DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Credit Weighting: 1.0

Pre-/Co-Requisites: 14.00 credits, including POLS*3130, POLS*3350.

Restrictions: BAH.JLS and BAH.JLS:C

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Dennis Baker

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GENERAL DETAILS

In this capstone course, students will synthesize and apply the multidisciplinary knowledge they have gained throughout the JLS major through project-based learning, namely by participating in a simulated trial where the legal controversy arises from a JLS areas of emphasis. Students will critically engage in the trial using the skills that they have acquired (such as communication, research methods, and legal research skills), and will apply their substantive and conceptual understanding of law, legal process, justice to their broader area of emphasis. In addition to honing advocacy skills, this exercise will allow students to critically reflect on the distortions that the legal process can have on knowledge dissemination and impact. Students will critically reflect on such questions as how law and legal processes shape and are shaped by broader social and political power dynamics, the degree to which law is "political"; and how the framing of the issue and solutions during the simulation in terms of law and justice created strategies, goals, and outcomes that may be distinct from other social and political approaches to the issue.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will build on their skills in finding, reading, summarizing and properly citing judicial decisions using such legal research tools as QuickLaw, CanLII, and HeinOnline. Students will learn and apply different wrting styles (factum writing, journalistic, and reflective) as well as different presentation skills, including oral advocacy, These skills will be developed experientially as students also learn how the trial process is shaped by politics and how politics shapes the trial process. In addition to these specific research skills, the more general Political Science / JLS (and Bachelor of Arts) learning outcomes of advancing your critical thinking, literacy, communication and global understanding skills will be furthered.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Book Review & Presentation: Trial Process. 750 words 10%
" Brandeis Brief " / Expert Factum 2000 words 15%
Advocacy Factum OR Judicial Decision 3000 words 30%
Oral Advocacy / Courtroom Performance 15%
Newspaper Account 500 words 10%
Reflection on Trial Process 2000 words 20%

REQUIRED READING

Robert A. Kagan, Adversarial Legalism (2nd Edition) (Harvard University Press, 2019).
Additional readings available via CourseLink.