

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
INTEREST GROUPS,
FREUD, AND THE UNCONSCIOUS BASIS OF MIND

Terms and concepts to know:

Interest groups	Madison / <i>Federalist 10</i> / factions
Calhoun / <i>Disquisition on Govt.</i>	Concurrent majority
Bentley and <i>Process of Government</i>	Truman and <i>Governmental Process</i>
Olsen and <i>Logic of Collective Action</i>	Lowi and <i>End of Liberalism</i>
“Iron triangles”	Pluralism
Hyperpluralism	Elitism / Pareto / Mills
Corporatism	Interest group dynamics
Group tactics	Group typology
Freud and un/consciousness	

Study and discussion questions:

1. Discuss Madison’s notion of “faction” and how it relates to interest groups. What do you think Madison felt was the most common reason for the development of factions?
2. Discuss Calhoun’s idea of a “concurrent majority.” Do you think this might be a better way to protect minority rights? What problems might result?
3. Examine David Truman’s thesis that no one group could attain overly powerful as a result of “overlapping memberships.” How do you think that this notion serves the pluralist definition of American politics?
4. What is the implication in Olsen’s thesis that certain groups ultimately obtain governmental action favorable to their interests? Do you see any connection between Olsen’s ideas and elite theory?
5. Discuss the concept of an “iron triangle.” Which entities make up an iron triangle in the military-industrial complex?
6. In reading about Sigmund Freud’s life and theories, how can some of his ideas be used to explain modern human nature and its relationship to politics? What would Freud argue is the reason for some of the problems that afflict us today?
7. Discuss the differences that exist between “self-interested” and “altruistic” or “attitudinal” groups. What effect do one or both of these groups have on democracy?
8. Begin a discussion on the philosophical and scientific thought of Sigmund Freud. Did he have a theory of the universe? What was his position on the question of human nature? Discuss in depth his diagnosis of what is wrong with us and his prescription for putting things right.

Readings:

Heineman. *Political Science*, Chapter 9.
Stevenson. *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, Chapter 10.

Video: *The Century of Self*.