

Political Science 389
Seminar on International Relations
“Transnational Interest Groups”
Spring 2005: Mr. McFarland

This is a paper-writing class with a midterm, limited to 30 students due to the seminar concept and the room size. The class meets once a week, Tuesdays from 2:00 to 4:30.

The instructor’s research specialization is American interest groups, but we will extend interest group concepts into the area of international relations. The assigned reading and much of the class time will be spent with the globalization movement and the Seattle demonstrations, with the international terrorist organization Al Qaeda, and with a discussion of international reform activist movements. There will be some discussion of the politics of international trade and how this relates to interest group organization.

The instructor will introduce concepts from interest group theory and political movement theory for the understanding of transnational interest groups. These concepts will have to do with the mobilization of political resources, the importance of communications networks, facilitation of organization by the political process, and the framing of new issues to appeal to a constituency. In addition policy issues regarding world trade, terrorism, the environment and other questions will be discussed. The instructor understands that one’s stance towards such policy issues is closely related to one’s own ethics and values.

This class meets the writing-in-the-discipline requirement for the Political Science major. As such the main requirement for the class is to write a fifteen page research paper about an international interest group or international political movement. This paper will be due during the last week of class, Thursday, April 28 at 5:00 P.M. The topic of the paper can be chosen by the student, but it must be approved by the instructor. Assistance can be given in the selection of the paper topic. The paper must include the application of concepts from this class, so obviously downloading an internet paper won’t go very far.

It is probably best if the paper topic focused on one group, about which there is a fair amount of information on the internet or in libraries. In some cases it may be feasible to write about several closely related groups, e.g. groups defending ocean wildlife. However, it is not feasible to write a paper about some general protest movement as a whole (e.g. international women’s movement, international environmental movement). On the other hand, there will be papers about more specific groups within the general movements. This is because the student will be required to write a portion of the paper using analytical categories presented from political sociology, and these are best presented to analyze a relatively specific group or movement.

First the student will write a prospectus of three pages, presenting his/her paper topic. This will be followed by the submission of an additional portion of writing of about four pages. These may be linked together to form the basis of the final, fifteen page paper. The prospectus will be due on February 1; the four page paper will be due on February 22, and the final paper is due on April

28. There will also be a midterm on March 8 over the reading and lecture material, plus a short oral report about the paper in March or April.

There will be no final examination. The fifteen page paper counts 50% of the grade; the midterm counts 30% of the grade; the prospectus is 10%; the four-page paper is 10%. A few grades will be raised from B+ to A- or C+ to B- for participation, attendance, and for a good oral report; this consideration will not be given for students who do not participate in discussion and/or who have a poor attendance record.

The required texts for the class are:

Globalize This! The Battle Against the World Trade Organization and Corporate Rule, Kevin Danaher and Roger Burbach, editors; Common Courage Press

Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Cambridge University Press

Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror, Rohan Gunaratna, Berkley Books

Schedule of Classes

- January 11. Introductory lecture.
- January 18. Anti-globalization movement.
Begin reading *Globalize This!*
- January 25. Continue anti-globalization movement. International trade.
Finish *Globalize This!*
- February 1. **Student paper prospectus due.**
Transnational political movements and groups.
Analytical concepts for the paper.
Begin reading *Activists Beyond Borders*.
- February 8. Continue the above.
Finish reading *Activists Beyond Borders*.
- February 15. Al Qaeda and terrorist groups.
Start reading *Inside Al Qaeda*.

- February 22 **Four page paper due.**
Al Qaeda and terrorist groups.
Finish reading *Inside Al Qaeda*.
- March 1 Guest lecture/more analytical concepts.
- March 8 **Midterm.**
- March 15. Begin student presentations.
- March 22. No class: spring break.
- March 29–
April 19. Student presentations. Possible guest lecture.
- April 26. Concluding lecture.
- April 28. **Paper due date.**
- No final examination.