

Rutgers University  
Bloustein School of Policy and Planning

Public Policy Advocacy  
34:833:522  
Fall, 2006

Wednesdays  
September 6 – December 13, 2006  
6:10pm-8:40pm  
CSB 168

Instructor:

Bob Sommer, Executive Vice President  
MWW Group

Office Hours: By Appointment – Please talk with me after class or call my Executive Assistant, Genine Leogrande, to arrange a convenient time.

Phone 201-507-9500

Fax 201-460-9404

E-mail [rsommer@mww.com](mailto:rsommer@mww.com)

## Course Overview and Objective

Lobbying in the United States is as old as our government. And like lawmakers, regulators and executives, the lobbying of public officials has adapted to changing pressures, requirements and objectives over time.

Particularly since the Reagan administration, the growth of state and local governments to compete with Washington has brought significant expansion to the profession. What's more, the disclosure and campaign finance laws promulgated at all levels of government have caused many intended -- and unintended -- changes in the way lobbyists pursue their craft.

No longer do lobbyists simply prowl the halls of government. Instead, sophisticated advocacy campaigners have taken to the street, the mail, the airwaves and the Internet to persuade constituents that their federal, state or local public officials should adopt a specific position. Often, both supporters and opponents of a policy matter undertake advocacy campaigns, further complicating the decision to be made by a public official. Add the pressures of campaign fundraising and today's lobbyists have an arsenal at their beck and call not imagined by the Framers of the Constitution. Just as important, lobbying is not only about economic issues. In fact, advocates and opponents on social issues represent some of the most aggressive lobbying campaigns.

The goal of this course will be to help each student understand the dramatic growth of lobbying - - or as we will call it -- government advocacy, especially in a New Jersey gubernatorial election year. We will examine various tactics used in advocacy on the federal, state and local levels. The concentration will be on the practical rather than the theoretical approaches to the profession. Specifically, through four case studies that are well publicized and contentious, we will examine advocacy at each level of government, providing a rich, practical experience of government advocacy as it works today. Our case studies will include (1) the debate in New Jersey over property tax reform, (2) the struggle over competing construction projects among the Giants, Jets and Meadowlands Xanadu with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and, (3) the passing of the federal budget.

In addition to the general readings I will provide, students will be expected to read *The New York Times* national and metro sections and either *The Star Ledger* or *The Record* on class days at a minimum as well as *The Times Sunday Week in Review*. (And through class discussion I will know who's been reading!)

## **Class Procedures**

Classes will consist of lectures, extensive discussion of the day's subject and several guest lecturers with practical experience in Washington and New Jersey.

## **Course Requirements**

*Research Paper* - Each student will choose a major policy issue currently being debated at any level of government not including the four topics we will cover in class. (If a student selects a state or local matter, it must be in New Jersey.) He or she will prepare a 15-20 page double-spaced paper comparing, critiquing and recommending improvements to the advocacy efforts implemented by both sides in the debate. Students will consult with me in advance to determine the efficacy of the issue.

Papers will be presented orally on the last two class sessions following my review and revisions by the student.

*Class Participation* - Students are required to attend classes. Since we are a small class, it is important for everyone to attend, especially when we have a guest lecturer or a case study, in order to facilitate discussion. If a student misses more than one class, he or she must provide me with a good explanation. I reserve the right to reduce a student's grade by one mark (A to B+) if the student misses several classes.

For the three case studies, students will be divided into working groups and will take a specific position to prepare a two-page "white paper" stating the position as if to be presented to a public official or reporter.

## **Grades**

Research paper	40%
Research paper oral presentation	10%
Case studies "white papers"	20% (approximately 7% each)
Class participation	30%

## Course Outline

1. September 6 Introduction/Overview of the Three Case Studies
2. September 13 Interest Groups  
Who are they?  
What is their influence?  
When do they matter?  
Where are they in Washington, the states and locally?  
How are they growing?  
Grassroots/Grasstops/Netroots -- are we farming?
3. September 20 Corporate America and its Associations
4. September 27 The News Media
5. October 4 Case Study 1  
First White Paper Due  
Topic for Research Paper Selected
6. October 11 Advocacy Tools and Tactics  
- mail - polling  
- advertising - Internet
7. October 18 Fundraising and Ethics
8. October 25 Case Study 2  
Second White Paper Due  
Research Paper Outline Due (optional)
9. November 1 Walking the Corridors -- lobbying at each level of government
10. November 8 Case Study 3  
Third White Paper Due
11. November 15 Impact of Election 2006 on Advocacy  
Research Paper Due
12. November 29 Collision of Interests -- using tools to win
13. December 6 Oral Presentations
14. December 15 Oral Presentations