

## **Law and Society Political Science 3271**

University of Colorado-Boulder

Professor Vanessa Baird

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Office Hours: Thursdays 11-1  
(also by appointment)

### **Module 1: The logic of evidence and inference**

*Week 1 Thinking logically: Thinking ethically, causally, and systemically*

Kinds of statements  
Logical fallacies

**Watch for class:**

[Logical fallacies YouTube](#)

[More logical fallacies YouTube](#)

**PowerPoint slideshow with audio on kinds of statements**

[Five fallacies about race](#)

**Reading: Hobbes' Leviathan, on why justice is immoral**

**Prepare for class discussion: Identify a logical fallacy – one that might go unnoticed (not an obvious one)**

*Week 2: Thinking causally versus thinking ethically: What causes people's differing reactions to injustice or violence? What are the ethics of punishment?*

**Reading: Javeline and Baird: Surprisingly non-violent aftermath in Beslan**

**Huo, et al. Social identity and justice concerns**

**Gruber, #MeToo and Mass Incarceration**

**Beccaria, On Crime and Punishment**

**Prepare for class discussion: Be today's Beccaria. Declare a new set of ethics regarding an aspect of our criminal justice system.**

Due Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> Identify a show, movie, reading, news clip, etc. that contains logical fallacies about race that would have been difficult to identify without these resources (i.e., non-obvious fallacies). Provide a logical critique of the fallacies present.

Due Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> Kritik Peer Assessments of logical fallacy essay

*Week 3: Thinking systemically: How does a “culture” get created or changed?*

**Reading: Two Colorado’s: What happened on deliberation day?**  
**Weingast: [The Political Foundations of the Rule of Law](#)**  
**Gibson [Mass Opposition to the Soviet Putsch of August 1991](#)**  
**Reading: Barwick and Baird, Support for the rule of law**

**Prepare for class discussion: bring an example from your own life when you either 1) noticed a cultural change, or 2) when you questioned (or were afraid to question) a cultural norm?**

Due February 12<sup>th</sup> Policy brief (group white paper) topic due: a few sentences describing the policy you want to brief, so that I can give you timely feedback on suggested scholarly literature and workability. 1000 points for completion, upon completion of the final brief. (These points are freebie points for having a topic this far in advance, but they are not to be given away for students or groups who do not complete the final brief.

Exam 1: Critique an essay February 15<sup>th</sup>  
(online, open note, book, internet, but not open discussion)

## **Module 2: Society**

*Week 4: What in human nature causes social inequality?*

**Rousseau, Excerpts from First and Second Discourses**

**Prepare for class discussion: Reflect on a time in which feeling threatened socially dampened your (or another’s) sense of compassion.**

*Week 5: How can social identities undermine a sense of justice?*

**Reading: Wilkerson, *Caste* excerpts, pages 1-109**

**Prepare for class discussion: What did you find most surprising in Wilkerson’s *Caste*?**

*Week 6: Why is culture so “sticky”?*

**Reading: *Caste* excerpts, pages 110-184**  
**Vice President Henry Wallace and his Anti-Fascist, Anti-Racist Politics**

**Prepare for class discussion: How does Rousseau inform us about the causes of caste systems? What does the example of Henry Wallace teach us about cultural shifts?**

Due March 1<sup>st</sup> Policy brief (group white paper) annotated bibliography due: an outline of the brief, with the 8-12 sources, correctly placed in the outline and summarized. 1000 points for completion, upon completion of the final brief. (These points are freebie points for having a

topic this far in advance, but they are not to be given away for students or groups who do not complete the final brief.

*Week 7: Thinking about why people have an extreme attraction to ideas, politics, and religion: the neurobiology of fervor*

**Reading: *Fervor: What Cults can Teach us about the Evolution of Religion*, excerpts**

**Guest lecturer: Yuval Laor, the author of *Fervor: What Cults can Teach us about the Evolution of Religion***

Due March 8<sup>th</sup> Write a single page paper about what factors might bring about social equality. Defend your causal reasoning.

