

SYLLABUS POLS 280 INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL & LEGAL THEORY FALL 2025

About the Instructor

Name: Tim Kalinowski

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Office: PH 0416

Office Hours: 12:15-12:45pm, Tuesday PH0416;
Noon-12:30pm, Wednesday PH0416;
4:00-5:00pm, Wednesday online (probably Zoom);
or by appointment

Sections: POLS 280-001 (11:00 am-12:15 pm, T&Th, FH 0103)

Website: www.timski.com \POLS280

Communicating with the instructor

The primary mode of communication outside of class should be via the email address above or office hours.

About the Course

Course description

This course assesses laws, policy, and structures with elementary empirical and normative approaches. This course is designed to expose students to multiple perspectives on political issues and show how empirical and normative logic shapes those opinions of those issues.

Course goals and objectives

Students who complete this course should be able to:

- Understand basic empirical and normative approaches to assessing laws, policies, and structures.
- Learn basic concepts and vocabulary political and legal theory
- Critically analyze basic law and justice issues from cross-cultural political and legal traditions and theoretical perspectives
- Communicate about complex and controversial topics.

Course textbooks

No specific textbook. A substantial number of readings are available in PDF form or online as specified in Blackboard under Coursework.

Course requirements

Subject to Change Notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. You are responsible for staying in touch with your instructor, reviewing the course site regularly, or communicating with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

Course Format:

The format of the course will be primarily discussion. Relevant questions are always in order. The lectures will be used to stress, emphasize, and reinforce the importance of key matters mostly also covered in the readings.

Grading scale

Your final grade will be determined on a percentage basis roughly as follows:

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

below 60% = F

Grading breakdown

The course grade will be determined as follows:

10% - Class Participation

30% - Journal Entries

30% - Research paper

30% - Final Exam

Course activities/assessments

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading assignments are drawn from many sources and are posted under Coursework on Blackboard.. Please consult the schedule in this syllabus. Readings should be completed prior to the day scheduled. Please recognize that this is a tentative schedule and be aware that additional readings or omitted readings may be announced in class.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

You will be expected to know and understand reading materials thoroughly. You will be expected to participate in class activities – conversations related to readings, project research, presenting results, etc. Listening to and participating in conversations about complex and controversial material is part of your responsibility to your classmates to facilitate the learning of all students.

READING JOURNAL:

Under Coursework in Blackboard you will find *Reading Journal Entries*. You should take 15 minutes after each assigned reading to think about the material. The subject line of your heading should specify the date and title of the assignment you are

responding to. You should provide a good faith statement of what you found to be new to you or of most importance. You should specify any reactions to the material and any questions the material raises in your mind. Additional prompts specific to a particular reading may be required and maybe specified in class or as a Blackboard Announcement. **You must also develop a question (from the reading) to be answered on the final exam.** Each section of the Syllabus specifies the number of readings and the minimum number of journal entries from that section. Each reading below that number will result in a reduction in your grade. (The Journal Entries are 30% of your grade. Each deduction will essentially result in lowering of your overall grade by 2 points. Another way to think of this: each journal entry is worth 2 points on your final grade – until you reach max credit of 15 readings – but each section has a maximum number you will get credit for as well.)

PROJECT:

Subject to the approval of the instructor, each student must choose current sociopolitical issue to assess. The details of the project are explained in a separate document. The project is 30% of your grade.

EXAMINATIONS:

Exam – One exam be given during final exam week as indicated on the schedule herein. The questions will be drawn from your journal entries (see above). **The form of the exam is to be decided after discussions with the class, but is likely to be two essay questions worth 30 points each and 20 multiple-choice questions worth 2 points each.**

Final Exam date: As specified by the Registrar's Office on the Academic Calendar.

Submitting work

Other than Journal Entries, all assignments should be emailed to the instructor at the email address stated above. The name of each file attached should include the student's last name and an indication of the assignment. For example, if the instructor were turning a project, the file would be named Kalinowski280Project.doc

Journal entries should be made by 9:00 am CT the day the reading is assigned.

