

INTRODUCTION TO LAW

POLITICAL SCIENCE 253 (001C) A USP EXPLORE COURSE | 3 CREDITS FALL 2021

ONLINE (ASYNCHRONOUS)
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH

PROFESSOR

Christian A. Gossett
Email gossettc@uwosh.edu

J.D. University of Wisconsin Law School
B.A. St. Olaf College MN: Metaphysics, Philosophical Theology and Psychology

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The development of political systems of jurisprudence, the judicial system of the United States and Wisconsin together with a survey of the major branches of law designating the place of law in society.

This course introduces students to the study of law. It will provide students with a basic understanding of the American legal system and the fundamentals of legal research and legal analysis. The course surveys several areas of law including Constitutional law, torts, contracts, property, and employment.

This course counts as an "Explore" course in the University Studies Program (USP). There are no prerequisites for this course.

ONLINE LEARNING & CANVAS

This course is taught entirely online. This is an asynchronous course. The primary system used for instruction is Canvas.

OFFICE HOURS:

My office is Sage 4634

I can be available for either in-person or online meetings (through Microsoft Teams - MS Teams) by appointment. It is easiest for me to schedule meetings after 4:30pm but it is possible to meet over lunch as well. I both live and work less than 1 mile from Sage Hall so it is very convenient to come in for meetings. I am here for you and I want you to enjoy our class and be successful now as well as in your future. Please email me or contact me through MS Teams and we will find a time that works for you.

Optional Group Discussions

On Wednesdays from 4:45 pm to 5:45 pm I will be available in Sage 4218. During this time, we can discuss legal career issues or class or materials or you can use this time to get to know one another and discuss the materials. Attendance is NOT required and no new material will be covered that you would be required to know for exams or quizzes. Office hours can be used for these same purposes. It is simply my hope that a drop in time each week that is open to all will encourage people to meet me, one another, and have some discussions about the materials and the legal field.

TEXT AND READINGS

Currier, Eimermann, and Campbell, *The Study of Law: A Critical Thinking Approach* (2020) (required) ISBN: 978-1-4548-9626-5

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Legal Studies Learning Outcomes

- Describe the structure of courts and legal systems in the U.S.
- Critically read and evaluate legal cases
- Conduct legal analyses (apply legal rules to new situations to formulate legal conclusions)
- Research legal and policy issues, including enacted law, common law, and legal scholarship

Essential Learning Outcomes

This course focuses on three UWO essential learning outcomes for students.

- Identify and objectively evaluate legal theories and assumptions
- Think critically and creatively about law
- Communicate orally and in writing arguments and ideas about law and policy.

Political Science Department Learning Goals

This course focuses on developing students' analytical skills (using legal analyses), written communication (case briefs), and critical examination and application of theory (applying legal arguments, which are theoretical arguments, to new situations).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I use the 93/90/87 grading scale for this course. Exams and/or Quizzes may be graded on a curve. Aim to be the person who establishes the top of the curve, not the bottom.

A 93–100	B 83–86	C 73–76	D 63–66
A- 90–92	B- 80–82	C- 70–72	D- 60–62
B+ 87–89	C+ 77–79	D+ 67–69	F 0–59

Grades are based on the following elements.

Exams and Quizzes (chapter quizzes = 33.3% final exam = 33.3%) Exams will be any combination of Multiple Choice, True/False, short answer, and essay/issue-spotter questions. Because this course is online the exams and quizzes will be open book and open note but must be completed by yourself. There will not be enough time given to look up every answer so you should be prepared to take the exam as if you were doing so without your notes or book even though you are allowed to use them.

Case Briefs (33.3%)—Case briefs are due on the date indicated by the syllabus. I do not accept late case briefs.

ATTENDANCE

As this is an asynchronous class, physical attendance is not an issue.

DEADLINES AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Turn in assignments on the due dates. Students who miss assignments will be excused only for university approved reasons (e.g., documented illness, family death, university-sponsored activity).

EARLY ALERT

During the fifth week of classes, you will receive by e-mail notice about your progress in this course. This is called Early Alert. Early Alert helps you evaluate your study skills and class attendance so you know if you are on the right track. If you need to make changes, there are tons of resources available. Early Alert grades are not permanent and do not appear on your transcript.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Expectations for Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found here: <https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>.

Disclosure statement:

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990:
<https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>.

GRIEVANCES

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at kruegerj@uwosh.edu. Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

UWO provides reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. We accommodate flexibly and individually. Register with Accessibility Services or Project Success to get an accommodation recommendation form.

Accessibility Services
125 Dempsey Hall
(920) 424-3100
dean1@uwosh.edu

Note to Political Science Majors: Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Changes to the schedule are inevitable, especially in a course on American government and politics where current events drive our focus and discussions. Changes to the schedule will be communicated through Canvas or through e-mail. If substantive changes are made, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available.

Part 1 The American Legal System

Week 0 (Sept 8) Introduction, Course Overview, Course Structure, Case Briefs and Syllabus

Week 1 (Sept 13) Introduction to the Study of Law (Ch. 1)

September 17th Chapter 1 Quiz (25 Points)

Week 2 (Sept 20) Functions and Sources of Law (Ch. 2)

September 24th Chapter 2 Quiz (25 Points)

Week 3 (Sept 27) Classification of the Law (Ch. 3)

October 1st Chapter 3 Quiz (25 Points)

Week 4 (Oct 4) The Court System and the Role of Judges (Ch. 4)

October 8th Chapter 4 Quiz (25 Points)

October 8th - Test covering Chapters 1-4 (100 Points)

Part 2 Substantive Law

Week 5 (Oct 11) Constitutional Law: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (Ch. 6)

Reading: Pages 157 - 170

Pages 196 (Beginning with D. Due Process) - 204 (Ending after the Case Discussion Questions)

Assignment: Case Brief Due October 18th 5:00pm (25 Points)

Week 6 (Oct 18) Torts (Ch. 7)

Reading: Pages 213 - 218

Pages 223 (Beginning with c. Defamation) - 227

Pages 234 (Beginning with B. Negligence) - 264

Week 7 (Oct 25) Contract Law (Ch. 8)

Reading: Pages 291 - 313 (Ending after D. Contract Interpretation section)

Week 8 (Nov 1) Property and Estate Law (Ch. 9)

Reading: Pages 349 - 353

Pages 369 (Beginning with C. Estate Planning) - 379

Assignment: Case Brief Due November 8th by 5:00pm (25 Points)

Week 9 (Nov 8) Family Law (Ch. 11)

Reading: Pages 437 - 463

Week 10 (Nov 15) Criminal Law (Ch. 12)

Reading: Pages 483 - 499 (Ending after D. Parties to the Crime)
Pages 514 (Beginning with F. Punishments) - 521 (Chapter Summary)

Week 11 (Nov 22)

Assignment: Case Brief Due November 23rd by 5:00pm (25 Points)

Week 12 (Nov 29) Criminal Procedure (Ch. 13)

Reading: Pages 527 - 543
Pages 548 (Beginning with C. The Court System) - 556

Assignment: Case Brief Due December 6th by 5:00pm (25 Points)

Week 13 (Dec 6) Ethical Dilemmas Facing Attorneys (Ch. 14)

Reading: Pages 567 - 570

Week 14 (Dec 13) Finals week

Final Exam covering Part 2 Materials. (100) points