

Course Syllabus
PSC 401C: Money in U.S. Politics

Fall 2019

Class Time: Tue, Thu 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Class Location: HOS 384

Professor: Kenneth Miller

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Office: WRI-A 208

Office Hours:

Tue, Thu 9:45 AM – 11:15 AM

and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

A common view among the American public is that money plays too large a role in our politics. Politicians frequently decry interest group influence, PAC money, or the effect of Wall Street in Washington. But what does the empirical evidence say about these issues? What does the Constitution have to say about the regulation of money in our system? This course is designed to have students think critically about how, when, and why money might influence the policy outcomes we see in the United States. While it is easy to assume money has major influence, finding/proving that money matters in a systematic way has been more difficult, and there are major debates in the political science literature about the effect of money in politics. In this course, we will directly engage in these debates. The course is designed to give students a deeper understanding of the laws and regulations on money in our political process, and the effects of those laws and regulations. Students will be required to think critically about the links between money and behavior, the (perhaps tenuous) connection between money and policy, and the role of special interests in American government.

In this course students will meet the following learning objectives:

1. Understand how the laws governing political contributions and spending in U.S. federal elections have evolved
2. Understand the consequences of these laws on political discourse and policymaking
3. Write an evidence-based paper drawing on a combination of government documents, campaign finance records, and published scholarly research.

Course Format

The course will be a balance of lecture and discussion. Many of the readings in this course will be challenging – we will read original court opinions as well as original scholarship. Feel free to ask questions when things are unclear, or if you would like more information on a subject. It will be a good idea to try to stay aware of current political news. I might bring up current events for discussion in class if things occur that relate to the course.

Attendance

The lectures parallel but do not repeat the readings and discussion of the readings is an important part of this course, so not attending class is a bad idea. Furthermore, in-class quizzes and polls (see below) cannot be made up, so not attending class carries the risk of losing points.

Evaluation

There will be three components to the overall course grade: a research paper worth 40%, two short exams worth 40% (20% each), and a quiz and poll component worth 20% in total. There is no extra credit in the course.

Research paper: 40%

The main project in this course is an original paper tackling an aspect of money in politics. For this project you can choose to write one of three different types of paper:

1. Propose a specific reform to campaign finance or lobbying law in the form of a bill for consideration by Congress accompanied by a defense of your proposal that describes: 1) the intended objective of the law, 2) the likely response by the relevant actors to this legal change and thus the effects of the law, 3) the law's prospects for surviving legal challenge in the courts. Your defense of the proposed bill should draw upon scholarly studies and empirical data on how money functions in the American political system.
2. Conduct an empirical analysis. Develop a theory and hypothesis to explain some phenomenon of money in politics in the United States. For this paper you should build your argument using scholarly research on your topic and conduct an original analysis using available data to test your hypothesis (I can assist with acquiring some datasets).
3. Write an original *amicus curiae*, AKA an amicus brief, for a current or recent case considered by federal courts that applies to money in politics. In this brief advise the court of relevant phenomena and legal arguments that apply to the case. I can provide an example of an amicus brief if you are unsure of the format.

Final research papers must use Times New Roman 12-point font, one-inch margins and should be about 10-12 pages in length, not including tables, figures, and bibliography. All papers should use Chicago/APSA parenthetical citation style (I will provide the APSA style guide on the course Canvas page). Tables and figures should be clean, clear, labeled, and professional in appearance.

Over the course of the semester some building blocks of the paper will be due and will be worth a portion of your grade: paper proposal (5%), working bibliography (5%), and final paper (30%), for a total of 40% of the course grade.

Exams: 20% × 2

There will be two short exams in this course, each worth 20% of your course grade. The first exam will cover the regulatory environment of political contributing and spending, while the second exam will cover the observed effects of money in campaigns and in government.

