

POLS 4900: Senior Seminar
Critical Analysis, Writing, and Thought
CRN: 87745 – Fall 2020 – Section 10

Instructor: Russell Luke

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Office Location: Langdale 1015

Classroom Location: Langdale 400

Meeting Time: Tuesday, 5:30–8:00 pm

Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:00–5:00 pm

Virtual (Zoom, Skype, WebEx) office hours available by appointment

Syllabus

Prerequisites: 36 completed credit hours in the Political Science degree pathway.

PLEASE NOTE: You are responsible for being aware of all policies, information, and assignments listed on this syllabus. Pay special attention to the section entitled "Covid-19 Specific Protocols". You are also responsible for all materials covered in class, regardless of your attendance, including assignment handouts provided throughout the semester. By remaining in this class, you are accepting this responsibility and agreeing to follow the course guidelines. Read each section carefully and contact me immediately with any questions you may have.

Learning Objectives:

This is a required course to complete your undergraduate Political Science degree at Georgia State University. Over the course of the semester, you will learn . . .

1. The principles of effective and professional writing.
2. How to critically analyze conflicting and complementary sources of information.
3. How to present your arguments in a persuasive manner.
4. The principles of conducting a research project from origin to completion.
5. How to efficiently conduct research into a topic.
6. How to constructively incorporate critical feedback into your work.
7. How to present your research for maximum impact.
8. How to effectively use these skills in your future academic or professional career.

Graded Components

Listed below are the graded elements of the course, details of these graded elements, and the response paper topics with selected texts.

Response Papers – 40%

- You will write a series of essays in response to eight sets of readings. The aim is to have you engage critically with two or three opposing schools of thought by reading, interpreting, and then expressing an argument in written form. I will discuss the expectations, format, and guidelines in class.
- The response papers are graded on both quality of writing and your ability to make an argument supported by evidence/sources/citations. The point here is the quality of writing and your ability to think, and write, critically. 750 word minimum, excluding citations and quotes.

- You are not required to read these sources in their entirety. Excerpts from these works will be posted on iCollege.
- The highest graded response paper is worth 10% of your final grade, the lowest is worth 0%, and the middle 5 papers are each worth 5%.

Response Paper Reading Assignments

1. The Declaration of Independence
2. Capitalism and Socialism
 - *Grundrisse* – Karl Marx
 - *The Wealth of Nations* – Adam Smith
3. Anarchism and Statism
 - *Leviathan* – Thomas Hobbes
 - *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* – Rudolf Rocker
 - *Against the State: An Anarcho-Capitalist Manifesto* – Llewellyn Rockwell
4. Judicial Activism and Textualism
 - *Antonin Scalia's Jurisprudence: Text and Tradition* - Ralph Rossum
 - *Democracy and Equality: The Enduring Constitutional Vision of the Warren Court* – Geoffrey Stone & David Strauss
5. Liberation
 - *The Meaning of Freedom* – Angela Davis
 - *The Souls of Black Folk* – W.E.B. DuBois
 - *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* – Isabel Wilkerson
6. Liberalism, Conservatism, and Progressivism
 - *The Cause* – Eric Alterman & Kevin Mattson
 - *The Promise of American Life* – Herbert Croly
 - *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* – Thomas Sowell
7. Radicalism and Pragmatism
 - *Rules for Radicals* – Saul Alinsky
 - *The Prince* – Nicolo Machiavelli
8. Nihilism, Existentialism, and Relativism
 - *The Ethics of Ambiguity* – Simone de Beauvoir
 - *On the Prejudices of Philosophers* - Friedrich Nietzsche
 - *On Human Nature* – Arthur Schopenhauer

Research Paper – 50%

- You will come up with an idea for, propose, research, write, and present an original research design. The primary topic restriction is that the subject must have to do with Political Science. I will provide more details on each component as the course progresses.

1. Research Proposal – 5%

- A 500 – 1000 word essay outlining:
 - Your research question
 - Your hypothesis/hypotheses
 - Why this research question is important
 - Your plan for researching and
 - A proposal for how you would test this/these question(s)
 - What you expect/would expect to find

2. Literature Review – 10%

- A section of what will become your final paper. You are to read 20-30 (or more) academic, peer-reviewed, journal articles pertaining to your research questions. These should include sources that have previously studied your research question, have studied issues related to your research question, and include sources that **both** support and refute your proposed explanation. You need to incorporate different schools of thought on your topic, and present those arguments in their most robust form - straw-manning opposing arguments is a sign of weak research.
- This is a synthesis and interpretation of previous research, not a regurgitation of previous author's work. You should be able to take multiple articles and extract the common themes, presenting these in relation to your research question. We will discuss this in great detail in class.