No Pass Policy

Irrespective of the grading rubric, I reserve the authority to issue a grade of zero for the research paper if the research paper is not of the quality I expect from a university student. This determination is solely mine and is somewhat subjective based upon the content of the paper and the effective communication of that content. While the grading rubric for the paper provides that points will be deducted for lack of content, poor form, poor grammar, improper citation, etc., I have received research papers that were of such poor quality that I was embarrassed that the student was allowed to pass the class. If such a situation occurs in this class, the student will be given one week after the papers are returned to adequately improve the paper. The grade based upon the rubric for the assignment will not increase. A failure to adequately improve the paper will most likely result in a grade of F for the class because the research paper is 30% of the course grade.

Classroom Expectation:

The usual restrictions and/or regulations in university classes will apply in this course:

1) Cheating (including plagiarism) will not be tolerated; those who are caught cheating will fail the course.

2) Subject to other university policy, attendance is required, and students may be penalized for missing class.

3) Tests are to be taken when scheduled. Make-up exams will be given only for compelling reasons.

4) This class involves the improvisational discussion of controversial material with much of it presented by students. Based upon more than 15 years of teaching this type of material, the instructor has found that many students will not discuss such controversial material when they are being recorded. This hinders the delivery of the curriculum and results in a situation where all students are limited in observing how to critically analyze the material being discussed. **During this class, no photographing, recording, or otherwise capturing the image or voice of students or faculty is allowed without the instructor's permission. Any such act will be considered a Classroom Disruption under Student Code of Conduct – 3C1 and subject to the punitive outcomes outlined under that policy.**

5) Because this class involves the improvisational discussion of controversial material, sometimes a position is inelegantly stated. Each person in the class deserves the benefit of a good faith interpretation of what was stated.

6) **Masks.** Unless and until otherwise specified, the decision to wear a mask in this class is left to the individual. Moral opprobrium should not be extended to anyone for their decision to mask or not to mask. Health reasons may exist for either decision.

7) **Artificial Intelligence.** Specific limitations regarding your paper are included with the instructions for that assignment. In various courses, you may see different instructions prohibiting the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on graded assignments. Each person's understanding of the meaning of AI may be different even within categories such as assistive, generative, and self-learning. Depending on the person, AI may include advanced search engines, statistics and graphing packages, grammar checkers, plagiarism checkers, translation tools, code generators, natural language generators, etc. In this class, you are expected to use AI tools such as search engines, grammar checkers, and if relevant, statistics and graphing packages. However, journal entries should be solely your thoughts and reactions, and you should construct the sentences and paragraphs in your paper. Quite simply, you must be the author of all coursework. If you are not, you should cite the source of the quotation. Every citation is a representation that you have reviewed that source, that you accurately conveyed the content of that source, and that you presented the material in the proper context. If you used statistical modeling or graphic representations, I expect that you used appropriate tools such as Excel and that you did not do the calculations or draw the graphs yourself. Some instructors may insist that you cite the versions of the tools you used. That is not necessary in this class. A failure to comply with these instructions related to AI will be treated as plagiarism under the University's plagiarism policy. <https://www.siue.edu/policies/li6>

Student Conduct in Class:

(borrowed from Dr. DeGarmo but with minor edits):

Political Science is a field of debate and disagreement - that is what is so exciting about this field. But given that Political Science can be a contentious subject, some simple rules of behavior will be required. First, no behavior that manifests a lack of respect for others or their learning objectives will be tolerated. Should you engage in disrespectful, hostile, or disruptive behavior, you will be removed from class immediately. Everyone must feel comfortable stating and defending his or her own views.