Quizzes and Polls: 20%

Throughout the semester many classes will include a short quiz or poll. Quizzes will cover the readings due for that class day or material covered in the previous class. Polls are a bit different in that you get credit simply for answering. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes, but the lowest three grades will be dropped. For example, if we had 9 polls and quizzes in the semester and a student has 5 with 5/5, 1 with 3/5, 1 with 2/5, and missed 2 (0/5), then the student drops the two that she missed and the 2/5 score, so the overall grade is counted as: $(5 \times 1) + (1 \times .6) / 6 = 93\%$. You should view the policy of dropping the three lowest three scores as something like an allotment of personal time off and an insurance policy against a bad day or two. Use your three drops judiciously.

Calculating Course Grades:

Overall course grades are assigned according to the following scale:

93.0% - 100%	A	77.0% - 79.9%	C+
90.0% - 92.9%	A-	73.0% - 76.9%	C
87.0% - 89.9%	B+	70.0% - 72.9%	C-
83.0% - 86.9%	B	60.0% - 69.9%	D
80.0% - 82.9%	B-	0% - 59.9%	E

Final course grades are calculated based on a percentage rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. For example, a final score of 92.95 is rounded to 93.0 and is an A, while an 82.91 is rounded to 82.9 and is a B-.

Course Materials

There is one textbook required for this course:

Financing the 2016 Election edited by David Magleby. Brookings Institution

A second book is recommended but is not required:

Campaign Finance: What Everyone Needs to Know by Robert Mutch. Oxford University Press

Readings noted as “Magleby” are from the *Financing the 2016 Election* textbook.

Additional readings will be posted on the course Canvas page. Any additions or subtractions to the reading list will be announced in class prior to that week’s reading.

Course Schedule

Because some topics may run long and some topics may wrap up a little more quickly the precise dates on this schedule are subject to change. If changes to the schedule occur, I will inform everyone in class and online.

8/27: Introduction

Note: no class on Thu. 8/29

The Rules

9/3 and 9/5: Formation and foundations of campaign finance

- Corrado, Anthony. 2004. "A History of Campaign Finance Law" from *A New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*: pp. 1-26
- *Buckley v. Valeo*

9/10 and 9/12: Contemporary rules

- Corrado, Anthony. 2004. "A History of Campaign Finance Law" from *A New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*. pp. 27-42
- Magleby Ch 2 "The Regulatory Environment of 2016"
- *Citizens United v. FEC*
- *Speechnow.org v. FEC*
- *McCutcheon v. FEC*

The Players

9/17: Campaign actors

- Tokaji, Daniel P. and Renata E. B. Strause. 2014. *The New Soft Money*

9/19 and 9/24: Individual donors

- Francia, et. al. 2003. *The Financiers of Congressional Elections: Investors, Ideologues, and Intimates*, Chs 2 and 3

9/26 and 10/1: Interest groups

- Magleby Ch 3 "Interest Groups in 2016"

10/3: EXAM 1

Money in the Campaigns

10/8 and 10/10: Congressional campaigns

- Magleby Ch 6 "Congressional Financing"
- Jacobson, Gary. 1990. "The Effects of Campaign Spending in House Elections: New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2)
- Green, John Philip and Jonathan Krasno. 1990, "Rebuttal to Jacobson's New Evidence for Old Arguments." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2)

10/15 and 10/17: Presidential campaigns

- Financing the 2016 Election Chs 4 and 5 "Presidential Campaigns"

10/22 and 10/24: Political parties and polarization

- Financing the 2016 Election Ch 7 Party Financing
- La Raja, Raymond and Brian F. Schaffner. 2015. *Campaign Finance and Political Polarization: When Purists Prevail* University of Michigan Press

Money in the Lawmaking Process

10/29 and 10/31: Access and Lobbying

- Hojnacki, Marie and David C. Kimball. 1998. "Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress" *American Political Science Review* 92(4)
- Hall, Richard and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias" *American Political Science Review* 84(3)
- Powell, Eleanor Neff and Justin Grimmer. 2016. "Money in Exile: Campaign Contributions and Committee Access" *Journal of Politics* 78(4)

11/5 and 11/7: Legislating

- Austen-Smith, David and John R. Wright. 1994. "Counteractive Lobbying" *American Journal of Political Science* 38(1)
- Stratmann, Thomas. 2002. "Can Special Interests Buy Congressional Votes?" *Journal of Law and Economics* Vol. 45
- Lynda Powell "How Money Talks in State Legislatures" *Monkey Cage*
- "Corporations Spend Big to Defeat Ballot Measures" *The Hill*