3. Rough Draft – 10%

- A rough draft of your final research paper. This is not a 5 page outline of what you plan to do. This should be a version of your final paper that needs some smoothing, editing, and perhaps expansion on certain elements. You should be 90% done with your final paper by the time the rough draft is due.

4. Presentations – 10%

- You will present your research project to the class. You will have 10 minutes to do so. I will give you explicit guidelines on what I expect from these presentations as the time approaches.

5. Final Paper – 15%

- A paper on the research question you've chosen. This should be in the form of a research design – Introduction, Literature Review, Theory, Research Design. The grading rubric is presented below. We will discuss the expectations and requirements in exhaustive detail.

Research Paper Grading Rubric

Points/ Characteristic	0 – Absent	1 – Unacceptable	2 – Below Average	3 - Average	4 – Above Average	5 - Exceptional
Research Question	Student does not have a research question or testable hypotheses	Research question and hypotheses are unclear	Research question is somewhat clear, but lacking precision in hypothesis	Research question and hypotheses are clear if imprecise	Clarity in research question and hypothesis, imprecise hypotheses	Precision and clarity in both research question and hypotheses
Breadth of Research	Makes no effort to research either supporting or opposing information	Some research supporting their position, no research supporting the opposing view	Some research both supporting and opposing their view	A good deal of research both supporting and opposing their view; opposing views are strawmanned	A great deal of research both supporting and opposing their view, though opposing position could be stated more strongly	An expansive reading of the pertinent perspectives; solid presentation of both views
Evidenced Support	Failure to cite any sources or otherwise support their arguments	Few sources for arguments, those used are not academic in nature	Some sources used; mix of academic and non-academic sources below the set threshold of required sources	Meets the threshold for academic sources; most of sufficient quality and pertinence to the question at issue	Meets the threshold for academic sources; sources used are of quality and relevant to the question at issue; few sources countering proposed argument	Meets or exceeds the threshold for academic sources; sources used are of quality and relevant to the question at hand; uses sources from multiple perspectives on the question at hand
Strength of Argument	No formal argument offered	Argument is fundamentally unclear or not well thought-out	Argument advanced is somewhat clear, though lacking in depth and critical thinking	Argument advanced is clear and possesses some depth	Argument advanced is very clear and well-reasoned, though does not fully contend with opposing views	Clearly stated argument; well-reasoned argumentation; fully accounts for opposing positions; offers systematic counterarguments against such criticism; foresees potential criticisms and contends with these
Formatting, Style, and Citations	Fundamental inattention to the rules of writing	Systematic failure to appropriately cite sources, haphazard formatting, or otherwise widespread fundamental errors	Some attention given to formatting, style, and citations, though still unacceptable	Clear attempt to conform to formatting, style, and citation rules, although issues still exist	Mostly conforms to formatting, style, and citation rules with some minor issues	Conforms to formatting, style, and citation rules with few minor issues

Class Participation – 10%

- With the ongoing pandemic, the most important note is that **if you in any way feel as though you may have Covid-19 DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS.** You will not be penalized so long as you communicate with me before class begins, even if it is only 1 minute before the start time. I will be flexible and amenable to the current circumstances.
- You will be graded on the degree to which you participate in class discussions regarding the previous week's readings. **You are required to bring a series (around 5) questions, thoughts, or other discussion stimuli to each class. These do not need to be printed or otherwise turned in, but must be available on request.** You also are expected to offer your interpretation of the weeks readings, what you found compelling, and what logical flaws you found in one or more of the author's arguments. You will also be expected to respond to your classmate's perspectives with reasoned and evidenced responses. While attendance is not mandatory, it is impossible to participate in class without attending. If circumstances change during the semester, and we are forced to move to an online format, I will provide further instructions for how class discussions will be conducted and graded.

Course Protocols

Covid-19 Specific Protocols:

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) has created new difficulties in and outside of the classroom for both students and faculty. The situation continues to evolve but we are now aware of effective steps that we all can take to prevent the spread of the disease. Foremost amongst these are social distancing, regular hand washing, and the use of masks, or other face coverings. The university had mandated the use of masks or facial coverings while on campus, and ***I strongly recommend*** that you use some sort of facial covering and practice social distancing while in public, both on and off campus. This especially applies in enclosed spaces such as classrooms and elevators. Keep in mind that while you may be in a lower risk group for serious complications from COVID-19, your friends and family may be more at risk. Preventative measures, such as wearing a mask and social distancing, not only keep you safer but also those around you. If the Covid-19 situation deteriorates/escalates, the University may once again close. If this occurs, I will immediately and explicitly explain how the course will change.