You may use a laptop in class to access online coursework or to type your own notes. **You may not use your laptop to surf the internet or check your email. You are expected to close your computer when we are involved in class discussion. Additionally, please turn your cell phones off and stow them in a backpack for the duration of the class. If you fail to follow these few simple rules, all student electronic devices will be banned from the classroom and the entire class may be penalized up to one-letter grade in their final course grade.**

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

Academic honesty and integrity are the keystones of education. Genuine learning can only occur in an atmosphere of honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity also provide the foundation to good citizenship. You should consult the SIUE policy on honesty and integrity before taking this class. In regard to academic dishonesty: No kind or degree of academic dishonesty (i.e. cheating or plagiarism) will be tolerated. Any such behavior on any assignment will result in failing the course and additional measures taken through official channels. There are no exceptions to this rule – you plagiarize and you fail the course. Please review: <https://www.siu.edu/policies/table-of-contents/3c2.shtml>

Feel free to ask me questions you may have about academic honesty. The core principle behind the student academic code is one in which students represent original work. When you plagiarize or cheat, you violate the expectation of honesty and trust between teacher and student and student and student. Students who work hard to complete assignments are being violated by those who take shortcuts to complete the same assignment; plus cheaters and plagiarizers cheat themselves of the opportunity to learn. Therefore, I expect that not only will you use appropriate citation, but that the work for the course is your own and it is original.

Attribution:

Dr. Timothy Lewis created a draft of a syllabus for this course which was reviewed and influenced the creation of this syllabus and course design.

Course Schedule

Subject to Change

Date	# of Pages	Assignment
Aug 19	0	Introduction
Political Theory (6/9)		
Aug 21	8 30	Warren – What is Political Theory/Philosophy Bloom – The Republic of Plato – Book VI
Aug 26	28	Bloom – The Republic of Plato – Book VII
Aug 28	??	Approaches to Legal Theory – Ch 1 parts g-k g – Approaches in Political Theory h – Historic Approach i – Normative Approach j – Empirical Approach k – Contemporary Approach
Sep 2	39	Epstein – <i>Empirical Legal Research</i> Chs 1 & 2
Sep 4	??	Dawson – <i>Black Visions</i> – Appendix: various tables, charts, etc.
Sep 9	20	York – <i>Traditional Knowledge & Perspectives</i>
Sep 11	28	Rawls – <i>Justice as Fairness</i>
Sep 16	20 ??	King, Jr. – <i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i> Frazier - <i>African American Rhetoric and the Art of Persuasion</i>
Sep 18	15	Kim – <i>The Confucian Tradition and Politics</i> Project topic due – via email
Legal Theory (5/7)		
Sep 23	37	Hart - <i>Positivism and the Separation of Law and Morals</i> (PDF)
Sep 25	43	Fuller - <i>Positivism and Fidelity to Law: A Reply to Prof. Hart</i> (PDF)
Sep 30	33	Hobbes - Pt 1 Ch 7 - <i>Of the Ends, or Resolutions of Discourse</i> Pt 1 Ch 14 - <i>Of the First & Second Natural Lawes & of Contract</i> Pt 1 Ch 15 - <i>Of Other Lawes of Nature</i> Project outline due – prior to research – via email
Oct 2	35	Hobbes - Pt 2 Ch 18 - <i>Of the Rights of Sovereigns by Institution</i> Pt 2 Ch 20 - <i>Of Dominion Paternall, and Despotically</i> Pt 2 Ch 21 - <i>Of the Liberty of Subjects</i>
Oct 7	35	Hobbes - Pt 2 Ch 26 - <i>Of Civil Lawes</i> Pt 2 Ch 27 - <i>Of Crimes, Excuses, and Extenuations</i> Pt 2 Ch 28 - <i>Of Punishments, and Rewards</i>

