

Political Problems of the Contemporary World
Political Science 597.02
191 Mendenhall Laboratory
Tuesday and Thursday 7:30 – 9:18 p.m.

Instructor: Kerry M. Hodak, M.A., J.D.
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Office Hours:
Wednesdays: 1:00 – 2:00p
Thursdays: 11:00a – 12:00p
and by appointment

Course Description

This course will examine the role of law, courts, and judges in politics across several countries. The first half of the course will focus on how different legal systems operate within the context of national political systems. The second half of the course will examine the role of courts in social change and in the establishment of social and political rights. During the course, we will learn about the distinctions between the civil law and common law systems. We will also examine issues of judicial independence, judicial selection, and the varying roles of the court in society. Throughout the course, we will consider the following five areas: criminal law, civil law, economic issues, constitutionalism, and individual rights. This course is designed to develop those analytical skills needed to think critically about the law, courts, and politics and to give students an opportunity to think independently about issues that society faces.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of differing judicial systems and their role in the development of individual rights cross-nationally. The course will provide students an opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes about the role of law and courts in society. Additionally, students will develop analytical, writing, and presentation skills using scholarly research.

*GEC Capstone Experiences*¹

Goals/Rationale:

Thematic upper-division course work, drawing upon multiple disciplines, enriches students' experiences of the contemporary world.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to contemporary issues.
2. Students write about or conduct research on the contemporary world.

¹ This language is required by the University.

Readings

The following books are required for the course and are available for purchase at SBX Bookstore.

- Epp, Charles R. 1998. *The Rights Revolution: Lawyers, Activists, and Supreme Courts in Comparative Perspective*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226211622 (abbreviated in schedule as *Rights*)
- Jacob, Herbert, et al. 1996. *Courts, Law, and Politics in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN: 0300063792 (abbreviated in schedule as *Courts*)

The following book is recommended for purchase:

- Rosenberg, Gerald N. 1991. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226727033 (abbreviated in schedule as *Hope*)

You may also purchase these books online through various outlets including Half.com, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. A copy of each of these books as well as additional readings will be on reserve at the Main Library. In addition to the books and materials on reserve, there will be current news articles assigned. Students will be notified via email of the articles assigned and when they will be discussed in class.

Additionally, each student will read two scholarly articles of their choice with approval of the instructor. The process for the selection will be provided in an assignment handout.

Assignments and Grading

The course grade will be based on the following:

- Reading quizzes - 10%
There will be six unannounced reading quizzes given over the course of the quarter. The lowest scored quiz will not be calculated into the final grade. Make-up quizzes will only be given if the student has provided a legitimate excuse prior to the class in which the quiz is given.
- Article Review Papers - 20%
Each student will write two five-page papers reviewing two scholarly articles. A handout will explain the article selection process and more detailed requirements for the assignment.

- Article Presentation – 5%
Students will present one of the articles in which they wrote a review paper in groups of 3-4 to the class. A handout will explain the requirements and expectations of the presentation.
- Midterm Exam – 30%
The midterm exam will be held on Tuesday, November 12. Make-up exams will only be given if the student provides a legitimate excuse prior to the class period in which the exam is given.
- Final Exam – 35%
The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7. Make-up exams will only be given if the student provides a legitimate excuse prior to the class period in which the exam is given. I will notify students of the final exam format during the 9th week of the quarter.
- Late assignments will be accepted but a penalty will be assessed. For each day a paper is late, the grade will be reduced by one full letter grade, e.g. B+ to C+. Under no circumstances may assignments be turned in via email.
- Grading scheme:
93-100%: A
90-92: A-
87-89: B+
83-86: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C+
73-76: C
70-72: C-
67-69: D+
63-66: D
60-62: D-
<60: F

Class Discussion, Participation, and Attendance

Students are expected to participate in class discussions. This ensures that students are thinking critically about the material from the readings. Some of the issues that we will discuss are controversial. Reasonable people can disagree. You must conduct yourself with the utmost decorum. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior is grounds for removal for that class period.

In addition to participation in classroom discussions, a discussion board will be set up on Carmen (the WebCT replacement). Students are encouraged to discuss class material as well as current events. Students may also raise questions on the discussion board.

Attendance at all class sessions is required. Arriving late to class twice is the equivalent of one absence. If a student arrives to class after attendance is taken, it is his/her responsibility to get the record corrected that same class period. Arriving to class more than thirty minutes late is counted as an absence.

Attendance and participation is not taken into account in calculating the final grade per se – attendance and participation will never hurt your grade. However, I will factor in participation and attendance at the margins. Therefore, regular attendance and significant participation can increase your final grade up one plus or minus, e.g. C+ to B- or B to B+. Significant participation includes both quantity and quality – using material from the readings and lecture.

Academic Integrity (Academic Misconduct)

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

I expect all of the work you do in this course will be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's

Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages (oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)

Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (oaa.osu.edu/coam/ten-suggestions.html)

Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity (www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html)

Disability

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

Course Schedule

Every effort will be made to maintain the following schedule. However, the schedule depends on the extent of class discussion. At the end of each class session I will let you know where you ought to be in the readings for the following session. I will also let you know well in advance should the mid-term have to be postponed. Please also note that you will be assigned two articles during the course of the quarter as well as current news articles in addition to the reading assignments below. This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Advance notice will be given should this occur.

Week 1:

September 22: Course Overview

Week 2:

September 27:

Introductory reading packet on reserve at the Main Library

Courts - Chapter 1: Introduction

September 29: *Courts* - Chapter 2 on the United States

Week 3:

October 4 and 6: *Courts* - Chapter 3 on England

Week 4:

October 11 and 13: *Courts* - Chapter 4 on France

Week 5:

October 18 and 20: *Courts* - Chapter 5 on Germany

Week 6:

October 25 and 27: *Courts* - Chapter 6 on Japan and Chapter 7 Conclusion

Week 7:

November 1: Midterm

November 3: *Rights* - Chapters 1-4 (Introduction, Theory, and the Case of the U.S.)

Week 8:

November 8 and 10: *Rights* - Chapters 5-6 on India

Week 9:

November 15 and 17: *Rights* - Chapters 7-8 on Britain

Week 10:

November 22: *Rights* - Chapters 9-10 on Canada

November 24: Thanksgiving. No class.

Week 11:

November 29 and December 1: Continuation of Canada discussion and *Rights* - Chapter 11 Conclusion, and *Hope*: Choice of Civil Rights, Women's Rights, or Environment, Reapportionment and Criminal Law

Week 12:

The exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7 from 7:30p to 9:18p.