THE BUSINESS-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

BGP-100

Roger B. Porter

Harvard University

Fall 2015
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Description

This course is designed to help students think analytically about the ways in which government and business interact with one another in a mixed economy. It examines how business and government are organized and how they seek to influence one another. It considers how government policies affect the competitive positions of individual firms and industries and how firms and industries compete to influence such policies.

It looks at the ways in which government policies affect economic growth and at the ways in which governments seek to achieve a variety of non-economic objectives. It will examine how to define national economic interest in an increasingly integrated global economy. Although the focus will be on U.S. business-government relationships, comparisons will be made to ways in which government and business interact in other nations.

Class Hours

Class sessions are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 2:40 pm - 4:00 pm in L140.

Requirements

Course requirements include: (1) required readings; (2) class attendance and appropriate contributions to class discussions; (3) a take home mid-term examination; and (4) a take home final examination.

The examinations will require students to reflect analytically and synthetically upon course readings and class discussions.

One of the best ways to prepare for class is through a discussion group. Students should organize or join a study group of 3-6 individuals.
Grading

Grades for BGP-100 will conform to the general letter grading scheme used for all Kennedy School courses. Transposition to appropriate grades for students registered in other faculties will be done, as necessary, by the relevant registrars' offices.

A student's grade in the course will be based on three elements: (1) 20 percent on contributions to class discussions; (2) 40 percent on the mid-term examination; and (3) 40 percent on the final examination.

Students may elect to write a 20-25 page research paper on a topic approved by Professor Porter in lieu of the final examination.

Distribution of Course Materials

All course materials will be made available through the course page.

Appointments

Students may schedule appointments with Professor Porter through his faculty assistant, Alison Barrow, who can be reached at 496-2454 or via email at alison_barron@hks.harvard.edu.
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Assigned Readings

I. Introduction

Session 1: Overview: An Historical Perspective  (September 3)


Session 2: The Organization of Government and Business in the United States  (September 8)


Session 3: Managing in the Public and Private Sectors  (September 10)


Session 4: Business, Government, and Labor: Striker Replacement  (September 15)

Testimony of Thomas R. Donahue, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO before the Subcommittee on Labor of the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, March 12, 1991, pp. 1-29.

Testimony of Lynn R. Williams, President, United Steelworkers of America before the Subcommittee on Labor of the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, March 12, 1991, pp. 46-61.
Floor Statement of Robert Michel, Congressional Record, June 14, 1993.


Session 5: Systems of Influence and Interaction (September 17)


II. Business-Government and the Quest for Prosperity

Session 6: The Elements of Economic Growth (September 22)


Session 7: Macroeconomic Policy I (September 24)


Session 8 and 9: Macroeconomic Policy II and III (September 29 and October 1)


Session 10: Industrial Policy: The Automobile Industry (October 6)  
(guest – F.M. Scherer)


Session 11: Savings, Pensions and the U.S. Economy (October 8)  
(guest – Thomas Healey)


Session 12: Efficiency, Equity and Tax Policy  (October 13)


Session 13: Research, Development and Technological Innovation  (October 15)


Session 14: Education and Training  (October 20)


Frederick M. Hess and Andrew J. Rotherham, “Can NCLB Survive the Competitiveness Competition?” American Enterprise Institute, (June 2007).


Session 15: Mid-term  (October 22)

III. Business-Government and Achieving Social Purposes

Session 16: Regulation, Markets, and Efficiency  (October 27)


Session 17: Financial Services Regulation  (October 29)


Session 18: Labor Market Policies  (November 3)


Session 19: Health Care Policy I  (November 5)

HKS Case: “The Battle Over the Clinton Health Care Proposal,” C15-00-1600.0.

Session 20: Health Care Policy II  (November 10)


Session 21: Business-Government and the Environment  (November 12)


IV.  Business, Government, and the International Economy


Session 23: Adjustment in a Global Market: The Case of Steel  (November 19)


Statement of George Becker before the Congressional Steel Caucus (March 21, 2001).

Statement of Stephan K. Todd and Terrence D. Straub to the Congressional Steel Caucus (March 21, 2001).


Session 24: Using Economic Measures to Achieve Foreign Policy Purposes  (November 24)


Session 25: The Global Economy and the Nation State  (December 1)


V. Summary, Synthesis, and Conclusions

Session 26: Summary, Synthesis and Conclusions (December 3)