

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

POL POS 3691 Introduction to Law and Politics
Class Room BSN 1401
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Fall 2013
Dr. Steven C. Tauber
Office # SOC 370

Office Hours: Monday 9:30-10:30, Monday 11:45-12:45, and Wednesday 11:45-12:45, or by appointment (which must be scheduled in writing)

This course will introduce students to the intersection between law and politics. Although many casual observers consider the law to be self-contained and immune from societal forces, the reality is that political and social factors heavily influence legal outcomes. Therefore, this course will provide students with the ability to analyze critically the way in which politics, society, and economics influence and are influenced by the law. By the end of the semester students will have a firm understanding of the leading schools of jurisprudence, institutional structures of federal and state courts, the selection process for federal and state judges, legal representation, legal mobilization, the jury system, criminal law, and tort law. Moreover, because all graded assignments entail critical thinking and writing, this course will develop students' critical thinking and communication skills.

COURSE POLICIES

Behavior During Lecture

I expect all students to attend lecture. Each day there will be a roll sheet passed around, and all students who are present need to sign it. These roll sheets determine the attendance grades (see below), so be sure to sign them each day. Any fraudulent behavior involving signing the attendance sheet will result in an academic dishonesty grade (FF) for ALL students involved. Forgetting to sign the sheet is **NOT** an excuse for being counted absent. Moreover, unless excused in advance, coming late and leaving early will count the same as an absence. Excused absences are granted at the discretion of the professor and will require documentation.

In order to facilitate class discussion, I encourage students to raise their hand to ask questions or make **RELEVANT** comments. However, I consider the following to be unacceptable behavior:

- 1) engaging in conversation with another student;
- 2) using laptops for anything other than course related work (laptops may **NOT** be used for email, social media, instant messaging, internet exploring, etc.);
- 3) a ringing cell-phone;
- 4) cell phone use (texting, social media, playing games, etc.);
- 5) reading the newspaper;
- 6) talking without raising one's hand;
- 7) eating in class;
- 8) listening to headphones;
- 9) entering late or leaving early in a noisy fashion;
- 10) entering late and walking in front of the room to take a seat (sit in the back or on the floor if there are no seats available in the back);
- 11) asking irrelevant questions; and
- 12) any other form of disruptive behavior

A violation of any of the above infractions can result in dismissal from the room and an official

report to the Dean.

Students with Disabilities

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with Students with Disabilities Services to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, it might be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It's the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Grades

Grades are based on three in-class examinations, an approximately 2,000-word take-home exam, and attendance. The in-class exams consist of identifications (i.e., explaining the significance of terms) and a medium-length essay question, and both parts are based on the lectures and readings. The take-home examination will be given in lieu of a final exam, and I will discuss it in more detail later in the semester.

Course grades are computed precisely according to the following formula (**THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE**):

In-class exam #1 = 22.5%; In-class exam #2 = 22.5%; In-class exam #3 = 22.5%; Take-home exam = 22.5%; Attendance = 10%

Computed scores then correspond strictly to the following scale:

97.5-100	A+
92.5-97.49	A
89.5-92.49	A-
87.5-89.49	B+
82.5-87.49	B
79.5-82.49	B-
77.5-79.49	C+
72.5-76.49	C
69.5-72.49	C-
67.5-69.49	D+
62.5-66.49	D
59.5-62.49	D-
0-59.49	F

Behavior During Examinations

In order to ensure that all students take tests honestly, the following is prohibited during in-class examinations:

1) talking or whispering to another student for ANY reason – direct all questions, requests, and concerns to me; 2) looking around the room – eyes must be directed on your examination AT ALL TIMES; 3) having notes or an open book visible to any student taking the exam – this includes the owner of the open notes/book and all students whose line of sight includes the open notes/book – ALL STUDENTS INVOLVED WILL BE PUNISHED SIMILARLY

An infraction of any of these rules will result in immediate confiscation of your exam, dismissal from the room, and an “F” in the course. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS!

I will allow students to take make up examinations if the following conditions are met:

- 1) students receive advanced permission; or 2) students provide documentation to substantiate emergency situations

All make up examinations must occur in office hours or during a time convenient to me.