Oct 9	19	Locke - Ch II - <i>Of the State of Nature</i> Ch IV - <i>Of Slavery</i> Ch V - <i>Of Property</i>
Oct 14	?? 2 ??	U.S. Declaration of Independence Douglass – <i>What to a Slave is the 4th of July?</i> (excerpts) Philippine Declaration of Independence Project outline and list of credible sources due – via email
Structures (4/5)		
Oct 16	20 ??	Locke - Ch X - <i>Of the Forms of a Common-wealth</i> Ch XI - <i>Of the Extent of the Legislative Power</i> Ch XII - <i>Of the Legislative, Executive, and Federative Power</i> Ch XIII - <i>Of Subordination of the Powers of the Common-wealth</i> Ch XIV - <i>Of Prerogative</i> Federalist 10, 51, 78
Oct 21	22	Breyer - Ch 7 - <i>The Basic Approach</i> ; Ch 8 - <i>Congress, Statutes, and Purposes</i>
Oct 23	13 10	Scalia pg 213 - <i>The Congressional Power</i> Scalia pg 234 - <i>Legislative History</i>
Oct 28	10 18	Breyer - Ch 1 - <i>Judicial Review: The Democratic Anomaly</i> O’Conner pg 3-20 – <i>Looming Large</i>
Oct 30	12 22	Scalia pg 223 - <i>The Crisis in Judicial Appointments</i> Scalia pg 271 - <i>Dissents</i>
Policies & Functions (5/8)		
Nov 4	29	Unger – <i>The Critical Legal Studies Movement</i> (1-29)
Nov 6	30	Unger – <i>The Critical Legal Studies Movement</i> (29-59) Project – final paper due
Nov 11	32	Posner – <i>The Jurisprudence of Skepticism</i> (827-858)
Nov 13	32	Posner – <i>The Jurisprudence of Skepticism</i> (858-891)
Nov 18	23	Dworkin - Chapter 7 - <i>Taking Rights Seriously</i>
Nov 20	5 11	Scalia pg 342 - <i>The Holocaust</i> Breyer - Ch 3 - <i>The Cherokees</i>
Nov 24-30		Thanksgiving
Dec 2	6	MacKinnon – <i>Pornography: On Morality and Politics</i> review
Dec 4	6	Elsby – <i>The Paradox of Tolerance</i> review
Finals Week		

Reference to University Policies:

Special Accommodations:

Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. Students who believe they have a diagnosis, but do not have documentation, should contact ACCESS for assistance and/or appropriate referral. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1203. You can also reach the office by emailing us at myaccess@siue.edu or by calling [618-650-3726](tel:618-650-3726).

If you feel you would need additional help in the event of an emergency situation, please notify your instructor to be shown the evacuation route and discuss specific needs for assistance.

Academic Integrity

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the Student Academic Code (3C2) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. The full text of the policy can be found here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>.

Student Success Coaches

[Student success coaches](#) work across campus to serve the SIUE student population with the tools and resources to adjust to and meet the demands of the college experience. Success coaches provide direct services such as time management support and referrals to campus resources. If you find yourself in need of academic or personal support, or in a situation that is preventing you from being successful in the classroom, please utilize [Starfish](#) to connect with a coach as soon as possible. The sooner you engage, the sooner you can access the information or tools you need that may help you get back on track.

Pregnancy and Newly Parenting Policy

This policy and procedure are established to ensure the protection and equal treatment of pregnant students, students with pregnancy-related medical conditions including as a result of the termination of pregnancy, and students who become new parents including parents adopting or fostering to adopt for the first 12 weeks a child is in the home, in accordance with Federal and State guidelines and regulations. "New Parents" refers to a parent who has recently welcomed a newborn or adopted a child or is fostering to adopt a child and needs support to mitigate the disruption in academic progress within the first 12 weeks of parenting or a parent that needs support due to medical necessity attributed to pregnancy or delivery of a child; care of newborn; or lactation within the first year of child's life or legal adoption/fostering. Visit [Policies & Procedures - Student Rights and Conduct - Newly Parenting Policy - 3C15](#) to view the full policy and learn how to request accommodations through the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX Coordination (EOA).