

# POLS/HNKLY 4914: A CAPITAL ENCOUNTER

Spring 2025

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<b>Instructor:</b> Jim Curry, PhD	<b>Time:</b> TuTh 9:10 a.m – 10:30 a.m.
<b>Instructor:</b> Gina Shipley, MPA	<b>Place:</b> GC 1780

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**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Course Description:** In this course, students will learn about the practice and science of political influence. We will read and learn about theoretical and empirical work regarding how influence and political advocacy occurs in our nation’s capital. Concurrently, in groups, students will develop policy proposals and put together advocacy plans for advocating for these proposals. At the end of the semester, students will travel to Washington to put their knowledge, and their plans, to work, meeting with governmental officials and advocating for their policy proposals. This immersive experience combines the best of theory and practice, and allows students to learn how political advocacy really works in our national politics.

**Learning Objectives:**

- To understand theoretical and empirical political science research about political influence.
- To understand what makes for a strong policy proposal in Washington.
- To understand what makes for effective advocacy in Washington.
- To gain experience developing and advocating for policy proposals in Washington.

**Required Textbooks and Materials:** All readings are found on Canvas unless otherwise noted.

**Course Grading:**

Reading quizzes .....	15%
Member of Congress assignment .....	15%
Advocacy assignments .....	60% (total)
Advocacy work in D.C. ....	10%

**Course Requirements & Due Dates:**

- **Attendance:** Attendance will be taken every class. Students may not miss more than two class meetings. Every class missed after that will result in a half-latter being docked from their final grade. Students arriving more than 5 minutes late for class will be counted as absent.
- **Reading quizzes:** Quizzes for each set of readings are on Canvas and must be completed by students **before** the first class meeting for which those readings are assigned. The goals of reading quizzes is to encourage students to read in an active rather than passive manner. Indeed, studies show that short, low stakes reading quizzes help students retain more information from readings.

Each quiz will contain 10 multiple choice questions. Students have two attempts at each quiz, but the questions will differ slightly from attempt to attempt.

- **Member of Congress Assignment (due January 28):** Students will be assigned a sitting member of Congress or senator to research. Drawing on the readings for that week, students should come to class with a **THREE**-page (single-spaced) paper that highlights how their lawmaker's goals explain policies he/she clearly support or clearly opposes. Specifically, students should identify **THREE** policy proposals Congress considered in the 118th Congress (2023-24) that the representative or senator appeared to strongly support or oppose. Students should identify **THREE** such policy proposals by looking at, at minimum:
  1. Their lawmaker's own policy proposals (bills introduced) in 2023-24.
  2. Their lawmaker's voting records in 2023-24.
  3. Their lawmaker's social media activity in 2023-24.

In explaining how the representative's or senator's goals explain their support or opposition, the paper should consider the three primary goals of legislators as described in the readings: (1) *reelection*, (2) *making good public policy*, and (3) *increasing their power*.

Students should wrap-up their papers providing a discussion of which goal(s) best explain the most of their lawmaker's support. This assignment is worth 15% of each student's final grade, and the research one for the assignment will be discussed in class.

- **Advocacy Assignments:** Throughout the semester, students (in groups) will put their learned knowledge to use to advocate for a policy proposal of their own design during a week-long visit to the nation's capital in May. Ahead of this trip, student groups will develop a detailed and original policy proposal, assemble a plan for advocating for their proposal to governmental officials, and begin to put that plan into action by seeking meetings with relevant governmental offices (with the help of the Hinckley Institute). Several assignments will help students draw on knowledge learned to prepare for their visit to Washington and for these meetings.

In **Week #2**, students will be assigned to groups of three for the purposes of these assignments and for their advocacy activities. Groups will work collaboratively to complete each of these assignments. Combined, these assignments are worth 60% of a student's final grade.

- **(1) Policy Proposal Ideas:** For **February 4**, each group will turn in, and be ready to discuss, **THREE** original policy ideas that they might propose and advocate for. Proposals should be described in brief (no more than two single-spaced pages, total, for all three) at this point, and can be rough. But they should clearly describe changes to existing federal public policy. Groups should be sure to consider proposal ideas that are both narrow enough and potentially achievable. In other words, they should not propose policy ideas that are too broad (i.e., replacing the global capitalist system) or that could not be adequately advocated for (i.e., proposals that are clearly unconstitutional). Groups will discuss their ideas with the class.

This assignment is worth 5% of each student's final grade.

