



Lakehead University
Law and Tyranny in Film and Television
POLI-4150 WA
M/W 2:30-4:00

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Cain (Political Science)
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Office hours: M/W 3:45-4:00 in RB 1044 (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this seminar course is to foster, cultivate, and enhance students' capacity to actively participate in thoughtful and reasoned discussions about the most significant inquiries concerning law, politics, and the human good. We will study how exceptional works of drama contribute to our comprehension of the law, particularly its connection to fundamental questions surrounding human and political existence. Of primary concern will be the moral and political teaching of the *Godfather* trilogy and the HBO television series *Deadwood*. These pieces of art provocatively raise questions about the relationship between morality, law, tyranny, virtue, governance, prudence, love, and human freedom. Students should note that these productions delve into the complexities of our course's themes through settings and storylines which involve intense and explicit depictions of physical, sexual, and racial violence, including racial and sexual epithets.

This course's examination of these questions is meant to (a) develop and enhance students' ability to freely partake in the art of thoughtful and reasoned discussion about the most important human questions; and (b) enhance student's ability to individually and co-operatively analyze texts and arguments. To achieve these objectives, students will have to come to class having diligently studied the complex and difficult texts under consideration, and prepared to engage the readings through thoughtful, charitable, and reasoned discussion. They will also need to engage the course's important political questions through a number of robust experiential exercises and assignments, some of which will happen synchronously and asynchronously in place of scheduled class time.

Required Texts:

Aristotle, Poetics (excerpts to be posted)

Deadwood (HBO)

Godfather I, II, III (Paramount)

The Lakehead Library has a subscription to the Criterion Collection that is free to all students. The Godfather films can be found in this collection.

Grading Overview:

Seminar Presentation: 10%

Seminar Paper: 21%

In Class Participation: 25%

Quizzes and Assignments 7 X 2%: 14%

Exam: 30%

In addition to the specific assignment requirements, here are some general guidelines for students hoping to achieve high marks in this course:

(a) Thoroughly read and analyze essential texts and ideas with care and insight, considering the questions raised and how their arguments illuminate ongoing political questions as well as our own lives and the political systems in which we live.

(b) Charitably engage your fellow students in deep and reasoned conversation about the arguments being made and the issues at stake, including through friendly disagreement that seeks a better understanding of the arguments being studied.

(c) Seek to comprehend the arguments made by the assigned authors, starting with the assumption that these writers can teach us something—that they have likely thought more profoundly about the issue at hand (and their own arguments) than we have as readers. This will be especially crucial if and when arguments diverge from the conventional wisdom of our times. While it is natural for discussions to deviate from the text's specific arguments, particularly when considering their application to current political events and issues, students should attempt to do so in concert with the thoughtful engagement with the text and its arguments.

Experiential Learning Component—Seminar Presentation

Students will sign up for a **8-10 min** presentation.

Each presentation should **analyze the assigned material in a way that outlines and explains** the import and teaching of the material. The presentation should illuminate the assigned material and its complexities especially in relation to the class themes.

Presenters must provide all class attendees with a one page handout that outlines a summary of their presentation's analysis. The handout is also to be submitted to the course website.

The presentation **handout** is to include:

(a) a three sentence summary of the import and teaching of the assigned material;

(b) a one to two sentence thesis that summarizes your analysis of the day's material;

(c) three quotes from the assigned material that supports and develops your account of that material—after each quote give a sentence or two that shows how the quote supports or develops your account;

(d) a concluding sentence that illuminates the importance of your presentation.

Seminar Paper

Seminar Papers are to be handed in no more than 2 weeks after the Seminar Presentation. Students should use their paper to develop and refine the topic and themes of their seminar presentations, producing a coherent interpretive essay of 1300-1600 words, which defends a clear thesis. Chicago Manual of Style with footnotes is preferred (notes do not count toward word limit). No sources other than assigned course materials are permitted. Late seminar papers will lose 2.5%/day. Delivered marks will not show late penalties.

