

San José State University

Political Science 120: Law and Society, W 6:00-8:45,

204 Clark Hall, Fall Semester 2017

Instructor:	Ben Field
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Office Hours:	By appointment

Canvas and mySJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and study guides can be found on Canvas. Go to www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/ to sign in. You will need your 9-digit SJSU id number. I will also communicate with you using the mySJSU messaging system. Please check your mySJSU email account frequently.

Course Description

A description of this course can be found at: <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/catalog/courses/POLS120.html>

The course examines the relationship between a democratic, capitalist, multicultural society and public policy. The course emphasizes the use of the law to achieve economic and social objectives. Special attention is given to patterns of discrimination endemic in the United States and how the law can alleviate patterns of discrimination based on race, class, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

In addition, this course will contribute to the Political Science Program Learning Outcomes, which political science students are expected reach by upon graduation.

- Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- Application: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- Disciplinary methods: Student should be able to formulate research questions,

engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

- **Communication Skills:** Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
- **Citizenship Students:** should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Required Texts/Readings

Readings are noted below and available online or through Canvas. Additional readings may be added to the syllabus over the course of the semester.

Expectations for the Class

Students should come to each class prepared by having done the assigned readings. You will be asked at the beginning of each class to summarize some or all of the readings. In class, each student should make regular and meaningful contributions to the discussion. If you have a question, raise your hand and the instructor will call on you. The in-class discussions and lectures will often not address the same information that is covered in the readings; nonetheless, students are responsible for knowing all materials covered in both the lectures and the readings. Questions about the readings and lectures are welcome at any time; there will always be time for questions, comments, and discussion at the end of class as well.

Attendance

Every lecture covers material that will appear on exams. If you miss class, you are still responsible for any lecture material that you missed. It is every student's responsibility to maintain excellent class attendance and to keep up with each class lecture.

Electronic Devices

Turn off your cell phone and put it away when you come to class. Do not answer phone calls in class. Do not send, receive, or read messages in class. Do not leave the room to use your cell phone. Do not record, transmit, or broadcast the lectures in any way.

Examinations, Assignments, other Requirements, and Grading Policy

Class Participation: In-class, written work collected at the end of each class.

Midterm: A one hour, multiple choice examination based on the lectures, discussions, and readings from the first half of the class.

Research Paper and Bibliography:

- 1) A bibliography in proper form listing all sources that inform your paper. Sources in your bibliography must be published books, peer reviewed articles or government studies in hard copy form. Websites (e.g. Wikipedia) cannot be cited. The bibliography, which is due several weeks before the paper and is worth up to 20 points, must identify your paper topic at the top of the page. It should cite no fewer than six substantial sources, not including the course readings.
- 2) **You will write a research paper on the redistributive effects of a public policy of your choosing.** One of the most difficult aspects of this assignment is that you must choose your own research question. Avoid questions that are too broad, like the redistributive effects of the healthcare system, or too obscure, like the redistributive effects of stop signs. Pick a policy area that interests you and discuss your topic with Prof. Field before starting your research.

The paper is designed to teach you scholarly research methodology, critical thinking and analytical writing skills. It should meet the following requirements:

- It should be five pages long, not including the bibliography, which should be resubmitted with the paper.
- Typed on a computer in 12 point font, double-space your sentences, and use one side of the paper only. Indent all paragraphs. Do not put spaced lines between paragraphs. Put a 1" margin on both sides of the paper.
- Put your name, the class (PoliSci 120) and the date the paper is due at the top left or right corner of your first page (single-space).
- All factual assertions must be properly footnoted.
- It must be written with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- It should be carefully proofread.
- Tip: After you have written something, read it out loud to yourself or someone else. Often this helps to identify unclear writing

The paper will be due twice. The first submission should be a complete, polished, thoroughly researched, well written analysis. I will then provide comments on your paper, and you will re-write it. The two versions will be graded separately, each on a scale of 1-50 points.

The best papers will contain clear, logical writing, thorough research and probing analysis. Late papers will be accepted, but the score will be reduced 5 points for every school day they are late. All papers must be submitted to Professor Field through Canvas. Students need not turn in hard copies.

Final:

A one and a half hour, multiple choice examination based on the lectures, discussions, and readings for the entire semester, but weighted toward the lectures, discussions, and readings from later weeks.

Student grades will be determined by the following:

Class Participation	100 points
Midterm	80 points
Term Paper	120 points
Final	<u>100 points</u>
Total	400 points

Grading of Political Science Writing

An “A” paper is clearly written and well-organized, but most important, it contains a perceptive, central argument supported by specific evidence. It demonstrates that the student has grappled with the issues raised in the reading and lecture, synthesized the material, and formulated a compelling, independent argument.

A typical “B” paper is solid work that demonstrates that the student has a good grasp of the material. It may provide a summary or reiteration of ideas and information already covered in the literature, with no evidence of independent thought or synthesis. Other “B” papers give evidence of independent thought, but do not present an argument clearly or convincingly.

A typical “C” paper provides a less thorough or accurate summary or a less thorough defense of an argument. A paper that receives a grade less than a “C” typically does not respond adequately to the assignment, and is marred by frequent errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or some combination of these problems.

Please note: NO STUDENT WILL PASS THIS CLASS WITHOUT TURNING IN THE PAPER.

Students should also note that plagiarism will be detected and will result in a failing grade for the assignment at the very least.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the

hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practical. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Additional Class Notes

This is a course that covers a significant body of material in a short period of time. Every student is encouraged to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory, participation is a portion of the grading scale and it is obviously difficult to contribute if you do not attend class. Each student has intellect, experience and a personal point of view to bring into the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

Please avail yourself of the instructor to answer any questions you may have regarding the course and the context in which the subject matter is considered.