- **(2) Policy Proposal Draft:** For **March 4**, each group will turn in a 5-page (single-spaced) policy proposal draft. This paper must propose and describe the new policy that the group will plan to advocate for in DC.

The paper must follow a standard format common among policy proposals:

1. A brief introduction that captures the reader's attention.
2. A problem statement, persuading the reader that there is a specific policy problem in need of a solution (emphasis on specific).
3. A proposal, in detail, of a policy solution to this problem, that provides convincing evidence that the new proposed policy will work to help solve the problem.

4. A section considering and addressing potential rebuttals or objections to the proposed new policy.

Policy proposals should be detailed, concise, and persuasive, and should draw on data and reputable sources to lay out arguments. Sources must be adequately cited (using ANY proper citation style). Papers MUST NOT exceed five single-spaced pages. The goal is to be concise and effective.

These draft proposals will be discussed in class, reviewed by the instructor, and returned to the group with feedback so they can be improved and turned into polished, final policy proposals. Example proposals from previous semesters are found on the Canvas page for the course.

This assignment is worth 15% of each student's final grade.

- **(3) Formulate an Advocacy Plan:** For **March 25**, groups will turn in advocacy plans detailing how they intend to successfully advocate for their proposals in Washington, DC. Advocacy plans should be realistic and attainable, but designed to be effective.

The plans must include at least the following:

1. A statement of the group's objectives for their (short-term) advocacy (i.e., to obtain support for the policy among member of Congress).
2. A list of governmental officials the group will target and contact (including their contact information), and why they should target each official.
3. A description of how the group will try to "get in the door" with these officials – how will you persuade them to meet with you?

Advocacy plans from previous semesters are found on the Canvas page for the course.

This assignment is worth 10% of each student's final grade.

- **(4) Outreach:** On **March 27**, groups will turn in drafts of the materials (primarily emails) they plan to use to contact the governmental officials in their advocacy plans. The instructors will provide quick feedback on these materials, and we will discuss outreach tactics more broadly in class. Students should then immediately begin reaching out to governmental officials. Students should 'blind carbon copy' (BCC) both Curry and Shipley on their outreach emails. Emails should be sent by **April 4** at the latest.

This assignment is worth 5% of each student's final grade.

- **(5) Compile Final Advocacy Materials:** For **April 22**, groups will turn in polished copies of their advocacy materials.

These materials must include, at least:

1. A 5-page (single-spaced and formatted) policy proposal detailing the proposed policy.
2. A 1-page targeted brief (or executive summary) about the proposal, customized for each official the group will meet.
3. A script of what the group intends to say during their meetings.
4. A list of questions the groups intends to ask during their meetings.
5. The "ask" the group will pose to officials at the end of each meeting.

This assignment is worth 20% of each student's final grade. Students will have an opportunity to make further revisions to their materials after receiving feedback from the instructor. Final, revised copies of all advocacy materials should be submitted to Curry and Shipley before the trip to DC.

- **(6) Practice Meetings:** During the last class day (**April 22**), groups will also practice for their meetings in Washington. Specifically, the students will run through their meeting scripts, with the instructor playing the part of a governmental official they are meeting with. Meetings should be planned to last about 15 minutes.

This assignment is worth 5% of each student's final grade.

- **Travel & Advocacy Work in DC:** The class will travel to Washington, DC, in early May (within the window of May 2-8). Each group must also complete and turn-in a memo detailing their advocacy work in Washington. The memo should:
  1. Describe who the group met with, the character of each meeting, and their impressions.
  2. Detail any successes they believed they had with these meetings.
  3. Detail the steps the group would take to follow-up on their meetings if they were to continue their advocacy.
  4. Describe what you learned from this process and what you would do differently if you were to do it all over again.

The memo need not be more than two pages and is worth 10% of each student's final grade.

Below are details on travel and lodging for your stays in Washington:

**Airports** — Students may fly into Reagan National Airport, Dulles Airport, or BWI Airport. Ground transportation into Washington is available from Dulles and BWI. There is Metrorail transportation from Reagan National. You can take a bus from Dulles and Amtrak or Super Shuttle from BWI. You can take the Metro from Reagan National; it is conveniently located at a Metrorail stop.

**Orrin G. Hatch Center** — While in DC students will stay at the Orrin G. Hatch Center. It is easily accessible from the Dupont Circle Metro Stop. The address is: 1527 18th St NW, Washington, DC 20036.

**Metro Travel in DC:** There are multiple Metro pass options to purchase. It is often cheaper to purchase a weekly pass than having to pay for every trip individually. Visit <https://www.wmata.com/> to learn more about the DC metro system.

