

Environmental Justice Main Menu

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NOTE: Herein you will find all the basics you will need to plan your semester and survive the course. This document is meant only for the Fall 2023 PolSci 340, Environmental Justice course and does not reflect past or future iterations of this class.

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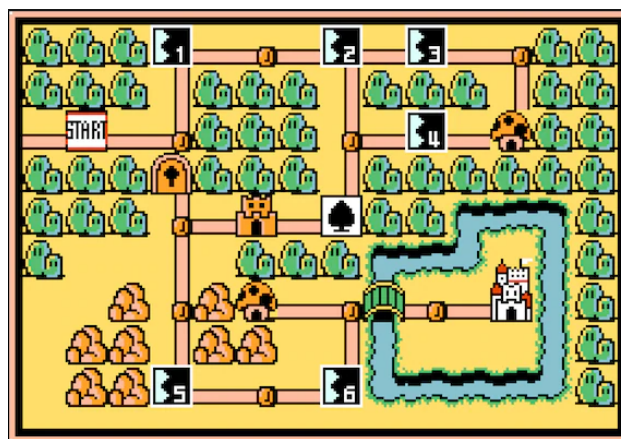
1 Introduction

Whether you play them or don't, you are likely familiar with role playing games (RPGs). *Baldur's Gate*, *Fallout*, and *The Elder Scrolls* are just some of the more familiar franchises. These games often let you, if not design from scratch, pick a character class and develop them based on the XP earned during a playthrough. Ultimately, each playthrough can be unique, and each player's own interests, strengths, and experiences are reflected in the outcome. This class has been designed to allow you, the student, with all of your unique interests, strengths, and goals, to determine how you will be assessed by me, the professor.

In other words, this class is designed for a variety of learning styles and students are encouraged to approach the semester with this in mind. Your grade items, from participation to written homework, will be chosen by you. You will be invited to tell me how you wish to be assessed throughout the semester. Some of you might want to focus on the legal writing grade items and the in-class participation to simulate some of the law school experiences ahead of you. Others might want something that tracks more closely with the business world. Ultimately, how you are graded and on what will be an agreement between student and professor.

This document will lay out the expectations for your performance as well as the grade items that you may consider devoting yourself to. First though, we will look at our [WORLD MAP](#).

1.1 The World Map



Getting from the start of the class in week 1 to the end of the class in week 15 could be a daunting task without some guideposts to let us know we are going the right way. The first and best way to consider what the “right” way is, is to consider your and my goals for this semester. My main goal is to get you connected with, thinking dynamically about, and then using for yourself the course materials. The table below gives you an idea of this progression and which assessment categories are meant to serve what learning concept.

Table 1: Modified Blums Taxonomy & Course Assessments

	Participation	Written Work	Group Exams	Independent Project	Side Quests
Knowledge	X	X	X	X	X
Comprehension	X	X	X	X	X
Application	X	X	X	X	X
Analyze		X	X	X	
Create			X	X	
Evaluate		X	X	X	

Your goals may be to learn more about our course’s topic, but you likely have something beyond that you are looking towards. Law school? Graduate school? Think of these like your character’s “class” in RPG. What will help you build your character into being a lawyer? What about an academic? Writing skills are important for both, but what you write about and how you write about it are different. If you are thinking law school, maybe a legal analysis for our four written assignments would be the ticket. Alternately, if you are thinking grad school, an analysis of the assigned scholarly work might be apropos.

You can always switch it around and try a few different writing styles. The same is true for our participation assessment. You can participate at any time, in any way, you choose. You let me know how you want to be assessed for any given week. Maybe we had an in-class discussion get cut short, and you want to carry it on into the Canvas discussion for that week. Let me know that your best is yet to come and that you want me to give preference to your on-line discussion. Maybe you are a diligent note taker and want to volunteer for a week’s course summary, we have a sign-up for that.

Table 2: Grade Category & Item Breakdown

Category	Grade Item	Points	Rules
Participation		Up to 150	
	In-Clas Discussion	10	1xWeek
	Canvas Discussion	10	1xWeek
	Lecture Summaries	10	TBD
Writing		Up to 200	
	Reading Essay	50	4xSemester
	Legal Memo	50	4xSemester
	Policy Critique	50	4xSemester
	Policy Prescription	50	4xSemester
Independent Project		Up to 200	
	A research memo	200	1xSemester
	A legal paper	200	1xSemester
	Essay exam	200	1xSemester
	Book Report	200	1xSemester

2 The Assessment Categories & Grade Items

2.1 Grade Item Breakdown

- **Participation:** I practice a deliberative pedagogical approach which means we will be conversing and exchanging ideas constantly. How we do that can take place in a variety of ways.
 - **In-class Discussion:** Students join in discussions during our regular meetings. Offering comments, questions, etc.
 - **Canvas Discussion:** Students join in an online discussion outside of the regular class, continuing our in-seat conversation.
 - **Class Summaries:** Students write up class summaries, being sure to get all the salient points, and in the process demonstrating their engagement with the course.
- **Writing:** Whatever you want to do in life, being able to effectively communicate through writing will be valued. Here is your opportunity to demonstrate comprehension while practicing written communication in a way that tracks with what you have planned beyond Wash