Fraud and Plagiarism

The Undergraduate Catalogue contains The University of South Florida’s policy on plagiarism. All students must familiarize themselves with it. Students can find the plagiarism policy on-line at: <http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0809/adadap.htm>. A single act of plagiarism can result in an academic dishonesty grade (FF) for the course. The take-home final must be submitted both as a hard copy and through SAFE-ASSIGNMENT ON BLACKBOARD.

ASSIGNED READINGS

In assigning texts for this course, I have several goals in mind. First, it is essential that students be given a comprehensive account of the subject matter; consequently, it is necessary in an upper level class to assign more than one book, even if there is some overlap. Nevertheless, I also try to minimize costs. Therefore, I endeavor to select the cheapest books possible, almost exclusively paperback books with black-and-white coloring. Moreover, because this class focuses on the political, social, and economic influences on the law, it is essential that I select books and readings that emphasize law, politics, society, and economics. Finally, it is essential that undergraduate students be exposed to scholarly works in the field; consequently, I am assigning a collection of scholarly works on law and politics, which are located in a packet available at Pro-Copy.

- 1) David W. Neubauer and Stephen S. Meinhold, *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States*, 6th edition (Cengage)
- 2) Steven Vago, *Law and Society*, 10th edition (Prentice-Hall)
- 3) Readings in the Pro-Copy packet

COURSE OUTLINE

Aug. 26th: Class Explained, No Readings

Aug. 28th – Aug 30th: Defining Law and Legal Systems

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapters 1-2

Vago, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (pp. 38-44 only)

Greg Miller, "The Rise of Animal Law" – in Pro-Copy Packet

NOTE: THERE IS NO CLASS ON SEP. 2ND – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Sep. 4th – Sep. 11th: Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy

Vago, Chapter 2 (pp. 44-82 only)

Banks and O'Brien, "The Politics of Law and Jurisprudence" – in Pro-Copy packet

L. Lon Fuller, "The Case of the Speluncean Explorers" – in Pro-Copy packet

Sep. 13th: In-Class Exam #1

Sep. 16th – Sep. 23rd: The Structure and Organization of Federal and State Court Systems

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapters 3-4

Vago, Chapter 3

Jeremy Buchman, "Judicial Lobbying and the Politics of Judicial Structure: An Examination of the Judiciary Act of 1925" – in Pro-Copy packet

Sep. 25th – Oct. 4th: Judges and Judicial Selection

Neubauer and Meinhold, Ch. 6

Henry Abraham, "The Nixon Era: A Turbulent Case Study" – in Pro-Copy packet

David Brody, "The Relationship Between Judicial Performance and Judicial Elections" -- in Pro-Copy packet

Oct. 7th – Oct. 11th: Judicial Decision Making and Policy Making

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapters 13-15

Vago, Chapter 4

Tracy George and Lee Epstein, "On the Nature of Supreme Court Decision- Making" – in Pro-Copy packet

Oct. 14th: In-Class Exam #2

Oct. 16th – Oct. 23rd: Legal Representation

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapter 5

Vago, Chapter 8

Susan Lawrence, "Philosophies of Legal Assistance and Access to Courts" – in Pro-Copy packet

Oct. 23rd – Nov. 1st: Interest Group Litigation and Access to Court
Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapter 7

Vago, Chapter 7

Steven Tauber, “The Influence of Animal Advocacy Groups in State Courts of Last Resort” – in Pro-Copy packet

Rebecca Deen, et. al., “Individual Justices and the Solicitor General: The Amicus Curiae Cases, 1953-2000” – in Pro-Copy packet

Nov. 1st – Nov. 8th: Juries and Representative Democracy

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapter 12

Robert Boatright and Elissa Krauss, “Jury Summit 2001” – in Pro-Copy packet

THERE IS NO CLASS ON NOV. 11TH – VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY

Nov. 13th: In-Class Exam #3

Nov. 15th – Nov. 25th: The Politics of Criminal Law

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapters 8-9

Vago, Chapter 5

David Rudovsky, “The Criminal Justice System and the Role of the Police” – in Pro-Copy packet

Nov. 27th – Dec. 6th: The Politics of Tort Law

Neubauer and Meinhold, Chapters 10-11

Vago, Chapter 6

Herbert Kritzer, “Public Perceptions of Civil Jury Verdicts” – in Pro-Copy packet

THERE IS NO CLASS ON NOV. 29TH – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Dec. 11th: Take-Home Exam due in SOC 352 by 5PM