

POLITICAL SCIENCE 441- Section 1

LEGAL REASONING

Fall, 2018

INFORMATION

COURSE: Monday, 3:00 – 3:50 in EHFA #137

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Mikel Norris

OFFICE: Brittain Hall #356

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:00 – 10:30am, 12:15 – 1:30pm, and by appointment

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INTRODUCTION

Catalog Description

POLI 441 Legal Reasoning (1) A laboratory course on test taking techniques and strategies for the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). Pass/Fail grading only. F, S.

Course Objectives

1. Introduce students to the law school admissions process.
2. Introduce students to the various sections of the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
3. Provide students with useful test-taking strategies that will help them achieve higher LSAT scores.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Fully understand the law school admissions process, and particularly know when and where to take the LSAT exam, and how to be prepared for the LSAT exam.
2. Identify the different sections of the LSAT exam, understand why each section is in the exam, and how each section is scored to calculate a final LSAT score.
3. Develop useful test-taking strategies that will help students achieve higher LSAT scores.

BOOKS and SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The following required book is available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

- Hatch, Lisa Zimmer; Scott A. Hatch, and Amy Hackney Blackwell. 2014. *LSAT for Dummies, 2nd Edition*. Wiley. (ISBN: 978-1-118-67805-3)

This textbook can also be found online. Please make sure you have this book **purchased** by our second class meeting. We will begin using it immediately. I will post other materials on Moodle or provide them via handouts in class if and when they are needed.

ASSIGNMENTS

This is a pass/fail course. Your grade will be based on 1.) your attendance in class, and 2.) your participation in class.

- **ATTENDANCE:** Students will earn 10 points for each day of class attendance, for a possible total of 140 points
- **PARTICIPATION:** Students can earn up to 10 points for participation in each class period. Participation grades will be based on actual participation, and completing in-class assignments.

Note: Although we will hopefully be taking a lot of practice tests this semester, your grade will not be based on how well you score on these tests. They will be for practice only. However, you will be graded on whether you attempt to complete the practice tests.

GRADING

A total of 280 points can be earned in this class (140 points for attendance, and 140 points for participation). Your grade will be based on the following calculation:

- **PASS:** 200 points or more
- **FAIL:** 199.9 points or less

ATTENDANCE and CLASS PARTICIPATION

Since this is a one-class-a-week class, I expect students to attend every class, and I will give no free absences. Students are only excused from class for absences deemed excused by the University.

Excused Absence Policy: I will only accept excused absences for three instances. Please make sure you are absolutely clear about these instances if you plan on missing class:

- **University Representation:** A student will have an excused absence if they miss class because they are representing the University in an official capacity (ex: sports, mock trial, Model UN, SCSL, etc.). Students must supply me with documentation of this event on Coastal Carolina University letterhead **BEFORE THE EVENT** to have these absences excused.
- **Death of a Family Member:** A student will have an excused absence if they miss class due to a death in the family. However, merely telling me this is not sufficient. If you miss class for this reason you **MUST** inform the Dean of Students Office that you will be missing time because of this event. Your absence will **ONLY** be excused when I receive notification from the Dean of Students' Office that you will be missing extended class time.
- **Extended Illness:** The key word in this incidence is **EXTENDED**. I **WILL NOT** excuse single absences for illness, and I **WILL NOT** accept doctor's notes or paperwork from Health Services as an excuse. If you are going to miss extended time due to illness, you **MUST** inform the Dean of Students' Office that you will be missing time because of this event. Your absence will **ONLY** be excused when I receive notification from the Dean of Students' Office that you will be missing extended class time.

Students are also asked to speak and act appropriately during class. This includes not talking to other students in a disruptive manner during class, or making inappropriate comments toward other students. **Cell phones should also not be used during class.** They are disruptive to the instructor and other students. 3 points will be deducted from a student's class participation grade each time I see a student using their cell phone in class. Depending on circumstances, more points may be deducted, and I will ask the student to leave the class.

I would ask all students to think of their participation grade as a clean slate. Everyone has a 100% on the first day of class. If you regularly attend class, come to class prepared, participate in discussion and don't use your cell phone you will get a 100% participation grade. If you don't exhibit these behaviors your grade will drop. It will ultimately be up to you what this final grade will be.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating and plagiarism are wrong and I do not like it. It is unfair to other students. Furthermore, it reflects very poorly on your character. Cheating carries with it a severe penalty, and may even lead to expulsion from the university. **DON'T DO IT.** It is wrong and will not be tolerated. Those caught cheating or plagiarizing (e.g., looking at someone else's paper during a test, consulting notes during a test, plagiarizing material on papers, etc.) will be brought before Student Affairs, and I will request that the student receive an **F for the course.** Harsher penalties may be levied depending on the extent of cheating and/or plagiarism.

Coastal Carolina University operates under a Code of Student Conduct, which governs both academic and social conduct. The Code of Student Conduct may be reviewed here:

<http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/documents/codeofconduct.pdf>

Per the Code of Student Conduct, all students at Coastal Carolina pledge to oppose all instances of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is listed as the first form of prohibited conduct in the Code of Conduct. This should make clear the importance of not engaging in this type of action. Students may talk to me privately if they have any questions or concerns involving cheating and plagiarism.

ACCOMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I am committed to making all necessary accommodations for students with verified disabilities. Students with disabilities are urged to contact the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services (843-349-2503, or Karen Howard-Goss at kgoss@coastal.edu) to learn more about the rights and responsibilities of disabled students attending Coastal Carolina University.

*******THE PROFESSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER. ANY CHANGES WILL BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS BEFOREHAND*******

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

MONDAY, AUGUST 20.....COURSE INTRODUCTION

MONDAY, AUGUST 27.....KNOW YOUR ENEMY

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 1-34

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd: LABOR DAY (NO CLASSES)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10.....LOGIC GAMES

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 37-48

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17.....LOGIC GAMES

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 49-64

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.....LOGIC GAMES

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 65-78

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1.....LOGIC GAMES

- MORE LOGIC PRACTICE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8.....LOGIC GAMES

- MORE LOGIC PRACTICE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15.....LOGIC GAMES

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 81-96

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22.....LOGICAL REASONING

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 99-114

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29.....LOGICAL REASONING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5.....READING COMPREHENSION

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 119-142

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12.....READING COMPREHENSION

- TEXTBOOK: pp. 147-158

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19th: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASSES)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26.....LSAT PRACTICE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3.....LSAT PRACTICE

FINAL EXAM: There is no final exam for this course. **HOWEVER, I am willing to administer an ENTIRE practice LSAT exam on SATURDAY, 8th. I will only do so if students commit to taking the test.**