

Course Syllabus

POLS 200: Introduction to Law; Winter Quarter 2020

Instructor: Frank Primiani, J.D., Attorney at Law (ret.)

Section A #8087 and Section B: #8091 (double section) Room: RLC 131
Office: Salish Hall 220-58, Office Hours: 11am-12 noon daily or by appointment
Phone #: 253-833-9111 ext. 4397 e-mail: fprimiani@greenriver.edu

"[Law Book on a Shelf](#)" by [umjanedoan](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Course Description:

This is a holistic, case method course which uses a critical thinking model to introduce the U.S. legal system through an examination of several substantive areas of law. We will discover procedural and jurisdiction issues, constitutional law, survey of crimes, torts; including negligence, product liability, and property issues. The business environment perspective is considered, along with the historical and social context within which laws have emerged. Discusses structure of American legal system, and investigates the historical sources of law for that system. Some comparative law may also be covered. *Satisfies social science distribution requirement for AA or AB-DTA degree. Prerequisite: Reading 94, or be eligible for Reading 104. This course is also a pre-requisite for BUS 201 (business law) for the AB-DTA degree.*

Textbooks and materials:

Required textbook: Primiani, J.D. *Processing the Law; A Holistic Approach, 2nd Edition*. A limited quantity of hard copies are available in the GRC bookstore. An E-Purchase is available here <https://he.kendallhunt.com/primiani>. After purchase, you will Log in to the E book here: <https://www.grtep.com>. **See also the Instructions in the Canvas Modules** This will also be the site used for Chapter Quizzes, but Midterms will be conducted on Canvas. Also required is a small booklet entitled *Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, Concepts and Tools*, by Paul and Elder which is adjacent to the textbooks in the bookstore. We will start the course with this booklet. Also highly Recommended: A. Clausen, J.D. **Study Guide for Processing the Law textbook**. This will also be available with the E-book above. You may also find the book available through other online sources, such as Amazon.

NOTICE: This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by contacting Disability Support Services at 253-833-9111, ext. 2631; TTY 253-288-3359; or by email at dss@greenriver.edu.

Green River College is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Learn more at www.greenriver.edu/accessibility.

Websites:

In addition to the E book Site above, [There is the instructor's website](#) which you should bookmark. The information on this site may change periodically, but has much useful information. Check with the instructor before relying upon specific information. There is also a class [canvas site](#) which has much information to supplement the course. There is an orientation video on Panopto to help you navigate the site.

Introduction:

The purpose of this course is to expose you to several broad areas of law and the general context within which legal disputes are resolved. This course can require a significant amount of participation, which may include group work. Reading comprehension and class attendance/participation is an important component of this class and your grade. If English is your second language, you are encouraged to have your reading comprehension evaluated on the Compass Test at the Testing Center, or take a Legal Terminology class (Bus E 109), which may be taken concurrently with POLS 200. A Tutor may be available for the course, but one has not been hired as of yet.

Course Objectives

1. Overarching Institutional Learning Outcomes

Green River Community College has committed to the achievement of a standard set of learning outcomes that are to be expected for every student attending classes at this institution. These are global outcomes, which are felt to be inherently important to a civilized democracy. This class is committed to the development of these traits and skills in each student. The outcomes are as follows:

1. Critical Thinking:

Definition (m): *Critical Thinking is an overarching ability which finds expression in all disciplines as well as in every situation in life where a person is trying to figure something out. In its most general form, critical thinking consists of disciplined, self-directed thinking which enables students to identify and solve problems, to evaluate arguments and sources of information, and to assess their own thinking—all with respect to explicit standards of good thinking. In addition to specific skills and abilities, critical thinking helps foster certain dispositions, if students consistently and appropriately master critical thinking skills. Among these are intellectual perseverance, intellectual courage, intellectual fair-mindedness, intellectual integrity and intellectual humility.*

We will use critical thinking on a regular basis to process the course content. You will learn how to map out the structural logic of particular cases and use appropriate standards to assess each case's reasoning, as well as your own.

2. Quantitative Reasoning:

Definition: *Quantitative Reasoning encompasses abilities necessary for a student to become literate in today's technological world. Quantitative reasoning begins with basic skills and extends to problem-solving. This outcome includes abilities designed to help students achieve four general goals: (1) that they value quantitative reasoning, (2) that they become confident in their ability to reason quantitatively, (3) that they use quantitative reasoning to solve problems, and (4) that they use quantitative reasoning to communicate.*

As law often involves abstract and intangible concepts, we will learn and apply tools, concepts, and tests which are used in law to quantify such business law intangibles as contract equity, fairness, and economic impracticability. We will also apply quantitative cost-benefit principles, known as legal "balancing tests" throughout parts of the course.

3. Responsibility and Engagement:

Definition: Responsibility encompasses those behaviors and dispositions necessary for students to be effective members of a community. This outcome is designed to help students understand the importance of, and develop a commitment to, those responsibilities which will enable them to work successfully on their own and with others.