The classroom will be set up for social distancing, with clear cues where to sit so you can be six or more feet away from one another. Please sit in the designated seats. GSU staff are regularly sanitizing classroom, but feel free to bring disinfectant wipes and/or hand sanitizer if you see fit.

For more information regarding GSU's response to Covid-19, please visit <https://www.gsu.edu/coronavirus/>. For more information on Covid-19, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Announcements and Communications:

When I need to make announcements to the class as a whole, I will do so by posting an announcement on the class iCollege page. If I need to contact you individually, I will do so through your GSU email. You should be in the habit of checking your email daily. You can download the Outlook app on your phone or computer and connect with your GSU email. If you need to contact me, please use my email address: r1uke2@gsu.edu. The iCollege email system is unwieldy, thus the best way to get in contact with me is through email.

Please note: Since iCollege is essential for accessing course materials and receiving announcements, please contact me immediately if you lose iCollege access (due, for example, to being dropped for nonpayment) so that I can add you manually back into iCollege right away.

Electronic Devices:

The writing assignments of this course must be typeset (Word, L^AT_EX, etc.) and submitted via iCollege. As such, reliable access to a computer with internet connectivity is a requirement for this course. The university does have a library of borrowable electronic devices, so reach out to me if this requirement is an issue before dropping the course. Laptops are allowed during class, but use of phones or other electronic devices is prohibited. If you continue use such devices during class after I ask you to cease, you will be asked to leave the classroom. If you need to use your phone or other device, for example if you are expecting an important phone call or message, let me know before class begins.

Required Textbook and Course Materials:

There are no required textbooks for this course. However, I ***strongly recommend*** that you purchase both:

- *The Elements of Style* (4th Eds.) by William Strunk and E.B. White
- *The Art of Writing Nonfiction* (2nd Eds.) by Andre Fontaine and William Glavin

The books will prove an invaluable resource for you not only in this course, but in your academic and professional career. You can purchase both for around \$25 on Amazon – even less if you purchase used copies. Each contain invaluable information presented in a highly readable and engaging form. These are likely available in electronic form, though I view hard copies of such resources as more valuable.

PDF or versions of the required readings for the Response Papers will be uploaded to the iCollege course page. **You are not required to purchase all of the required readings for the course.** However, feel free to acquire any work that you wish to read in its entirety.

Late Assignments:

Assignments are due at their stated date and time in the course schedule. Late assignments will be accepted with a 20% penalty per day the assignment is late. For clarity, 1 minute past the deadline will be considered as a day late, just as an assignment 23 hours overdue will be. All assignments, other than research presentations, are due on iCollege. The due date for each assignment is explicitly stated on iCollege. Submission time is determined by iCollege's internal servers. By design, any assignment more than 5 days late will be graded as 0. The only exception to this rule are extenuating circumstances outlined in the University's 'Approved Absences' section of the student handbook. Any such extenuating circumstance will require official documentation and instructor approval. It is better to turn in an unfinished assignment before the due date than turn in a finished assignment late.

Extra Credit:

There are currently no planned extra credit opportunities. This may change as the course progresses. I will make an announcement to the entire class if this changes.

Cheating and Academic Misconduct:

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty in this course primarily means plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use, directly or indirectly, of another's work without proper attribution. Use means both direct quotations and paraphrasing. Proper attribution means citing the author in a standard format. I prefer APSA citation format, but APA is also acceptable. You can find the APSA style manual at <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2018/11/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-2018.pdf> and the APA style guideline at <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations>. I will cover plagiarism and correct citation usage in more detail during the first class.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Any violations of Georgia State University's Policy on Academic Dishonesty (Section 409) will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. If you would like to view the policy in full, you can go to <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwfhh/sec409.html>. Please note that the University considers violations of dishonesty rules to be grounds for

receiving an “F” in this course and possible expulsion from the University. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, examine the university policy and/or **ask me**.

GSU Policy Prohibiting Students from Posting Instructor-Generated Materials on External Sites:

The selling, sharing, publishing, presenting, or distributing of instructor-prepared course lecture notes, videos, audio recordings, or any other instructor-produced materials from any course for any commercial purpose is strictly prohibited unless explicit written permission is granted in advance by the course instructor. This includes posting any materials on websites such as Chegg, Course Hero, OneClass, Stuvia, StuDocu and other similar sites. Unauthorized sale or commercial distribution of such material is a violation of the instructor’s intellectual property and the privacy rights of students attending the class, and is prohibited.