Assignments/Quizzes

Delivered in-class. Generally due in class or by the beginning of the following class. If more than 7 quizzes/assignments are completed, the top 7 scores will count toward the Assignment grade. These assignments are designed to measure students' preparation for class time and therefore cannot be made up if missed. However, in order to accommodate excused absences, 3/10 quizzes/assignments may be missed without penalty. In other words, all **accommodations for these assignments (including those for excused absences) are already built into the assignment structure.**

Accessibility and Accommodation

Students with accessibility issues or with requested accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>

Class Participation

This is a seminar, and so much of class will be spent in discussion, responding to the assigned materials, seminar presentations, and other issues related to the course. Although the professor will facilitate discussion in a number of ways (such as playing “devil’s advocate”), students should be prepared enough to drive the discussion themselves. In order to facilitate discussion, and in order to allow the lectures to be executed in the most effective manner, students are required to follow the seating direction of the professor

To fully engage in this discussion, students are expected : 1. Read assigned material carefully; 2. Bring the readings to class; 3. Be prepared to discuss the readings; 4. Be attentive and avoid appearing inattentive. Regular attentive attendance is a key component of participation. Students are expected to regularly participate in fully engaged, non-distracted discussion. Cell phone use during class time is not allowed and laptop use is strongly discouraged. Often there will be periods of discussion when all laptops must be closed.

No audio or video recording of the class is allowed without the written permission of the professor, and any permitted recording will for be only for the private use of the individual to whom the permission is given and cannot be distributed under any circumstances. Failures to follow this recording policy will result in a mark of 0% for participation, and a plagiarism complaint will be brought against the student.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead’s policy in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:

Plagiarism involves presenting another’s work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one’s own.

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any words from sources
2. Give accurate and complete citations for all material *including paraphrased material.*

3. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.

Artificial Intelligence, Academic Honesty, and Classwork

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems or programs that can perform tasks that would typically require human intelligence. Unless otherwise noted, the use of artificial intelligence is not permitted in the completion of classwork.

All permitted use of AI must be noted and referenced by students. This must take the form of a note at the beginning of the student's work that explains what AI tools were used, and the ways in which they were used. This includes all editing, writing, and/or research. If permitted AI is used, the professor is likely to conduct a discussion with the student to judge the extent to which they comprehend the submitted material, and will adjust the mark accordingly.

If the professor suspects that AI has been used in a way that violates the above policies, a plagiarism case will be opened and a meeting with the student will be scheduled. The determining factor in deciding these cases is simply the preponderance of evidence. Students who submit work that they cannot explain, or who submit work that is written at a level far above their demonstrated capabilities, should expect their work to fail this test. Any unpermitted use of AI will result in a mark of zero on the assignment and a plagiarism charge.

Students should at all times remain aware that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is *artificial* intelligence.

Use of web search and spell checking tools do not fall under this policy.

READING AND WATCHING SCHEDULE

Our schedule will be adjusted throughout the year in response to the fruitfulness and pace of class discussion. A number of class days may involve asynchronous lectures and/or assignments in place of in-class meetings

1/8 *Course Outline*

1/10 *Aristotle, Poetics (excerpts provided)*
Deadwood, 1.1 (Season 1 Episode 1—first 16 minutes)

1/15 *Deadwood, 1.1 (Season 1 Episode 1)*
1/17 *Deadwood, 1.1-1.4*
1/22 *Deadwood, 1.5-1.8*
1/24 *Deadwood, 1.8-1.12*
1/29 *Deadwood 1.13*
1/31 *The Godfather*
2/5 *The Godfather*
2/7 *The Godfather*
2/12 *Godfather II*
2/14 *Godfather II*
2/19 *STUDY BREAK*
2/26 *STUDY BREAK*
2/28 *Deadwood, Season 2.1-2.7*
3/4 *Deadwood, Season 2.7-2.12*
3/6 *Deadwood, Season 2.13*
3/11 *TBA*
3/13 *Godfather III*
3/18 *Godfather III*
3/20 *TBA*
3/25 *Deadwood, 3.1-3.4*
3/27 *Deadwood, 3.4-3.8*
4/1 *Deadwood, 3.8-3.10*
4/3 *Deadwood 3.11-3.13*

4/8 *Catch up and Review*

FINAL EXAM