



## Course Syllabus

### Course Description

Designed to study the relationship between politics, ethics, and literature, the course will review modern day political and ethical dilemmas and study the impact of literature on our nation's concepts of justice, fairness and morality.

Course participants will be required to complete assigned weekly readings, participate actively in class discussions, keep track of current events, and write analyses of reading assignments.

### Lecturer

Pete P. Gallego

Office Hours: By Appointment

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### Class Plan

Our class will meet weekly on Monday evenings from 6:00pm - 8:50pm in Lawrence Hall, Room 201. Because we will be a small class, there may occasionally be another designated meeting place.

Prior to class, you will be expected to have kept up with current events and read the assigned readings. This is crucial to success in the class. Our class will meet weekly on Monday evenings. Prior to class, you will be expected to have kept up with current events and read the assigned readings. This is crucial to success in the class.

You will be expected to write a detailed analysis of six of our readings and relate the readings to current events. You are to choose which readings you will analyze by the second week of class and submit them to me for approval.

Your analysis of a reading will be due immediately prior to our class discussion of the reading. While I will facilitate and guide the class discussion of the reading, you will be expected to lead and fully participate in the discussion of the readings you have analyzed.

Finally, in addition to a final exam, I will also occasionally administer exams on our readings. These exams will be administered (probably every other week) to be sure that you are understanding the readings and deriving something from the class discussions.

## **Basis of Grading**

You will be graded on attendance and participation in the class discussions, the written analyses you have submitted, and your performance on the exams. Our final exam will be cumulative. If you are interested in supplementing your grade with additional work, please see me.

Your analyses of the readings will cumulatively account for 40% of your grade. Class participation will account for 25% of your grade. Your performance on exams will cumulatively account for 20% of your grade while your performance on the final exam will account for the remaining 15% of your grade.

The analyses of the readings should contain much more than a simple recitation of the plot in each of our readings. On the contrary, I expect a detailed, in-depth review of the author's points of view and a discussion of how the lessons learned from the writing can be applied to historical and modern day events. As an attorney, I will also expect that you provide evidence for whatever conclusions you reach.

You will be expected to help lead the discussion on the readings which you have analyzed. Thus, it is imperative that your written analysis be turned in on a timely basis immediately prior to our class meeting. For every day a writing assignment is late, I will drop its grade one full level (i.e. from a B+ to a C+).

The exams will be a combination of true/false questions, fill in the blank questions and short-answer essay exams. The short answer essay questions will account for 50% of your score. The final exam will be made up entirely of long and short essay questions.

I grade assignments on a standard 100-point scale. At the end of the semester I compute a final grade based on the weights associated with each assignment. I convert that final numerical grade into a letter grade. Below is an explanation of my grading criteria, followed by a comparative breakdown of letter grades and quality points.

A – Demonstrates superior understanding of the topic; presents factors of central significance and explains them with substantial factual detail; clearly shows how these factors operate and interrelate; follows all instructions and guidelines; if written, done so in a clear and professional style, with correct grammar and spelling.

B – Demonstrates an accurate grasp of the topic; presents important factors and explains them with appropriate specifics; shows less detailed knowledge and less synthesis than A-quality work, but meets basic requirements of assignment; if written, done so in a style that is clear, correct, and professional.

C – Demonstrates an acceptable but commonplace or shallow understanding of the topic; presents important factors, but explains them with only the most obvious specifics; may omit some important factors or make factual errors; if written, done so in a style that may cause the reader minor distractions.

D – Demonstrates limited understanding, or partial misunderstanding, of the topic; may omit important aspects of a topic and make numerous factual errors; may omit some requirements of assignment; if written, done so in an unprofessional style that impedes the reader’s understanding.

F – Demonstrates little or no grasp of the topic; if written, done so in an unprofessional style that causes the reader significant difficulty.

