broad coincidence of attitude between feminist policy experts and activists and women with little or no exposure to organised feminism”.

“WEL represented a compromise between the organisational principles of women’s liberation and the requirements of operating as an effective lobby group”.

“Lack of organisational and financial resources might be compensated for by effective coalition-building”.

Week Nine (April 30)

Business Power and Lobbying

Required Reading:

J. Warhurst, “Business-government communication: Power, influence and mundane relationships”, in S. Young (ed), **Government Communication**, Cambridge University Press, 2007, Ch 4. **READING BRICK 19**

Discussion Starters:

“Packer is a useful, though potentially misleading, case study for a discussion of business-government communication. He is useful because both personally a corporately he illustrates some aspects of business intractions with government: personal wealth and close networks together with access to modern tools such as political advisers and lobbyists, as well as obvious commercial interests and the power of his media empire at his disposal. He is misleading because his image is of a stereotypical business leader lording it over government and parliamentary committees, while the truth is much more complex and mundane”.

S. Bell, “The Political Power of Business”, in S. Bell and J. Wanna (eds), **Business-Government Relations in Australia**, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992, Ch. 5, **READING BRICK 20**

Discussion Starters:

“It is possible to question both pluralist and radical theories of business power”.

“Business leaders, then, are powerful but not all-powerful; they do not always win in politics”.

Week Ten (May 7)

Minority Interests, Elite Politics and the Public Interest

Required Reading:

J. Warhurst, "In Defence of Single-Issue Interest Groups", in D. Lovell et al, **The Australian Political System**, Longman, 1995, pp. 317-321, **READING BRICK 21**

Discussion Starters:

"At a time when the parties are faced with static, even declining membership, despite Australia's increasing population, single-issue groups are thriving".

"Single-issue groups encourage democratic participation".

"Those who disagree with their goals attempt to combat them by branding their tactics as illegitimate and undemocratic rather than by political argument about the issues themselves".

D.Marr, "The Spires of St Mary's" in **The High Price of Heaven**, Allen and Unwin, 1999, Ch. 10, **READING BRICK 22**

Discussion Starters:

"Cathedrals are built to remind politicians they're not the only power in town".

"The campaign against the Northern Territory's euthanasia law showed just how powerful the church is when it speaks with a single, clear voice".

Week Eleven (May 14)

Ethics, Corruption and Regulation

Required Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, **Lobbying in Australia**, Chs 7-8

Starting Points:

"Ultimately, the question facing each system is not limiting the access of lobbyists to the government and the legislature, but controlling their influence on policy outcomes, so that the concept of the 'public good' is not undermined in favour of the vested interest,

Here the vision and integrity of the politicians-the people in power-is more important than the aspirations and blandishments of lobbyists”.

S. Tongue, “The Virtues and Vices of Lobbying”, in G.L. Clark et al (eds), **Accountability and Corruption: Public Service Ethics**, Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1997, Ch. 8, **READING BRICK 23**

Discussion Starters:

“A valuable aspect of the lobbying process is that an alternative set of advice can be provided to government from that put forward by public service advisers”.

“In Australia we have an inadequate system for ensuring ethical behaviour by lobbyists”.

J. Warhurst, “Locating the Target: Regulating Lobbying in Australia”, **Parliamentary Affairs**, 51 (4), 1998, pp. 538-550, **READING BRICK 24**

Discussion Starters:

“Australia’s experiment with regulating lobbying and lobbyists has so far been unsuccessful”.

“In Australian public life there is more concern with regulating the lobbied-ministers and bureaucrats-than in regulating the lobbyist”.

“What explains this apparent lack of interest in Australia in the regulation of lobbying”?

Week Twelve (May 21)

Effectiveness: Measuring the Political and Policy Impact of Lobbying

Required Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, **Lobbying in Australia**, Chs 12-13

Discussion Starters:

“Results will not come overnight but are usually the consequence of sustained lobbying and influence over years”.

“Ministers and bureaucrats hate being bombarded by lobby groups who present problems but provide no solutions”.

M.Sawer, "Why has the women's movement had more influence on governments in Australia than elsewhere?", in F. Castles (ed), **Australia Compared: People, Policies and Politics**, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991, Ch. 13, **READING BRICK 25**

Discussion Starters:

"In summary, the Australian women's movement, by working through government, has succeeded in mitigating the retreat from the welfare state characteristic of the English-speaking democracies and continued, with some exceptions, to expand the range of services meeting the needs of women".

T. Matthews, "Interest Groups", in R. Smith (ed), **Politics in Australia**, 3rd ed., 1997, Ch. 16, **READING BRICK 26**

Discussion Starters:

"Any question about interest group influence hides a minefield of methodological difficulties. Each path towards a possible answer has its own risks. All that can be done here is to signpost some of these dangerous paths".

NO LECTURES OR TUTORIAL IN WEEK THIRTEEN (May 28)

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FINAL THOUGHTS

ANU Plagiarism Policy:

<http://arts.anu.edu.au/student_information/current/rules/plagiarism.asp

Books on Short Loan:

- C. Thomas, **Research Guide to US and International Interest Groups**, Westport, Praeger, 2004
- P. Cullen, **No Is Not an Answer** (in course guide) [lobbying]
- A.Yeatman, **Activism and the Policy Process** (in course guide) [general]
- M.Sawer and G.Zappala, **Speaking for the People** (in course guide) [general]
- I.Marsh, **Beyond the Two Party System** (in course guide) [general]
- D.Peetz, **Unions in a Contrary World** (in course guide)

E.Van Acker, **Different Voices** [women]
S.Bell and J.Wanna, **Business-Government Relations in Australia** (in course guide)
T.Doyle, **Green Power**
D.Marr, **The High Price of Heaven** (in course guide) [churches]
B.Head and S.Bell, **State, Economy and Society** [general]
K.Abbott, **Pressure Groups and the Australian Federal Parliament**
P.Sekules, **Lobbying in Canberra in the 1990s**
P.Sekules, **The Lobbyists**
D.Hutton and L.Connors, **A History of the Australian Environmental Movement**
“The Regulation of Lobbying”, **Parliamentary Affairs**, 51 (4), 1998
J.Jupp and M.Kabala, **The Politics of Australian Immigration**
T.Connors, **To Speak with One Voice** [National Farmers Federation]
M.Maddox, **For God and Country** [religion]
J.Warhurst and M.Mackerras, **Constitutional Politics** [republic]
Committee Bulletin, **2006 Survey of Politicians’ Lobbying Preferences**
S.Maddison and S.Scalmer, **Activist Wisdom**
S. Maddison, R. Dennis and C. Hamilton, **Silencing Dissent**

Introductory Reading:

J. Fitzgerald, **Lobbying in Australia**,

Reading Brick: Nos 5 and 26 [each of these is a general introduction to interest groups and lobbying]

John Warhurst
January 25 2007