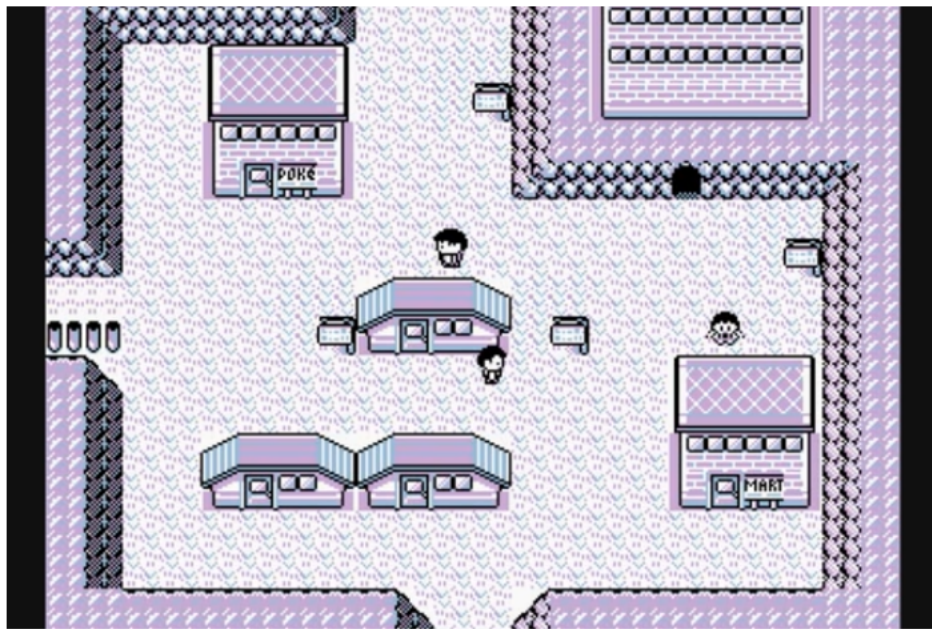
U. All writing assignments should be 3-5 pages and conform to APA or Harvard Bluebook styles. **You should prioritize, in whatever writing style you choose, to prioritize your own critique, opinion, conclusion, etc.**

- **Reading Essay:** Students may summarize and critique/respond to an assigned *or* recommended reading from the course content. This is recommended for those thinking of an academic path.
- **Legal Memo:** Students may summarize a legal article or case whose import is relevant to the course. This is recommended for those thinking of a legal path.
- **Policy Critique:** Students may offer a policy critique of an existing policy, being sure to provide ample evidence for their position. This is recommended for those thinking of a government/bureaucratic path.
- **Policy Prescription:** Students may offer a prescriptive policy response to an existing problem being sure to provide evidence for its effectiveness. This is recommended for any and all of these paths.
- **Independent Project:** Consider this the **BOSS LEVEL**. Students will have to demonstrate their comprehension of the course content at its most macro level. Traditionally this would be accomplished with a test (and if you so choose I will give you one), but here we will offer you a chance to determine how best you can demonstrate your mastery of the course.
 - **Research Memo:** You might have a larger research program knocking about in your head, here is your chance to describe it in 8 - 12 pages. The bulk of this effort should be directed to completing a literature review that convinces the reader of your programs merit. This would be recommended for anyone thinking of an academic future.
 - **Legal Article:** For those of you considering law school, here is your opportunity to practice legal writing in a longer format (8 - 12 pages).
 - **A book report + presentation:** For those of you looking to build up your EJ *bone fides*, you may choose to read a larger scholarly work that will expand your knowledge about a specific aspect within EJ. In other words, you are looking for specialization.

In 6 - 8 pages, give us a report, you will also record a short presentation of the report which can be shared with your classmates giving them the gist of your book's contents.

- **Essay exam:** For those of you who would rather take a test, I feel you, and I will give you an essay exam. You will answer three essay questions (at approximately 3 pages each) and then I will have you defend (briefly) your answers (*a'la* a dissertation defense) in person.
- Whatever you choose I will be looking to see how you apply the course content in completing your project. Did you do the readings? Can you apply them here? The bigger concepts that we have been working through this semester, is there some connection between your work and them?

3 Resources & Side Quests



What would an RPG be without resources that you can use when you need to. Every one starts the semester with **1 SICK DAY** and **1 PERSONAL DAY**, no questions asked. Neither of these will move a due date or excuse you from anything, but I need not be told anything more than you will not be in class that day. More may be awarded as the semester goes on through what we

will call **world events**; these are those seemingly random adventures you may stumble into when exploring the world map. For instance, we may have a **MINI-BOSS** in the form of a quiz one day, or an ad hoc Jamboard assignment.

There are **side quests** too, or those voluntary tasks you can select into, to earn extra points as well. The table below lays out these quests and the points available (as well as how many a semester you may be rewarded for completing). You are more than welcome to complete all or none of these. Your decision will not count against you.

Table 3: **Side Quests & Points**

Side Quest	Points	No. Per Semester
Office Hours Visit	5	Multiple
News Brief	10	TBD
Pre-submission Drafts	10	4
Library Visit	25	1
Writing Center Visit	25	1

4 When things go wrong...



It is likely that you've not taken a course like this, and this format is newer to the professor too! There are no emergencies in political science, so there is nothing that might happen this semester which cannot be fixed. We will, to continue the video game metaphor, go back to the last save point and start from there when we need to consider a late assignment or the growing pains of learning

how to, let's say, format a legal paper. My posted office hours are not the limits of my ability to meet with you and I encourage you to reach out whenever a hiccup occurs.