In the case method approach, students are responsible for their own attendance, behaviors and learning. This will be measured through engagement opportunities in class and on the Canvas Discussion board. In addition, students may choose to create teams by which each team member becomes partially responsible for the group outcome and grade.

4. Written Communication:

Definition: *Written Communication encompasses all the abilities necessary for effective expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in written form. This outcome is concerned with helping students 1) learn to value clear written communication, 2) demonstrate a clear sense of purpose, 3) gain confidence in their written communications skills, and 4) improve their ability to assess the effectiveness of their own writing as well as the writing of others.*

Students will be provided the opportunity to provide written communication of course content in assignments, tests, group and individual activities. In addition, groups often utilize PowerPoint presentations to communicate their group assignments.

5. Valuing Diversity:

Definition: *Valuing diversity encompasses those behaviors and dispositions necessary for students to be effective members of a changing world. This outcome is designed to help students understand, respect, and value the attitudes and practices which may be*

different from their own by considering various perspectives in areas of race, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, culture, disability, and/or sexual orientation.

Part of the Logic mapping procedures involves consideration of various Points of View within the context of the Case Method approach. Some points of view will relate to consideration of changing social and cultural factors such as defined above. We also welcome the increasing number of International students to our classes and look forward to exchange of cultural perspectives with them.

6. Oral Communication:

Though oral communication is not yet campus-wide outcome, it is highly recommended as part of the transfer degree program. In this class, students will be provided the opportunity to develop speaking and presentation skills if they choose to present case assignments.

1. General Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, each student should be able to:

1. Display a working knowledge of the functions of law in society, and the factors that affect the evolution of laws over time.
2. Understand the fundamental Concepts of Jurisdiction, Legal Procedure, Criminal Law, Torts, basic principles of property, and how they fit under the umbrella of Constitutional principles.
3. Demonstrate an ability to concisely articulate the specific holdings and reasoning in assigned court cases.
4. Work cooperatively and effectively in group presentations (optional).
5. Articulate and use several “balancing tests” commonly used in the resolution of public policy and Constitutional law cases.
6. Understand, appreciate, and reflect on the elements of thought as they are applied to case analysis.
7. Recognize and apply certain intellectual criteria used to evaluate the merit of a particular argument, case, or presentation.

Grading:

The grading for this class will be based upon the results of various content examinations that will be given throughout the quarter, plus engagement in class activities as stated below.

Course Assessments will be weighted as follows:

3 Content Midterms (subject to late penalties) 40%

Chapter Quizzes (online in the Ebook). Subject to **late penalties** per Class rules below. 35%

Engaged class participation (includes not being "disengaged") 10%

Online (Canvas) Discussions(original posts or responses to other posts) 10%

Physical Attendance (based upon occasional roll call) 5%

Optional Extra Credit:

Group Case Presentation. It is usually not possible to obtain a 4.0 without participating in a case presentation. 2% of presentation grade added to overall score

Optional Extra Credit: Cognitive Self Reflection Paper. See details in Canvas Course Modules. 2% of Paper grade

Important Notice: Z grades or unofficial withdrawals are no longer granted at GRC. If you do not withdraw or seek a Credit/No Credit option at the appropriate time (usually the 7th week of the quarter), your final grade for the course will be a 0.0. See Enrollment Services for further details. **It is the student's responsibility to know the relevant deadlines.** There are no formal extra credit options, other than listed above.

The subject matter of POLS 200 is such that your attendance is an important aspect of engagement in the course. Not only may absences affect your grade, but it may also affect your classmates or group partners. If you know that you will be absent on a class day, please share this information with the Instructor and your group members early. This directly relates to the institutional goal of promoting personal responsibility.

Proposed Reading Assignments:

See the attached Tentative Reading schedule which covers day to day assignments. In general, we will proceed through the E book in Chapter sequence:

Table 2 Reading Assignments

Syllabus pack, Text Introduction and Critical Thinking Booklet (blue book) First Week

The Thinking Process Applied to Law 1

Substantive Law: The Historical Context 2

Legal Procedure (Civil) 3

Constitutional Law 4

Basic Criminal Law Principles 5

Intentional Torts 6

Negligence and Strict Liability 7

*Property and Insurance**
(as time allows) 8

Course Policies and Expectations:

Expectations for College coursework includes **reading assignments before class and coming to class prepared for discussions.** In addition, **there are multiple short videos on the Course Canvas site that will enhance the student's ability to come to class prepared.** These should be viewed either before or shortly after class periods. The Canvas discussion board provides another opportunity to discuss various current topics of interest. Participation on this site may also enhance the student's chances for a good grade. Finally, students are encouraged to consider extra credit case presentations, which will provide a good way for student to test their knowledge and develop leadership and presentation skills. In general, students are expected to spend about 1-2 hours of out of class study for each hour in class in order to get the most benefit from the course experience. This translates to 5-10 hours, or more, of outside study during the typical week.