Withdrawals and Hardship Withdrawals:

The last day to withdraw from the course and receive a W is October 13th. Students who withdraw on or before that day receive a W; students who withdraw after will receive a WF. W’s have no effect on your GPA whereas WF’s count as Fs for GPA calculation purposes. If you are struggling in the course and are worried about keeping your HOPE Scholarship, then you should consider taking a W before 5:00pm on October 13th. Please feel free to contact me before doing so for advice, as I will be able to offer you a clear accounting of where you stand in the course. Another kind of withdrawal, called “Hardship Withdrawals,” are only given if students experience non-academic emergencies beyond the midpoint of the semester which interfere with or prevent the completion of their coursework. Such hardships are usually due to medical, personal or financial emergencies, and are not to be used for academic issues. These withdrawals also do NOT count as F’s for GPA calculation purposes.

Disability Policy:

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services (located in Suite 230 of the New Student Center). Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought. Please advise me (and provide me with a signed copy of your Accommodation Plan) if you have a documented disability that needs to be accommodated.

Privacy and Personal Information:

In keeping with USG and university policy, I will make every effort to maintain the privacy and accuracy of your personal information. Specifically, unless otherwise noted, I will not actively share personal information with anyone except university employees whose responsibilities require access to said records. However, some information may be subject to the Georgia Open Records Act. This means that while I do not actively share information, in some cases I may be compelled by law to release information. Also, your information will be managed in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of education records without student permission.

Classroom and Online Behavior:

It is the expectation of the instructor that students will behave in a professional and polite manner in this class – both in person and online. I do not tolerate speech that demeans, denegrates, or otherwise seeks to harm others. However, the subject matter of this course is, by design, contentious. Students should feel free to express their views on the material so long as this is done in a courteous, calm, and measured manner. Bigotry and prejudice will not be tolerated. The same rules that apply in the classroom apply in online interactions. Interactions on the internet often seem impersonal, but there is always someone else on the other side of the monitor. Students will interact with one another in a courteous and professional manner on any course or university platform. If you have an issue or concern regarding the conduct of class, please speak to me and I will do my best to address them.

Problems, Emergencies, and Counseling Services:

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from taking an exam or completing an assignment, you should contact me. Also, generally speaking, college can be a challenging time for students and it can all feel overwhelming at times. This is especially true during these novel and trying times. If you are feeling a lot of stress, thinking of harming or killing yourself, have been a victim of a crime, and/or are having difficulties in your relationship with an intimate partner, there are a lot of people and resources eager to help you at GSU and off-campus. Both GSU and non-GSU resources have adapted to offer virtual or by-phone assistance. Please consider taking advantage of these opportunities if you might benefit from help:

- GSU Counseling Center: 404-413-1640
 - Offers immediate crisis help (including after-hours), counseling, support groups, stress management and meditation classes, and more.
 - <https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/crisis-services/>
 - <https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/immediate-help>
 - GSU Student Victim Assistance: 404-413-1965
 - GSU Campus Police: 404-413-3333

- Off-Campus Resources:
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
 - Rape Crisis Center: 404-616-4861
 - Atlanta Victim Assistance: 404-588-4740
 - Multi-County Crisis Helpline: 1-800-715-4225

Your constructive assessments of this course, on these and most importantly the end of the semester evaluations, play an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing this course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation when checking final grades on PAWS.

Course Schedule

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. This plan is subject to change. I will alert the course to any changes made to the course schedule. The due dates for each assignment are listed below. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be uploaded to iCollege.

Week Number	Dates	Class Meets	Assignments
Week 1	8/23 – 8/29	8/25	No Assignments Due
Week 2	8/30 – 9/5	9/1	Response paper 1 due at start of class
Week 3	9/6 – 9/12	9/8	Response paper 2 due at start of class
Week 4	9/13 – 9/19	9/15	Response paper 3 due at start of class
Week 5	9/20 – 9/26	9/22	Response paper 4 due at start of class Research proposal due at start of class
Week 6	9/27 – 10/3	9/29	Response paper 5 due at start of class
Week 7	10/4 – 10/10	10/6	Response paper 6 due at start of class
Week 8	10/11 – 10/17	10/13	Response paper 7 due at start of class Literature review due at start of class
Week 9	10/18 – 10/24	10/20	Response paper 8 due at start of class
Week 10	10/25 – 10/31	10/27	No Assignments Due
Week 11	11/1 – 11/7	11/3	No Assignments Due
Week 12	11/8 – 11/14	11/10	No Assignments Due
Week 13	11/15 – 11/21	11/17	Rough Draft Due November 21 st at 11:59pm In-Class Presentations
Week 14	11/22 – 11/28	—	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
Week 15	11/29 – 12/5	12/1	In-Class Presentations Final Paper due December 5 th at 11:59pm