A	“superior”	93-100	4.000
A-		90-93	3.667
B+		87-90	3.333
B	“good”	83-87	3.000
B-		80-83	2.667
C+		77-80	2.333
C	“average”	73-77	2.000
C-		70-73	1.667
D+	“poor”	65-70	1.333
D		60-65	1.000
F	“failure”	below 60	0.000

Please keep in mind that I take these standards seriously. I believe most of you are capable of doing “good” work. I expect all of you to strive for a professional quality in your assignments.

I reserve the “A” for exemplary work – work that is of truly superior quality, surpassing expectations and exceeding standards. Simple regurgitation does not qualify as “exemplary.”

Work that is barely adequate, that demonstrates lack of preparation and care, and that fails to meet what I consider to be acceptable university-level standards will be evaluated accordingly.

Lastly, be aware that simply logging in a certain number of hours on a project does not constitute meritorious performance.

### **Class Discussions & Readings**

Aug 24        Organizational meeting; Discussion of expectations & class schedule; Preliminary discussions on politics & ethics

Aug 31        Parties, Factions & the Ideological Divide  
Reading: Anthem - Ayn Rand  
[Http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Ayn\\_Rand/Anthem/](http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Ayn_Rand/Anthem/)

Sept 7        Labor Day Holiday - No Class Meeting

Sept 14       Playing the Game Well: Is it Right or Moral?  
Reading: The Prince - Niccolò Machiavelli  
[Http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince.pdf](http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince.pdf)

Sept 21       Justice & Fairness: Are They the Same?  
Reading: Billy Budd, Sailor - Herman Melville  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/bb/BillyBudd.html>

Sept 28       The Politics of Race  
Reading: Native Son - Richard Wright  
Available in the University Bookstore  
[http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/s/ref=is\\_s?rh=i%3Aaps&k=native+son+richard+wright](http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/s/ref=is_s?rh=i%3Aaps&k=native+son+richard+wright)

- Oct 5 Family Values: Whose Family?  
 "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" - Berthold Brecht  
 Available in the University Bookstore  
 Available online (by opening an account) at: [https://openlibrary.org/books/OL46857M/The\\_Caucasian\\_chalk\\_circle/borrow](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL46857M/The_Caucasian_chalk_circle/borrow)
- Oct 12 The Role of Women: Stereotype, Double Standard or Reality?  
Antigone - Sophocles  
[https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/antigone\\_2.pdf](https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/antigone_2.pdf)
- Oct 19 The Good & Bad of Wealth & Power  
 Reading: Animal Farm - George Orwell  
<http://www.book4free.us/2014/09/animal-farm-pdf.html>
- Oct 26 Motives: Taxing, Spending & the Lobby  
The Merchant of Venice - William Shakespeare  
[Http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/playmenu.php?WorkID=merchantvenice](http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/playmenu.php?WorkID=merchantvenice)
- Nov 2 Can One Person Make a Difference?  
 Reading: Chronicle of a Death Foretold - Gabriel Garcia Marquez  
<https://d3jc3ahdjad7x7.cloudfront.net/5McRntL6oWc5eFevYZ8Z5k3Mh1xj7lfpw4x5Y0mcSwSA1zYi.pdf>
- Nov 9 Balancing Democracy, Individual Rights & National Security  
 Reading: The Rights of Man - Thomas Paine  
<http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/right.pdf>
- Nov 16 The Credibility Gap - Issues in Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice  
 Reading: The Trial - Franz Kafka  
[Http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7849](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7849)

- Nov 23      Are There "Strangers" in American Society?  
Reading: The Stranger - Albert Camus  
<http://www.macobo.com/essays/epdf/CAMUS,%20Albert%20-%20The%20Stranger.pdf>
- Nov 30      Popular Opinion: Does it Matter?  
Reading: The Jungle - Upton Sinclair  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/140/140-h/140-h.htm>
- Dec 7        Order vs Chaos: Politics & the War on Terrorism  
Reading: "The Lottery" - Shirley Jackson  
[https://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/jackson\\_lottery.pdf](https://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/jackson_lottery.pdf)
- Dec 14      Final Exam