Due March 15<sup>th</sup>: Kritik Peer Assessments of social equality causal analysis

### **Module 3: Criminal justice**

*Week 8: Policing*

**Vitale, The End of Policing**

or

**[The Ferguson DOJ report.](#)**

or

**[The Baltimore DOJ report](#)**

**Prepare for class discussion: What are the ethics of policing? What are possible solutions to the problems in policing? Like the discussion about Beccaria, what**

would be the optimal structure of the police, given that the police cannot be responsible for all the ills of society.

Guest lecture: Hank Graham, Senior Honors Thesis, Examining the Individual and Contextual Determinants for Support for the Police

*Week 9: Prosecutors and defense attorneys*

Reading: Van Cleve, Crook County, Excerpts  
McClelland Prosecutorial immunity  
Greenhouse [“Cops are stupid and prosecutors are smart,”](#)  
Dervan, Bargained Justice

Prepare for class discussion: What could be done to reform our systems of legal defense? What policies could assist with prosecutorial misconduct?

*Week 10: Punishment*

Reading: McLeod, *Prison abolition*  
Haney, Restricting the Use of Solitary Confinement  
Henrichson, Cost of prisons  
Lacey, Soskice, Hope-Comparative Penal Policy  
Denmark prisons

What would society have to look like if the U.S. decided to have no prisons, or to have a prison system similar what they have in Denmark?

*Week 11-12: Presentations of policy briefs: Reimagining U.S. Criminal justice*

Due April 5<sup>th</sup> Write a single page paper proposing a change in a policy that would bring about a better outcome in U.S. criminal justice, with particular attention to defining the policy and outcome and assessing the causal relationship between the two

Due April 12<sup>th</sup>: Kritik Peer Assessments of criminal justice causal analysis

## Module 4: The law and economic inequality

*Week 13: Corporate harm and litigation*

[Stout: Debunking the Shareholder Myth](#)

[DuPont's Poisoning of Parkersberg, WV](#)

or

[Watch "the Devil We Know: a Netflix documentary about Dupont](#)

[Oreskes and Conway, Merchants of Doubt, excerpts](#)

[McCann and Haltom, Distorting the law](#)

[Baird, Why the Supreme Court cannot make liberal economic policy](#)

**Prepare for class discussion: What could be done to reform our system of corporate responsibility? Reimagine society such that corporate harms can be mitigated.**

*Week 14: Inequality and everyday indignities*

[Michener, Fragmented Democracy, excerpt](#)

[Money, Race and Success: How Your School District Compares, New York Times](#)

[Spade, What is wrong with rights?](#)

**Prepare for class discussion: What could be done to reform our system of corporate responsibility?**

Due April 19<sup>th</sup> Write a single page paper proposing a change in a policy that would bring about a better outcome in reducing the harms from economic inequality, with particular attention to defining the policy and outcome and assessing the causal relationship between the two

Due April 26<sup>th</sup>: Kritik Peer Assessments of economic harms causal analysis

*Week 15: Presentations of policy briefs: Addressing economic harm*

## Exam 2: Final exam, time and date TBA by CU Campus

### **Brief description of projects**

There are two kinds of projects:

- Group projects: policy brief with accompanying research paper
- Individual projects: policy brief

Note: There are two time in the semester where project presentations occur. It is not expected that you would do more than one, but I am happy to hear reasons for exceptions to that rule. It should not be an alternative to coming to class.

Generally, policy briefs and accompanying research papers address the ethics of the current state of affairs of some policies, with a discussion of harms and harm reduction of various policy alternatives. You should discuss alternatives, recommendations, and evidence for your position. What are some mechanisms for policy change?

The final written briefs and white papers are not due until the final exam.

### **Point breakdowns for assignment types**

#### **4500 points total for my assessment of the quality of your classroom participation**

If you cannot attend the class synchronously, you can turn in your prepared reflections on the readings by email, for 300 points per week.

#### **12,000 points total for weekly discussions**

Moderate a class discussion: post something and respond to responses. If at least three other students respond to your question and you respond to them, you can get up to 800 points each week for a total of 6000 points

You can reflect on contemporary events, news, discussions with students outside of class, on class topics or anything having to do with law and society.

Or you can post your “Prepare for class discussions” reflections

#### **4500 alternatively a total for responding to others’ posts**

If you don’t want to begin a discussion, respond to other student’s questions are 100 points for a total of 3 responses, for a total of 300 points per week

You can receive a maximum of 12,000 points for discussions.

