Central European University  
Department of Public Policy

Political lobbying  
Spring term – 2 DPP credits, 4 ECTS credits  
Alex Fischer

Short description of the course  
For some observers, political lobbying is a euphemism for dubious interactions between big business and corrupt politicians. Others believe that lobbying is an essential component of a lively representative democracy. In any case, more resources are invested every year in the management of relations between various organizations and political decision-makers. In recent years, the NGO sector, too, has started to professionalize its relationships with the political world. Similarly, there is a growing literature on how academics can diffuse their research and impact on a policy process by approaching decision-makers.

The aim of this course is to introduce students to practices and theories of political lobbying. It discusses how interests and ideas are organized in different political systems and what kind of exchange takes place between interest groups and decision-makers. It addresses the issue of legitimacy and regulatory attempts. A large part of the course is devoted to the practical features of a lobbying process: How can a lobbying process be organized, which methods allow for identifying target groups and relevant intervention points and which lobbying instruments are useful under which circumstances?

This course is designed for students who would like to combine theoretical insights into public policy and methodological tools with their own mission to change a specific public policy or to further the political goals of a particular organization. Teamwork will help to understand the concepts in a practical context. Both in class and in a paper, the students will be asked to apply the discussed tools on a case of their own choice.

Readings for the Course  
An electronic reader will be compiled for the course. It includes a range of book chapters and journal articles that will represent the main source of reading for the course. Those interested in purchasing a text that complements the reader should consider the following:


Choices for students

Students may take this course either for credit or for audit. If you take the course for audit, you should be present at least at 10 out of the 12 sessions. Absences should be notified in advance. If you have good reasons that you have to miss more than two classes, we may negotiate an extra-work to make it up.

The same condition applies if you want to take the course for credit. In addition to your regular and active participation, you should give a presentation (or be responsible for a short practical interaction) and write a short paper (or two short written tasks) at the end of the course.

Course assessment

The Assessment will be broken down in the following manner:

- 25% participation;
- 25% presentation and/or short practical interactions
- 50% paper or 2 short written tasks

The structure of the program in detail

April 2, Part I: Introduction: a brief guide to the maze

- Definition of lobbying, advocacy and related terms
- Importance and relevance of lobbying
- Different lobbying cultures (e.g. US versus Europe, local, national versus international level)
- Program of the course and course requirements

Further readings:


L’HEBDO, 10.03.2005 : Les lobbies plus puissants - Comment on achète les parlementaires, downloadable at http://www.public-affairs.ch/hebdo_050310.pdf


April 2, Part II: Interest group organization: Insights from political science and economics

- Different typologies (pluralism, corporatism, clientelism etc)
- Olson and his critics

Required readings:


Further readings:


April 2, Part 3: The lobbying process
- Monitoring
- Evaluation
- Lobbying in the narrow sense

Required readings:

Further readings:


April 3, Part I: The exchange model of lobbying
- What does a lobbyist want from the decision-maker and what does the decision-maker want from the lobbyist?
- Discussion of exchange „goods“ (such as information, legitimacy, electoral support etc)
- Discussion of a formal network exchange model

Presentation:


Further readings:
April 3, Part II: The policy cycle and intervention points for lobbyists

- How to identify the different intervention points
- What can be expected from each step in the cycle
- When to lobby

Presentation:

Further readings:

April 3, Part III: Evaluation of different lobbying instruments

- Direct lobbying (oral and written)
- Indirect lobbying (via surroundings of the target person, opinion leaders, experts and the media)

Presentation:

Further readings:

April 4, Part I: Ethical and regulatory issues: the normative dimension of lobbying

- Lobbying and democratic theory in representative democracies
- Comparison of existing regulatory approaches
• Role game on different normative positions

Presentations:
http://archive.corporateeurope.org/lobbycracy/BulldozingREACH.html
http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/toxic-lobby-how-the-chemical.pdf

Further readings:
Mc Grath, Conor (2005): Lobbying in Washington, London and Brussels, Lewiston, Section 5.1 and 5.5.

April 4, Part II: Target audience
• Methods to identify decision-makers (e.g. stake holder analysis, network analysis etc)
• How to select the „right“ target audience

Presentation:

Further readings:

April 4, Part III: Case studies on environmental lobbying
• How to deal with Olson’s problem
• The role of alliances

Presentation:


**Further readings:**


**April 5, short Part I: Lobbying and the media**

- How to use the media to influence decision-makers
- Conflict of goals between communication officers and lobbyists

**Presentation:**


**April 5, short Part II: Who should lobby?**

- What makes a good lobbyist?
- Inner-organizational division of labor between top-management, issue managers, lobbyists and communications officers
- Decision of the type „make or buy“
- How to form coalitions
- Organigrams and position of lobbyists

**Presentation:**


**Further readings:**


**April 5, Part III: Lobbying the European Union**

- How the developments of a supranational body impact on lobbying opportunities

**Presentation:**


**April 6, Part I: Tobacco case studies: industry versus public health**

- Strategies on both sides?
- Determinants of the outcomes?
**Presentation on the EU case:**

**Presentation on the US case:**

**Further readings:**
Knight, Jennifer and Steven Chapman (2004): "A phony way to show sincerity, as we all well know": tobacco industry lobbying against tobacco control in Hong Kong, in: *Tobacco Control* 13 (Suppl 2)): ii13-ii21.

**April 6, Part II: The determinants of lobbying success – final discussion**

**Presentations:**

**Further readings:**