

**LAW AND SOCIETY
POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLS 295 - 01 & 02**

Syllabus Revised Spring 2017

Professor: Alexander M. Sanders, Jr., a/k/a Alex Sanders

Office Hours: Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and at other times by appointment. Students should call in advance of coming – 953-5755. My office is located in the Robert Scott Small Building, Room 302.

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The overall purpose of the course is to develop in students effective oral and written communication skills and to engage in critical thinking (focusing particularly on the ability to develop and articulate a particular perspective and assess competing perspectives). Through a combination of lectures and a rigorous Socratic teaching method, I will mightily endeavor, in the words of Fred Friendly, legendary Dean of the Columbia University School of Journalism, to make the students so uncomfortable they can only escape by thinking.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will consist of a series of lectures designed to teach legal analysis and the legal method of deciding disputes. Classical principles of contract law will serve as the tools for gaining that understanding. Ancillary legal subjects may also be covered. Students will be required to solve typical disputes according to the applicable principles of law. For the relief of tedium and as a precursor to the second part of the course, anecdotal discussion of various social issues will intersperse the lectures on the law, i.e., I will tell stories.

Testing will require definitions and examples of legal terms and discussions of principles of law applicable to the facts of particular disputes. The questions will be given to the students in advance. The answers will also be supplied in advance. However, without a firm understanding of the subject matter, the answers cannot possibly be memorized. With such an understanding, very little memorizing is required. In addition to written class work and oral presentations, there will be at least one graded test and a final examination. The dates will be announced well in advance.

The following scale will be used for assigning letter grades:

A	=	93	-	100	A-	=	90	-	92
B+	=	88	-	89	B	=	83	-	87
B-	=	80	-	82	C+	=	78	-	79
C	=	73	-	77	C-	=	70	-	72
D+	=	68	-	69	D	=	63	-	67
D-	=	60	-	62	F	=	Below		63

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The second part of the course will consist of a series of discussions, in a seminar format, of the intractable issues facing society. Students will confront those issues using the analytical principles learned in the first part of the course. At least, that is the goal. Issues addressed will include, e.g., climate change, abortion, affirmative action, political correctness, the environment, foreign affairs, welfare, animal rights, business ethics, drugs, capital punishment, women's rights, gay rights, the Middle East, terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The students, by consensus with me, will choose the specific issues. Each student will be required to write a paper on one of the issues.

Written class work may also be required.

Generally speaking, the written test will count 1/3 of the final grade, class participation and the paper together will count 1/3, and the final will count 1/3.

Outside reading will be assigned, but no text will be required.

It is very important that I be able to contact every student enrolled at all times. At the first class, they will be asked for their e-mail address and telephone number. They will be asked to read their e-mail and check for telephone messages every day and respond to anything I send them. Should a student's e-mail address or phone number change during the semester, that student should let me know immediately.

UNFAILING CLASS ATTENDANCE AND TIMELY ATTENDANCE WILL BE AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT. STUDENTS WILL BE TOLD, IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS: "DO NOT MISS A SINGLE CLASS FOR ANY REASON."

Course Outline

The lectures, during the first half of the semester, will include introduction to law and to the course, and principles of contract law, including offer, acceptance, and consideration, the characteristics of an offer, revocation of an offer, tangible versus intangible consideration, termination of contracts and damages. The remaining class meetings will consist of discussions of the intractable social issues facing society.

Disability/Access

If there is a student in this class who has a documented disability and has been approved to receive accommodations through the Center for Disability Services/SNAP (Students Needing Access Parity), discuss this with me.

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Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at:

<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>