



Political Science 489: The Twentieth Century
Albert Camus: Absurdism and its Implications for Politics

Spring 2024

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon

Office Location: 160 Ferguson Social Sciences

Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 a.m. Tuesday/Thursday

10:45-11:30 a.m. Tuesday/Thursday

By appointment

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Course Information

Required texts: All by Albert Camus

The Rebel

Resistance, Rebellion, and Death

The Plague

The Stranger

The Myth of Sisyphus

Material and documents will also be posted to D2L/Brightspace.

Course Description

This independent study will be a tutorial on the implications of Camus' absurdist philosophy for political theory.

Student Learning Outcomes

The successful student will:

1. Synthesize material to develop and present a coherent narrative.
2. Develop and present a literature review review.
3. Compose and present at least one academic paper.
4. Critically analyze primary and secondary materials.
5. Engage as scholars with their peers both through the presentation of original material and by serving as discussants for the work others.

Course Requirements

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Attendance: We will meet every two weeks to discuss readings.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of any form of cheating or academic misconduct related to your role as a student. Examples of academic dishonesty may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying another student's work, cheating on exams, quizzes, and/or assignments. In addition to the traditional forms of academic dishonesty, **the use of AI in the composition of written assignments is forbidden.** Writing and thinking are inextricably linked and, since the goal of the university is to train you to think, you should do your own writing.

There is another reason that you should do your own writing. Experience has demonstrated that AI is not a very good writer. In other words, you are more likely to receive a better grade than for your own writing than that created by AI.

The penalty for academic dishonesty in this class is an immediate "0" on the graded material on which the cheating was discovered. For those assignments that might otherwise be among grades dropped in the calculation of final grades (readings quizzes for example), the "0" recorded for academic dishonesty will not be among those dropped.

In addition, in accordance with university procedure [13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty](#), you will be reported to the academic dean of the college in which your major department is housed as well as the department head in your major department so that a record of your offense may be maintained for purposes of future disciplinary action.

Under the policy, repeat instances of academic dishonesty may result in expulsion from the university. With this in mind, consider that any short-term gain that you hope to attain by engaging in unethical behavior is simply not worth it.

AI Statement

A&M-Commerce has adopted the following statement regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for inclusion on faculty syllabi:

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content

of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Of course, this statement is wholly inadequate. In the context of this class, **DO NOT USE AI**. Programs that save you all the trouble of reading, thinking, and presenting your thoughts and ideas are antithetical to university **education**. If it is apparent that you used AI in writing any assignment in this course, you will receive a 0 on that assignment with no opportunity to make it up.

Conduct

Student conduct in the university is governed by university procedure [13.02.99.R0.06 Standards of Student Conduct](#). The university requires that all syllabi include a statement from section 2.2 of that procedure. Section 2.2 of the policy deals with student “obligations and responsibilities.” Under the terms of the procedure, students have the obligation “to follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior commensurate with aspiration implied by a college education.”

Bear in mind that your behavior is not only a reflection upon you, but also the university. It is my expectation that you will demonstrate respect for the institution, your professors, and your fellow students, as well as your own education. If you send me a photo of a tiger by noon January eleven, I will give you ten points. This is true even in the context of courses in which controversial topics and issues (such as a political science course) are discussed. (I will explain why you were taught to never discuss religion and politics in polite company on the first class day.)

Your professor will serve as the arbiter of what constitutes appropriate respect and behavior in the context of this class. Students who fail to treat the institution, class, professor, and/or other students may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Contrary to what many people seem to believe, a university education is not a right. Rather it is privilege—and it ought to be treated that way. You should remember that this course is part of YOUR education. Your education is, in turn, YOUR responsibility. Sadly, some students seek to shift responsibility to others: faculty, other students, etc. This is unfortunate and demonstrates an unwillingness to take ownership of what belongs to you. Your professors and other university staff are here to help you to succeed, but it is up to you to decide that you are going to succeed and take the steps necessary to make that happen.

I cannot force you to do your homework, read the material assigned for class, or study material presented in class, etc.—that is up to you. With that said, your success (in all of your courses) is dependent upon you doing those sorts of things. If you choose not to, and your academic performance is less than adequate, it is not the fault of your professor or anyone else. It is yours.

On a related note, almost every class that university professors and instructors teach there has, among its students, that one student that knows so much more than anyone else—including the instructor. Don't be that student. It is disrespectful to all of us and, if it becomes too distracting

for the instructor, you may be dropped from the course. Your instructor and other students in the class do not have the time or the energy to deal with this phenomenon.

Finally, most classes will end with an admonition to be kind. You never know the burdens that those with whom you interact may be carrying. Kindness does not cost anyone anything and it may benefit someone in ways that you cannot imagine—in addition to the benefits that you will receive from the active exercise of civility and kindness. It is good for them AND good for you.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced.

Grading and Assessment

Your grade will be determined using the following assessment tools that taken together total 500 possible points:

Discussion Papers: 50%

Final Paper: 50%

University Support Resources and Policies and Procedures

Counseling Center Information

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

[If you need help, get help! Your emotional and mental well-being is very important. Many of us put a lot of pressure upon ourselves and sometimes we require support. Fortunately, A&M-Commerce recognizes this and provides services to address these issues. Take advantage of them should you need to!]

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained. [Your instructor's side note: I will not tolerate ANY bigotry in this class on the basis of any of the categories listed in the university non-discrimination notice.]

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COVID-19 Statement

A&M-Commerce recommends the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories.

Technology Requirements **LMS**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>