POLS 120, Law and Society, Fall 2017 Course Schedule

Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Aug 23	Court visit in lieu of class*
Aug. 30	<p>Inequality and the Law</p> <p>Michael Parenti, Chapters 3 and 4;</p> <p>Milton and Rose Friedman, <i>Free to Choose</i>, Chapter 1;</p> <p>Thomas Piketty, <i>Capital in the Twenty-First Century</i>, Conclusion, pages 571-573;</p>
Sept. 6	<p>Money and Politics</p> <p>The Top 10 Things Every Voter Should Know About Money in Politics, https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/dollarocracy/ (Read all ten)</p> <p>More readings TBD</p>
Sept. 13	<p>Inequality in Education</p> <p>Harvie Wilkerson, From Brown to Bakke, Chapters 3 and 10;</p> <p><i>Brown v. Board</i> at 60, http://www.epi.org/publication/brown-at-60-why-have-we-been-so-disappointed-what-have-we-learned/;</p> <p>Perspectives on <i>Vergara</i>: http://www.cta.org/en/Issues-and-Action/Ongoing-Issues/Vergara-Trial1.aspx;</p> <p>http://studentsmatter.org/case/vergara/;</p> <p>U.S Constitution, Article XIV, section 1, https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiv</p>
Sept. 20	<p>Gender and Sexual Orientation Issues</p> <p>Congressional Research Service Report on Pay Discrimination and <i>Ledbetter v. Goodyear</i>, https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20090429_RS22686_77a3cf9cdd72fdcc20164d7db09f223baa3569a0.pdf;</p>

	<p>National Women’s Law Center Amicus Brief in Ledbetter, pgs 1-6, http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ledbetteramicusbrief.pdf;</p> <p><i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> opinion (Kennedy) https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/14-556#writing-14-556_OPINION_3</p>
Sept. 27	<p>Social Safety Net</p> <p>Michael Parenti, Chapter 7;</p> <p>The Negro Family: The Case For National Action, Chapter IV, Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/#Chapter%20III;</p> <p>Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, http://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/policy-basics-top-ten-facts-about-social-security, http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/policy-basics-federal-payroll-taxes, http://www.cbpp.org/research/health/policy-basics-introduction-to-medicaid.</p> <p>Bibliography due</p>
Oct. 4	<p>Social Safety Net</p> <p>Jacob Hacker, <i>The Great Risk Shift</i>, Chapters 1 and 2.</p>
Oct. 11	<p>Criminal Justice</p> <p>Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i>, Chapter 1</p>
Oct. 18	<p>Midterm</p>
Oct. 25	<p>Labor and the Law (Guest speaker)</p>
Nov 1.	<p>Criminal Justice</p> <p>Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i>, Chapter 3</p> <p>Term Paper Due</p>

<p>Nov. 8</p>	<p>Labor and the Law</p> <p>Economic Policy Institute, Unions, Inequality and Faltering Middle Class Wages, http://www.epi.org/publication/ib342-unions-inequality-faltering-middle-class/;</p> <p>Colin Gordon, <i>Growing Apart</i>, http://scalar.usc.edu/works/growing-apart-a-political-history-of-american-inequality/what-unions-did-labor-policy-and-american-inequality;</p> <p>Eric Schlosser, <i>Fast Food Nation</i>, Chapters 7 and 8</p>
<p>Nov. 15</p>	<p>Monetary and Trade Policy</p> <p>Dean Baker, <i>The End of Loser Liberalism</i>, Chapters 5-8, http://deanbaker.net/images/stories/documents/End-of-Loser-Liberalism.pdf</p>
<p>Nov. 22</p>	<p>Thanksgiving Holiday</p>
<p>Nov. 29</p>	<p>Tax Policy</p> <p>Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, <i>Who Pays</i>, http://www.itep.org/whopays/executive_summary.php;</p> <p>Tax Policy Center, <i>Distribution: Are Federal Taxes Progressive?</i>, http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/background/distribution/progressive-taxes.cfm;</p> <p>Pew Research Center, <i>High Income Americans Pay Most Income Taxes</i>, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/03/24/high-income-americans-pay-most-income-taxes-but-enough-to-be-fair/;</p> <p>New York Times, <i>How the Tax Burden Has Changed</i>, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/11/30/us/tax-burden.html?_r=0</p> <p>Revised Term Paper Due</p>
<p>Dec. 6</p>	<p>Housing and Land Use Policy</p> <p>Kenneth Jackson, <i>Crabgrass Frontier</i>, Chapter 11</p>

Dec. 13 5:15- 7:30	Final Examination

* **Court visit in lieu of class:** There will be no class on August 23. Instead, before class on October 11, please attend a felony arraignment calendar in Department 23, Santa Clara County Superior Court, 200 West Hedding Street, San Jose. Felony arraignments take place every court day at 1:30 PM. After the arraignment calendar is over, please approach the bailiff, identify yourself as a student working on a class assignment and ask to speak with a prosecutor, a defense attorney or the judge. Based on your observations and your conversations with court personnel, please answer in writing the following questions:

1. What are the roles of the public defender, prosecutor and judge?
2. What is the racial and gender make up of the defendants who are in custody?
3. What are the most common types of crimes they are charged with (drug offenses, violent crimes, property crimes like theft or something else)?
4. Why are some of the defendants in custody and some out of custody?
5. Why do some defendants have a public defender and others have a privately hired attorney?

Your answers will count toward your class participation grade and are due by the beginning of class on October 11. If a student is unable to attend felony arraignments in the Santa Clara County Superior Court, he or she may do so in another county. If a student is unable to attend any felony arraignment calendar, he or she should contact Professor Field for an alternative local government observation assignment.