

**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
LAW & POLICY IN A CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY
PLSC 305—Winter, 2016**

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Mark Maironis
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Office hours: 11:00 to 12:30 p.m., Monday & Wednesday and by appointment.
Class time: 24/7
Location: Online

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction, at the collegiate level, to the American judicial process. It explores the law's philosophical, historical, and cultural antecedents and its practical applications in our "modern" society. In the class we will focus our concerns on the development of various legal entities, their interaction and the outcomes of those interactions. Most importantly, we will identify those outside factors which may influence those outcomes. Upon its completion, you should be knowledgeable with our "American Judicial Process" and the part it plays in all of our lives on a daily basis.

REQUIRED READING

Law, Politics, and Society, Suzanne Samuel, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006, ISBN:0-618-37651-8.

EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS

There will be three exams and one written assignment. Exams will cover both reading and lecture materials contained on the audio slideshow and are not cumulative. The exams will consist of multiple choice and true or false questions. Exams must be taken within the 24 hours allocated for the exam unless another time has been previously approved by the instructor or in the case of a documented emergency. In those cases exams will have to be taken in person in the office. Each exam will constitute 25% of your grade. The writing assignment will constitute the remaining 25% of your grade.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this assignment is to enhance your critical thinking skills while reinforcing some of the course content which you have been exposed to. It should also assist you in ascertaining your knowledge of the subject matter. Further, it will hopefully challenge your ability to apply the law to a particular set of facts.

The assignment consists of choosing a federal law that is currently being enforced. It may be either criminal or civil in nature. You are to track it from its inception to its actual application. You are required to provide in the paper the reasons and justification for the law, the sponsors of the law, the arguments surrounding its passage, the applicable portion of the law you're dealing with, and a court decision dealing with the actual application of the law. Lastly, you will compare any differences which exist between the original intent and the actual results that if obtained.

The paper should be five to six pages long, typed and double-spaced. It should be submitted using the dropbox method. Grading will be based on your knowledge of the law (derived from this course), how you applied it to the facts and the reasonableness of your arguments. It will constitute 25% of your course grade. It is due April 4, 2016. **No late papers will be accepted.**

EXTRA CREDIT

The Threaded Discussions are an additional exercise that you should participate in if you wish to earn extra credit as outlined below. I do not participate in these discussions, I merely monitor and assess them. You can only log on to them prior to the exam for the units to which they are assigned. For example, the first exam is for February 8, 2016, you must complete the Threaded Discussion for Units 1 to 4 prior to February 8, 2016, i.e. on or before February 7th. The purpose of these discussions is to generate some thought-related ideas centered around certain questions I have proposed. You are evaluated on the depth of your response, its applicability to the subject matter, and your understanding of the ideas being discussed. You are not guaranteed any points merely by responding to the discussions if these criteria are not met. **Units 1 & 2 discussions will be graded concurrently with their submission, all others will be graded at the close of the semester.**

Students may earn up to 50 extra points by participating in the "Threaded Discussions" at the end of each unit. There will be a threaded discussion at the end of each unit with a particular question poised. Students may respond to these questions at their discretion. Based on the caliber of their response students may earn 10 points per unit for their responses, **up to a total of 60** extra credit points for the semester. You cannot receive all 120 extra credit points. Students are encouraged to participate as these discussions are designed to illustrate a particular point or concept covered in that unit.

POINTS

Exam #1 100 points
 Exam # 2 100 points
 Final Exam 100 points
 Writing Assignment 100 points

Total Points: 400
 (Extra Credit: Additional 60 points)

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

1/6 to 2/7/16	Introduction	Chapter 1
	American Law & Legal Theory	Chapter 2
	Foundations of American Law	Chapter 3
	Comparative Context for American Law	Chapter 4
2/8/16	<u>First Exam</u>	
2/8 to 3/6/16	The Structure of and Participants in the American Court System	Chapter 6
	The Function of American Courts	Chapter 7
	Legislature & Lawmaking	Chapter 8
	Chief Executives, Regulatory Agencies, Administrative Agencies, & Lawmaking	Chapter 9
3/7/16	<u>Second Exam</u>	
3/7/ to 4/21/16	Law Enforcement Personnel & Lawmaking	Chapter 10
	Law, Race, and the Law	Chapter 11
	Law & Gender	Chapter 12
	Law & Class	Chapter 13
4/4/16	Writing Assignment Due	
4/22/16	<u>Final Exam</u>	

ONLINE HELP

Since I am almost completely computer illiterate I can help you very little if you're experiencing technical difficulties. To this end, there are three valuable resources that you have available to assist you should the need arise. The first one walks you through the drop box system. This system will be used to submit your papers. A demonstration of this system can be found at: <http://emuonline.info/demos/dropbox.htm>.

The second source you can use if you are having trouble getting on to the online course is by phone: (888) 538-0515. This is the phone number to Continuing Education which is the sponsor of this course. The last number which may be used if you are having problems logging in is the ICT Help Desk at (734) 487-2012. If you still are having problems with the online course after contacting the appropriate department, please notify me immediately and we'll see what we can work out.

******SPECIAL NOTE******

The course offers an audio PowerPoint slideshow **and** a non-audio presentation which is essentially the PowerPoint without the audio. Some students will attempt to view the PowerPoint presentation only (since it is faster,) rather than the audio PowerPoint slideshow which is much longer and is time regulated. **This does not work!** If you do not listen to the audio slideshow you cannot pass this course. The non-audio presentation should only be used to refresh your memory after you have listened to the audio portion.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty but if you are not sure about whether something you are doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with the course instructor. You may access the Code online at: www.emich.edu/student_conduct/.

Maximum Online Courses:

Just a reminder that the maximum number of courses that may be applied to your Political Science major is four. Other departments may have different requirements and you should check with them for any similar limitations.

