The American Political System – POLI 102 Fall 2020 Paper #2   100pts (discussion) + 150pts (paper)
Discussion board due 12/6 and 12/8. Paper due 12/14 (maximum 3 single space pages).

For this discussion board and paper assignment, assume that you work for an interest group that has a stake in the outcome of attempts to pass legislation about shifting to clean energy (to battle climate change), and you have been given the job of reviewing excerpts from ONE of the following books for the president of the interest group. S/he would like to know your thoughts about the claims in the book and what this suggests for the group's strategy on this issue. The job assignment also requires that you participate in a discussion of your conclusions with your team members in advance of submitting your individual report.

Your "team" is your class group, and you will find a Discussion Board assignment on your group homepage. For the assignment, some of the teams will be from interest groups that support legislation to take strong steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and other teams will be from interest groups that are trying to block this type of legislation.

So, here are the steps:
1) visit the discussion board assignment on your group's homepage to see which "interest group" you will be representing
2) skim these stories about elections and public opinion as background
    a) Jennifer Ludden "Biden Will Face Major Limits to His Ambitious Climate Plan" https://www.npr.org/2020/11/08/932160547/biden-will-face-major-limits-to-his-ambitious-climate-plans
    b) Thomas Frank "How the Senate Race Could Shape Future US Climate Action" https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-the-senate-race-could-shape-future-u-s-climate-action/
    c) https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/21/how-americans-see-climate-change-and-the-environment-in-7-charts/
    d) https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/06/how-important-is-climate-change-to-voters-in-the-2020-election/
3) review these book excerpts and choose ONE (you'll also find recently published op-eds by both sets of authors)
    a) James Curry and Frances Lee The Limits of Party 2020 (13 pages)
        https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/18/opinion/joe-biden-mitch-mcconnell-congress.html
        (This topic is also touched upon in Section 11.5 of your textbook.)
    OR
    b) William Howell and Terry Moe Relic 2016 (13 pages)
        https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/09/14/how-stronger-presidency-could-lead-more-effective-government/
        (This topic is also touched upon in Section 12.5 of your textbook.)
4) due by 12/6 - develop bullet points and post to the discussion board - your post should:
    a)   List the main arguments OF THE BOOK YOU CHOSE (with page #'s from the book excerpts – the op-eds will help you understand the overall argument, but your job assignment is about the book excerpt-explain it to someone who hasn't read it) (50%)
    b) Tell how the book's claims might relate specifically to the type of legislation your group seeks (20%)
    c) Explain how you think your interest group should pursue its goals based on the claims of the book. In other words, what do you think YOUR interest group should take away from YOUR chosen book.(30%)
    d) Attend today's roundtable zoom discussion where you can meet with the other interest groups!
5) due 12/8 – review what other members of your team have posted and post at least 2 reply comments to other team members
6) due 12/14 - write your paper, based on your discussion post and ideas from your team members (give credit to team members in your paper and I will give credit to you)- submit via canvas

- In your analysis, feel free to incorporate any of the concepts and institutions we have studied regarding federalism, public opinion, parties, interest groups, the lawmaking process, and/or the president's role in the governing process. But your focus should be on what you think YOUR interest group should take away from YOUR chosen book.
- But your supervisor at the interest group does not want to read more than 3 single-spaced pages, so you will have to decide what to focus on (you will NOT be able or expected to cover all of these topics).
- And, papers that incorporate ONLY class materials and the resources provided here, including insights gained from other team members, will score better than those that use outside material. All thoughtful and concise answers will score well.
- You do NOT have to reach the same conclusions as your team members.
- Rubric: for both the discussion post and paper, your grade will be weighted in accordance with the percentages in a-c above.

Here is some information about the interest groups :

American Petroleum Institute

-represents oil companies – generally opposed to strong climate protection policies and focuses attention on voluntary efficiency steps, conservation, and carbon capture

Group website   https://www.api.org/

Elections summary 2020
    https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00483677/summary/2020

Lobbying summary 2019
    https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2019&id=D000031493

Overall summary 2020
    https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/summary?id=D000031493

lobbying by entire industry 2019 $126 million
    https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/industries/summary?cycle=2019&id=E01

Natural Resources Defense Council

-one of the larger environmental public interest groups- seeks strong climate protection policies

Group website   https://www.nrdc.org/issues/clean-energy

elections summary 2020
    https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/nrdc-action-fund/C00548008/summary/2020

lobbying summary 2019
    https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2019&id=D000036133

overall summary 2020 –
    https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/natural-resources-defense-council/summary?id=D000036133

lobbying by all environment groups 2019 $13 million

Alliance for Automobile Innovation

-represents largest auto manufacturers- generally call for gradual increases in fuel efficiency standards set by one national policy (rather than by the state governments)
-changed name from Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

Group website   https://autoalliance.org/

elections summary 2020 -
    https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/C00516526/summary/2020

lobbying summary 2019 –
    https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2019&id=D000043820

lobbying by entire industry 2019 $46 million
    https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/industries/summary?cycle=2019&id=T2100