#### **6000 points for two “Essay” Exams, 3000 points possible for each**

In these essay exams, I write an essay related to class content, at about a B- level and provide a list of possible factual or logical critiques. You have to choose whether these particular critiques are valid. They are open note, open book, open internet.

#### **12,000 points total for four single page essays, 3000 points each**

(You must turn in the essays by the deadline and assess five other essays using Kritik by the deadline to receive any points for essay)

Your grade on these essays will depend on how five anonymous peer reviewers assess your essay, based on Rubrics that I assess. You can challenge the grade your five reviewers give.

#### **6000 total points for Kritik’s and students’ assessments of your critiques, 1500 points for each critique**

These are based on both quantitative and qualitative assessments. Kritik does quantitative evaluations and the students you critique also give

qualitative feedback. If you dodge and select the highest or lowest evaluation on the prompts, you will be docked points here.

The more your score correlates with others' scores, the better your quantitative evaluation will be. The more your score and comments are seen to motivate students to do better, the higher your qualitative score will be.

### **8,000 points for individual policy briefs**

Individuals can create and present policy briefs, without the 15-20 page research paper

**2,000 extra points for turning in topic and outline by the due date.**

### **12,000 points for participation in group projects**

Groups present policy briefs and research paper

**2,000 extra points for turning in topic and outline by the due date.**

Note: For group projects, the entire group will receive a grade. Then, each group member will "grade" one another's efforts, according to a four-number grade.

3: This person contributed significantly to the excellence of the project. This project would not have been as good without this person's efforts.

2: This person contributed, mostly came to meetings, and mostly did all the work for the group.

1: This person came to meetings occasionally and contributed but in ways that did not significantly affect the quality of the project.

0: this person contributed nothing, with the exception of attending one or two meetings. The rest of the group did the project without this person.

Group members may average their grades, such as giving a person a 1.7 or a 2.5.



This grade will be averaged, and then the following calculation will take place to calculate an individual member's grade of the final project

Group members' average assessment of quality of an individual's contribution	Resulting impact on final grade: students will receive...
0-.5	a total of 0 points for the group project.
.5-1.5	50% of the total points for the project.
1.5-2.5	the total project grade, out of 12,000 points.
2.5 -3	<b>an additional</b> 20% of the total group grade.

**6000 points: serving as a learning assistant, tutoring dyad, or participation in a weekly study group**

You must be active all semester as learning assistant to get this credit for being a learning assistant.

## Grade breakdown

<b>Total points</b>	<b>Assignment type</b>
4500	My assessment of the quality of your classroom participation
12,000	Moderating online discussions, 800 per week
	4,500                      Responding to others' posts
6000	Two "Essay" Exams, 3000 points possible for each
12,000	Four single page essays, 3000 points each
6000	Kritik's and students' assessments of your critiques, 1500 points for each critique
12,000	Group projects, white paper and policy brief
	8,000                      Individual policy briefs
2000	Turning in topic and outline by due date
6,000	Serving as a tech learning assistant, tutoring dyad, or participation in a weekly study group
<b>60,500</b>	<b>Total points possible</b>

There are a total of 60,500 available points. The following is the grade breakdown.

F	Below 18,000
C-	19,000
C	21,000
C+	23,000
B-	25,000
B	27,000
B+	30,000
A-	35,000
A	40,000

## Syllabus Statements

### Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### Requirements for COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements, and public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Required safety measures at CU Boulder relevant to the classroom setting include:

- maintain 6-foot distancing when possible,
- wear a face covering in public indoor spaces and outdoors while on campus consistent with state and county health orders,
- clean local work area,
- practice hand hygiene,
- follow public health orders, and
- if sick and you live off campus, do not come onto campus (unless instructed by a CU Healthcare professional), or if you live on-campus, please alert [CU Boulder Medical Services](#).

Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). For more information, see the policies on [COVID-19 Health and Safety](#) and [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please see the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

All students who are new to campus must complete the [COVID-19 Student Health and Expectations Course](#). Before coming to campus each day, all students are required to complete the [Buff Pass](#).

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home.

### **Accommodation for Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

### **Preferred Student Names and Pronouns**

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

### **Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

### **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

## **Religious Holidays**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, let me know and I will accommodate.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.