

**Dongseo University**  
**Global Studies Institute**  
**The Business of Politics in the U.S.**  
**2016-2 Semester**

**Instructor:** Jon Steiner  
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**Classroom:** N/A  
**Class Time:** N/A  
**Office Hours:** N/A

**Course Description:**

This course investigates the influence of business in American politics from two angles. The first is the way political campaigns are increasingly being run as businesses. We will see that American political campaigns have taken on many of the functions of a business: general management, financial management, advertising, market research, public relations, and strategic planning. Like any business, a political campaign has a product, in this case the candidate. The second is the influence of business interests on the political system. We will look at how businesses participate in the American political system through the formation of Political Action Committees (PACs), through campaign contributions, independent expenditures, soft money, and lobbying. We will also look at how responsive politicians are to the voice of big business. Ultimately we will look at whether the United States is actually a democracy ruled by the many, or an oligarchy ruled by the few.

**Course Goals & Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this course, the successful (passing) students will be able to...

1. Understand the basics of the American political system at the local, state and national levels.
2. Understand in greater depth the system by which presidential candidates are nominated and presidents elected.
3. Be able to discuss how American political campaigns are structured like businesses.
4. Be able to discuss how American political advertising has changed over time and to describe how it has become similar to other product advertising.
5. Be able to identify the ways in which business interests are able to influence politicians.
6. Be able to clearly explain why he or she thinks the United States is a democracy or an oligarchy.

**Course Outline**

| Week     | Description   |
|----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> Course Introduction: 1. Syllabus, 2. Class Rules, and 3. Introductory Lecture on The Business of Politics in the U.S.  |
|          | <b>2</b> Lecture: American Elections – Basic Information on the American Electoral System (Lecture Notes)   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> Lecture: American Elections – The Participants, Namely the Voters, Candidates, Political Parties, Business Interests, Political Professionals, and Media (Lecture Notes) |
|          | <b>2</b> Lecture: American Elections – State & Local Elections (Lecture Notes)  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>1</b> Lecture: American Elections – Federal Elections (Lecture Notes)  |
|          | <b>2</b> 1. Lecture: American Elections – Presidential Elections (Lecture Notes), 2. Lecture Questions & Discussion (Handout)   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> Case Study: <i>How to Get to 270 Electoral Votes</i> (Handout) to be completed in groups   |
|          | <b>2</b> Article: <i>Six-Figure Jobs</i> (Handout) and Discussion about Politics as a Business and Profession   |
| <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> 1. Lecture: The Business of Political Advertising (Lecture Notes), 2. Lecture Questions & Discussion (Handout)   |
|          | <b>2</b> Videos: <i>Presidential Election Campaign Commercials from the 1950s to the Present</i>  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>1</b> Videos: <i>Presidential Election Campaign Commercials from the 1950s to the Present</i> - continued  |

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|----|---|---|
|    | 2 | Case Study: <i>What Makes a Good Political Commercial</i> (Handout) to be completed in groups                                       |
| 7  | 1 | Lecture: Political Action Committees, or PACs (Lecture Notes)   |
|    | 2 | 1. Lecture: Political Action Committees - continued (Lecture Notes), 2. Lecture Questions & Discussion (Lecture Notes)              |
| 8  | 1 | Mid-Term Exam   |
|    | 2 | Mid-Term Exam   |
| 9  | 1 | 1. Exam Results & Review of Questions, 2. Lecture: Political Contributions (Lecture Notes)  |
|    | 2 | Lecture: Soft Money & Independent Expenditures (Lecture Notes)  |
| 10 | 1 | Lecture Questions & Discussion (Lecture Notes)  |
|    | 2 | Article: <i>Conservative Justices Question Contribution Limits</i> (Handout)  |
| 11 | 1 | Article: <i>Corporations Don't Pony Up for Super PACs</i> (Handout)   |
|    | 2 | Lecture: Lobbying (Lecture Notes)   |
| 12 | 1 | Lecture: Lobbying – continued (Lecture Notes)   |
|    | 2 | 1. Lecture Questions & Discussion (Lecture Notes), 2. Case Study: <i>Four Cases on Lobbying</i> (Handout) to be completed in groups |
| 13 | 1 | Lecture: The Investment Theory of Party Competition (Lecture Notes and the Recommended Textbook)                                    |
|    | 2 | Lecture Questions & Discussion (Lecture Notes)  |
| 14 | 1 | Lecture: The Investment Through History (Lecture Notes and the Recommended Textbook)  |
|    | 2 | Lecture Questions & Discussion (Lecture Notes)  |
| 15 | 1 | Make-Up Class (if necessary)  |
|    | 2 | Make-Up Class (if necessary)  |
| 16 | 1 | Final Exam Week   |
|    | 2 | Final Exam Week   |

### Textbook

- Recommended: Thomas Ferguson, *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Party Competition and the Logic of Money-Driven Political Systems* (1995; The University of Chicago Press) ISBN 978-0226243177.

**Class Website:** [eclass.dongseo.ac.kr](http://eclass.dongseo.ac.kr)

### Course Assignments & Grading:

- *Exams:* There will be a mid-term exam given in week 8 and a final exam given in during the final exam week (week 16). Each of these exams will account for 35% of the final grade, for a total of 70%.
- *Articles, Lecture Questions and Class Participation:* In this course, we will be discussing both a number of articles and questions related to the lectures. Students will be expected to read the assigned articles before class and be prepared to discuss these articles both in groups and as a class. Students will also be expected to discuss the questions about the lectures in groups and as a class. This class participation will account for 20% of the final grade.
- *Attendance:* Attendance will account for 10% of the final grade.

### Grading Policies:

- *Make-Up Tests:* There will be no make-up tests. Students must take the mid-term and final exams when these tests are given or receive a grade of zero for the test.
- *Contesting Grades:* Students have a right to contest grades during a one-week period after the grades are entered into the e-Class system. After this period, students may not contest grades.

**Course Policies:**

- *Attendance:* Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences may be excused if the student is absent for a good reason (such as illness, a job interview, or army service) and has a written and signed note explaining the absence.
- *Academic Misconduct Policy:* If a student is found to be cheating on a test, the test paper will be taken away and the student will receive a grade of zero for the test.