### Course Policies:

- **Questions & inquiries:** Students should reach out to me at any time with questions, concerns, or inquiries. During the week, I strive to respond to all student emails within 24 hours. On the weekend, I shoot for 48 hours. If you do not hear back from me within those time-frames, do not hesitate to email again.
- **Late assignment policy:** Assignments will not be accepted after their due dates unless we have otherwise agreed to an extension.
- **Academic code of conduct:** All students will be expected to abide by the [University of Utah's Student Code](#). No cheating, plagiarism, or other serious offenses will be tolerated. This includes the use of proper citation in ALL papers completed for the class. Violation will result in disciplinary action. Please speak to me if you have any questions.
- **Disability services:** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
- **University safety statement:** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit <http://safeu.utah.edu>.

- **Addressing sexual misconduct:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
- **Wellness statement:** Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness: [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu); 801-581-7776.

**Grading Scale:** (via David Foster Wallace) Each grade letter counts as a "grade interval" for the purposes of this syllabus and for grade penalties.

Grade letter	Points/Pct.	Description
A+	97-100	Mind-blowingly good
A	94-96	Extremely good
A-	90-93	Very, very good
B+	87-89	Very good
B	84-86	Good
B-	80-83	High-average
C+	77-79	Average to low-average
C	74-76	Mildly subpar
C-	70-73	Severely subpar
D+	67-69	Varying degrees...
D	64-66	...of...
D-	60-63	...markedly poor
E	<60	Obvious

## Course Schedule & Readings

### Jan. 7 — Introduction and Introductory Discussion

READINGS: None

### Jan. 9 — NO CLASS

READINGS: None

### Unit 1: Theory

### Jan. 14 & 16 — Groups & Influence

READINGS:

- James Madison, Federalist #10
- Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Excerpts)
- Gilens and Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens” (pages 564-568)

### Jan. 21 — Power

READINGS:

- Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, pages 14-59
- Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, chapter 1
- Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, Excerpts

### Unit 2: The Audience — Players and Institutions

### Jan. 23 & 28 — Understanding Legislators

*Member of Congress Assignments Due Jan. 28*

READINGS:

- Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, Excerpts
- Fenno, *Home Style*, Excerpts

### Jan. 30 — Congressional Action

READINGS:

- Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, chapters 1-4

### Feb. 4 — Work-shopping Policy Proposal Ideas

READINGS: None

### Feb. 6 — NO CLASS

READINGS: None

### Feb. 11 — Bureaucracy & Implementation

READINGS:

- Godwin, Ainsworth, and Godwin, *Lobbying and Policymaking*, Chapters 4-5

**Feb. 13 — GUEST SPEAKER, TBA**

READINGS: None

**Feb. 18 & 20 — “Inside” Lobbying & Subsidy**

READINGS:

- Baumgartner, et al, *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why?*, Excerpts
- Hall and Deardorff, “Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy”
- Hertel-Fernandez, “Who Passes Business’s Model Bills? Policy Capacity and Corporate Influence in U.S. State Politics”

**Feb. 25 & 27 — “Outside” Lobbying**

READINGS:

- Kollman, *Outside Lobbying*, Excerpts
- Walker, “Grass-Roots Mobilization, by Corporate America”

**March 4 — Workshopping Policy Proposal Drafts**

READINGS: None

**March 6 — NO CLASS**

READINGS: None

**March 11 & 13 — SPRING BREAK**

Like school in the summertime. No class.

**Unit 3: Other Forces****March 18 — Money & Access?**

READINGS:

- Kalla & Broockman, “Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment”
- Hall & Wayman, “Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committee”

**March 20 — Parties & Partisanship**

READINGS:

- Lee, *Insecure Majorities*, Excerpts
- Curry & Lee, *Limits of Party* (Chapters 1-3)
- Binder, “Polarized we Govern?”

**March 25 — Centralization & Process Changes**

READINGS:

- Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, Excerpts
- Curry & Lee, *Limits of Party* (Chapters 4-5)

**March 27 — More workshopping...**

READINGS: None.

**April 1 — GUEST SPEAKER TBA**

READINGS: None.

**April 3 — GUEST SPEAKER TBA**

READINGS: None.

**Unit 4: In Practice**

**April 8 & 10 — Independent Work or Guest Speakers**

**April 15 & 17 — Independent Work or Guest Speakers**

**April 22 — Practice Meetings**

READINGS: None

**IN WASHINGTON, DC — MAY 1 - 7**