Americans with Disabilities Act Notice:

If you believe you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans With Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Support Services Coordinator in the LSC and provide the appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition through the GRCC Disability Support Services Office, which would qualify you for special accommodations, or if you have emergency medical information or special needs I should know about, please notify me during the first week of class.

You can reach me by phone at 253-833-9111, extension 4397. Or, you can schedule an office appointment to meet me in Salish Hall, office number 220-58 during my posted office hours or at another mutually determined time. If this location is not convenient for you, we will schedule an alternative place for the meeting. If you use an alternative medium for communicating, let me know well in advance of the meeting (at least one week) so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

Green River College is committed to providing access to all who visit, work and study on campus. The College will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, with advance notice of need. If you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services as soon as possible to determine eligibility and/or request accommodations. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Disability Support by email at dss@greenriver.edu; by phone at 253-833-9111, ext. 2631; TTY 253-288-3359; or in person at the Student Affairs and Success Center, Room 274, to request accommodations. For additional information, please visit www.greenriver.edu/student-affairs/disability-supportservices.htm

The accommodations authorized on your forms should be discussed with your instructor. All discussions will remain confidential. Accommodations are not provided retroactively, so it is essential to discuss your needs at the beginning of the quarter. Additionally, only accommodations approved by Disability Support Services will be provided. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request.

Green River College is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Learn more at www.greenriver.edu/accessibility.

Student Good Faith and Rules of Conduct:

The college and instructor assume that all enrolled students are taking this course for the legitimate purpose of learning and improving their life skills. Therefore, any conduct by students which are inconsistent with that goal, such as plagiarism, cheating, class disruptions, or other forms of misconduct will be subject to the disciplinary procedures specified in the Student Rules of Conduct found in the Appendix of the College Catalog, or here: [GRC Student Code of Conduct](#) . The Student Complaint process is found here: [Student Complaint procedure](#).

Student Safety:

Please bookmark the [campus safety](#) site, which includes information on college safety reports, and how to obtain various safety alerts.

NOTE: GRC faculty and staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect and must report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Academic Honesty:

In academically honest writing or speaking, the student documents their source of information whenever: another person's exact words are quoted; another person's idea, opinion or theory is used through paraphrase; and facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials are borrowed.

In order to complete academically honest work, students should: acknowledge all sources according to the method of citation preferred by the instructor; write as much as possible from one's own understanding of the materials and in one's own voice; ask an authority on the subject, such as the instructor who assigned the work; and seek help from academic student services such as the library and/or writing center.

Two types of academic dishonesty are plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism occurs when you submit someone else's ideas or words as your own. Cutting and/or copying and then pasting items from the internet, like Wikipedia, into your work are examples of plagiarism. Cheating occurs when you copy someone else's answers or work and submit them as your own. Taking answers from your peer's or friend's work or turning in someone else's work as your own are examples of cheating.

Reasonable Accommodations for Religion/Conscience:

Students who will be absent from course activities due to reasons of faith or conscience may seek reasonable accommodations so that grades are not impacted. Such requests must be made within the first two weeks of the course and should follow the procedures listed under Student Procedures on the College Holiday and Leave Policy website. <https://www.greenriver.edu/campus/policies-and-procedures/student-affairs-policies/sa-91-college-holiday-leave-policy/>. **Please note that requests must be made to the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs in addition to your instructor.**

GRADING SCALE:

Below is the grading scale to be used in assigning GPA grades for Law related classes in the Business Division. You will note that 95% or above is considered a 4.0, and a 73% is needed to achieve a 2.0 grade. Your final grade will be an accumulation of your separate exam and presentation scores over the course of the quarter.

Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade
95-100	4	80	2.7	68	1.5
92-94	3.9	79	2.6	67	1.4
91	3.8	78	2.5	66	1.3
90	3.7	77	2.4	65	1.2
89	3.6	76	2.3	64	1.1
88	3.5	75	2.2	63	1
87	3.4	74	2.1	62	0.9
86	3.3	73	2	61	0.8
85	3.2	72	1.9	60	0.7
84	3.1	71	1.8	0-59	0
83	3	70	1.7		
82	2.9				

Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus, class rules, and/or reading assignments as is reasonably necessary. Prior notification will be given for significant changes.

Disclaimer: The foregoing class is general information provided to the public on a subject of significant interest. It is intended merely as a general review of a complex and confusing subject for which there are very few clear and reliable answers. The information is not intended as legal advice and may not be relied on as such. By providing to the public the general information below, no attorney-client relationship is created. The legal outcome in a given case will completely depend on all of the relevant facts in a given case and thus will vary from case to case. For legal advice and representation, students are cautioned to consult a qualified attorney who practices in the relevant area of law they may have questions about. Rev 1/20.