11/12: EXAM 2

Reforms and Alternatives

11/14 and 11/19: Comparative Systems

- State of Nevada Campaign Guide. 2016
- Wiltse, David L., Raymond La Raja, and Dorie Apollonio. "Typologies in Campaign Finance Systems" *Election Law Journal* 18(1)

11/21 and 11/26: Implications and prospects for reform

- Magleby, "Ch 8 Political and Policy Implications"
- Boatright, Robert, and Michael Malbin. 2005. "Political Contribution Tax Credits and Citizen Participation" *American Politics Research* 33(6)
- We The People Amendment

12/3 and 12/5: Does money rule politics?

- Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics" *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3)
- Branham, J. Alexander, Stuart Soroka, and Christopher Wlezien. "When Do the Rich Win?" *Political Science Quarterly* 132(1)

12/5: PAPER DUE

Class Policies and Procedures

Classroom Environment: I will do my part to start and end class on time: we will start at 11:30 PM and end by 12:45 PM. Please do your part and do not make a habit of arriving late to class or leaving class early. I encourage you to engage in class discussions, ask questions, and respond when I ask you questions. However, side discussions during lecture are especially distracting for me and make my job a lot harder.

Technology: Laptops and tablets are welcome in class for taking notes (although a growing body of research indicates that taking notes by hand is associated with better retention of material and deeper understanding). Using laptops and tablets in a manner that is distracting to the instructor or other students, or in an otherwise inappropriate way is not acceptable. If students report distracting behavior with laptops and tablets this policy may change and the devices may be banned from the class. Turn off all mobile phones prior to entering the classroom. Texting and messaging on laptops and tablets during class is not acceptable.

Readings: You should perform the readings listed on the syllabus in preparation for the week on which they are listed. In other words, the reading assigned for the week of September 3 and 5 should be done before attending class on September 3. Class discussion is structured around the readings, so not doing the reading before class makes it unlikely that you will be able to meaningfully contribute to discussions. The lectures will often be used to highlight material different than the reading, so it is necessary to do both the reading and regularly attend class to be fully prepared for quizzes.

Communication: The best way to communicate with me is during office hours. I encourage you to visit me in office hours for any reason: you are having trouble with something, you have questions, you want to discuss your research paper, you want to talk politics, you have a good restaurant recommendation for me, or most anything else. Email correspondence is also welcome. Please format your emails as business correspondence, with a greeting and signature. I will try to get to your emails within 24 hours or, at the latest, during my next scheduled office hours unless the answer to a question is in the syllabus or was discussed in class (in which case you should consult a classmate). I may also answer through a general email to the class rather than writing you back personally if your question reflects a general concern. If your question via email requires a long or complicated response, I may ask that we set a time to meet instead. I am also happy to schedule an appointment with you if you cannot make my office hours.

Make-ups and Late Assignments: Make-ups are only offered for the following circumstances: (1) University sanctioned events (verification required); (2) religious observations (see University policy, below); or (3) extreme emergencies, and I am the sole arbiter of what constitutes an extreme emergency. If you intend to miss class for a religious holiday, you must notify me of your pending absence at least 14 days in advance. **NB:** Some things that do not qualify for make-ups are: vacation travel, light illness (i.e. a common cold). Late assignments will be docked 5 percentage points per day.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns: Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed: All grade complaints must be typed and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy. Written statements will not be considered until one week after the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made. Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint before the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment. In other words, there is a one-week window to submit a written statement. Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours. Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

University Policies

Academic Misconduct: Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the Student Academic Misconduct Policy (approved December 9, 2005) located at:
<http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

Copyright: The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at:
<http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC): The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to me during office hours so that we may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your

needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach me before or after class to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy: Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first two weeks of classes, September 5, 2014, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Incomplete Grades: The grade of I (incomplete) can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring: The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all UNLV students taking UNLV courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling 702-895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at: <http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/>.

UNLV Writing Center: One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

Rebelmail: By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu.