

POLI 391 – THE FOUNDATIONS OF LAW AND GOVERNMENT

June 2-14, 2026

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kirk A. Randazzo
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this class is to provide students with an opportunity to explore the evolution and development of law and government in a cross-cultural context. Specifically, we will examine particular legal and governmental institutions that regulate policy and resolve disputes both domestically and internationally. A portion of the class will be conducted in the United States with the remaining portions taught in England and Scotland.

Over the course of the semester students will:

- Compare theories of law, governance, and democracy across different political and cultural norms and apply this knowledge to a set of global and national-level legal issues, contexts, and processes.
- Compare the evolution of institutions in the United States to those in England and Scotland by exploring the values, beliefs, and perspectives underlying and informing the institutions in these countries.
- Develop critical-thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, and the capacity to cope effectively with ambiguous or unfamiliar situations.
- Gain experience and insights related to careers in law and government.

REQUIRED READING

Required readings consist of a series of articles from professional law and political science journals. All readings are available on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The course assignments and assessment criteria have been crafted to help students identify and fulfill the course objectives. Accordingly, evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

Attendance	20%
Participation in Class	20%
Written Paper	60%

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, especially for events scheduled overseas. All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material in an intelligent manner.

Participation: The instructors will rely on a modified Socratic method and classes will consist of a series of questions, which the students are expected to answer. On occasion we will ask for volunteers to apply the readings to certain hypothetical situations. At other times, we will select specific individuals to answer questions. Students will be graded according to their willingness to participate and their responses. This is not a class for the shy; quietly sitting in the back of the room will translate to a low participation grade.

Written Paper: Each individual is expected to write a paper linking the experiences in-country to material read and discussed in class. Papers will be 10-12 double-spaced pages, with 12-pt font and one-inch margins, of substantive text (title page and references do not count as substantive text). While the specific

topic is open, students are expected to relate aspects of the England and Scotland trip to particular theories on law and governance.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs are advised to contact the instructors immediately. Every effort to for accommodation will be made. This may require a letter of documentation from the Office of Student Disability Services.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Anyone found guilty of cheating, plagiarism, or any other violation of academic integrity will receive an automatic grade of 0.0 for the assignment. Additionally, all other available penalties within the University will be pursued to the fullest extent. For more information about academic dishonesty, visit the USC Office of Academic Integrity (www.sc.edu/academicintegrity).

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

We expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You will be held responsible for all material covered in the textbooks and the class discussions. We will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) reading newspapers, talking during lectures, use of cell phones or pagers during organized activities or classes, and insulting classmates or the instructor. Additionally, we expect all students to arrive promptly, prepared for the topic to be covered, and to remain throughout the scheduled session. It is disrespectful to the instructors and the other students when individuals show up late or are not prepared to participate in the class discussion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: We anticipate approximately three contact hours per Columbia session pre-departure and a minimum of five to eight contact hours per day while abroad.

Pre-Semester (TBD)	Periodic meetings; Distribute Syllabus and Introduction
June 1	Depart for London from Charlotte Airport (CLT)
June 2	Arrive in London Meet CIS Abroad OPC City Bus Tour Group Dinner and CIS Abroad Orientation
June 3	Visit Buckingham Palace (Changing of the Guard) Visit Inns of Court
June 4	Visit British Supreme Court (attend hearings) Visit the London School of Economics Lecture by Dr. Ken Benoit on legal implications of Brexit
June 5	Visit the Royal Courts of Justice (attend hearings) Visit the British Museum
June 6	Visit British Parliament Visit Tower of London

June 7	Free Day in London (get snacks for train ride to Edinburgh)
June 8	Depart for Edinburgh, Scotland via train Guided Walking Tour of Edinburgh Group Dinner
June 9	Visit Scottish Supreme Courts Visit Ceilidh Club at Summerhall (learn Scottish cultural dances)
June 10	Guest Lecture on Scottish Law at University of Stirling
June 11	Visit Scottish Parliament (meet with members of Scottish National Party) View Questions of First Minister
June 12	Day-long tour of Scottish Highlands Group cruise on Loch Ness
June 13	Free Day in Edinburgh Group Farewell Dinner
June 14	Depart for United States from Edinburgh
June 15 – 18	Research/Library Days
June 19	Final Papers Due by 5:00 pm

Costs for Trip

Total cost for trip: \$5,145 not including tuition (3 credit course).

This includes:

- On-site transportation in Europe, also for all course activities (buses, trains, etc.)
- Accommodations
- Excursions and entrance for course visits
- Breakfast everyday
- 3 Formal Dinners
- Liability insurance
- Classroom space

This does not include:

- Airfare to and from Europe (class website available for booking flights)
- Course Tuition (3 credits)
- Lunch and Dinner (with the exception of the 3 group dinners)
- Study Abroad Administrative Fee (\$150)
- Any optional excursions during free time
- Any charges made at hotels such as entertainment, room service, laundry service, etc.
- Passport
- Overseas Medical Insurance (\$35 fee that is required by USC)

Timeline:

Nov. 21, 2025

- Application due/Register for Class
- Application fee of \$350 (will be applied to total cost of trip if accepted)

Jan. 16, 2026

- Waivers/Health Forms, etc. due
- First installment due (\$2,573)
- After this date, no refund will be given!

Feb. 20, 2026

- Remaining balance due (\$2,222)

March/April, 2026

- Pre-Departure meeting – Location/Time TBA

June, 2026

- Leave for London on June 1

FOR PAYMENT INSTALLMENTS:

Please either mail a check made out to USC or BRING to Ms. Wende Miller:

Department of Political Science
c/o Ms. Wende Miller
349 Gambrell Hall
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

Questions may be directed to the Department at (803) 777-3109, or Dr. Randazzo (randazzo@mailbox.sc.edu). Students accepted will be required to attend meetings before the trip to cover all information including travel, lodging, packing essentials, etc. Students will be expected to actively participate in the entire program.