

Pols 434: Comparative Political Economy

Spring 2025, Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:45, LNGH 235

Dr. William O'Brochta (wobrochta@tlu.edu, LNGH 104, 830-372-6566)

Student Office Hours: Tuesday 8:15-9:15 and Wednesday 9-11

Syllabus Updated: January 16, 2025

One Drive Link: <https://pols.tiny.us/434spring2025>

Course Description: This is a course on comparative and international political economy grounded in individual and biographical narratives. Political economy examines how politics and economics influence one another. In the comparative formulation, this interaction occurs primarily within states, whereas international political economy speaks to globalization and political interactions within the international system. Many political economy courses focus on economic theory to explain major topics like inequality, trade, and wealth from a macro perspective. We will take the opposite approach. Using narratives written by and about individuals working within the economic system, we will seek to understand how these personal stories illustrate broader economic and political themes.

Prerequisites: None.

Text: None. See readings on Brightspace.

Catalog Description: An examination of the differences and similarities of political economic systems across the world. This course will include a comparison of the political and economic institutions in both developing and developed countries.

Student Learning Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how capitalism operates and interacts with other economic systems.
2. Critically read, understand, and discuss texts containing complex human narratives.
3. Plan, prepare, execute, and reflect on discussion leadership.
4. Synthesize knowledge across texts and discussions; draw implications for public policy.
5. Apply your knowledge toward a project of your choice.

Course Philosophy:

This course is being taught as part of the Department of Political Science, Sociology, and Geography Research Lab. Lab courses are small seminars wherein students work together to complete major research-related projects. In addition, all lab courses are focused on developing teamwork, project management, and career-focused skills. This course focuses on close reading and analysis through a book club and discussion leader format.

A note on the course content: economic and political systems produce immense wealth and success for some, but not all. As this is a political science course, our focus is on critically examining these systems to improve them. Therefore, the intersection between economic struggles and personal stories often results in profoundly challenging, yet important, reading and discussions. The stories we will read are unvarnished: vulgar language and descriptions of

explicit experiences should be expected. Course readings include descriptions of kidnapping, death, torture, sexual assault, and other similar topics.

Assignments: This course is contract graded with three contract evaluation points throughout the semester.

	“A” Contract	“B” Contract	“F”
Reading Journals	Complete at least 18 reading journals of the 21 possible	Complete at least 15 reading journals of the 21 possible	Complete fewer than 15 reading journals of the 21 possible
Reading	Spend at least one hour per annotations assignment	Spend at least 40 minutes per annotations assignment	Spend less than 40 minutes per annotations assignment
Attendance	Miss no more than 3 classes	Miss no more than 5 classes	Miss more than 5 classes
Class Engagement	Consistently ask questions and participate in class. Uses electronic devices appropriately	Consistently ask questions and participate in class. Uses electronic devices appropriately	Does not participate in class. Fails to use electronic devices appropriately
Discussion Leader	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on all these assignments	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on all these assignments	Miss an assignment or evaluate yourself lower than a “B” on at least one assignment
Discussion Leader Response	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as lower than a “B” on this assignment
Object of the Day	Evaluate yourself as an “A” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as a “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself lower than a “B” on this assignment
<i>The Project</i>	Evaluate yourself as an “A” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as an “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as lower than a “B” on this assignment

Topics and Readings: Below is the schedule of reading and assignments for each class. I may change the course outline, but I will give you plenty of prior notice.¹

January 16: Introduction and course purpose

January 21: Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Revised ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Sections 1-4. (17 pages)

- Assignments Due:
 - Beginning of semester survey. You must submit the survey before the link to upload your contract appears.
 - Upload initial contract.
 - Sign up for discussion leader and object of the day on OneDrive.
- Note: First reading journal due on Brightspace (see below).

January 23: Fulcher, James. 2015. *Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 and 4. (36 pages)

January 28: Discussion Leader Practice

- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Read this handout on leading a discussion: https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/discussion_leading.pdf. With the handout in mind, prepare a written plan to lead a 20 minute discussion on one section of Rawls in the context of what we learned from reading Fulcher. Follow the requirements for discussion leader submissions outlined below. Submit to Brightspace by class time.

January 30: Bauer, Shane. 2019. *American Prison: A Reporter's Undercover Journey into the Business of Punishment*. New York: Penguin Random House. Introduction & Chapters 1-5. (47 pages)

February 4: Bauer. Chapters 6-11. (58 pages)

February 6: Bauer. Chapters 12-16. (51 pages)

- Note: Class will be held on Zoom on this day. <https://zoom.us/my/wobrochta>

February 11: Bauer. Chapters 17-20. (44 pages)

February 13: Bauer. Chapters 21-23 & Epilogue. (57 pages)

February 18: Project Workday

- Assignments Due: Contract assessment, project proposal, optional mid-semester survey.

February 20: Krishnamurthy, Mathangi. 2018. *1-800 Worlds: The Making of the Indian Call Centre Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1. (36 pages)

¹ I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

February 25: Krishnamurthy. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 (through the end of page 104). (57 pages)

February 27: Krishnamurthy. Chapter 3 (from page 105) and Chapter 4. (51 pages)

March 4: Krishnamurthy. Chapters 5 and 6. (43 pages)

March 6: McFate, Sean. 2015. *The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What they Mean for World Order*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-4. (41 pages)

March 18: McFate. Chapters 5-8. (49 pages)

March 20: McFate. Chapters 9-10. (41 pages)

March 25: McFate. Chapters 11-12. (37 pages)

March 27: Project Workday

- Assignments Due: Contract assessment, project 30% submission

April 1: Chin, Josh, and Liza Lin. 2022. *Surveillance State: Inside China's Quest to Launch a New Era of Social Control*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Introduction & Chapter 1. (38 pages)

April 3: Chin and Lin. Chapters 2-3. (44 pages)

April 8: Chin and Lin. Chapters 4-6 & Epilogue. (45 pages)

April 10: Project Workday

April 15: Martinez, Oscar. 2014. *The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*. London: Verso. Chapter 1 & Chapter 6. (51 pages)

April 22: Martinez. Chapters 7, 8, & 11. (49 pages)

April 24: Martinez. Chapters 13-14. (27 pages)

April 29: Wrap-Up

- Assignments Due: Contract assessment, Project

Final Exam (Friday, May 2 1:30PM): Project Presentations

- Note: We will complete the end of semester survey in class. If you will not be in class, please complete the survey before class time.

Description of Assignments:

Reading Journals

This course requires you to read intentionally every day before class. To facilitate this, you will submit a reading journal entry to your discussion forum on Brightspace prior to each class period where reading is assigned.

To start, read the assigned passage. The main purpose of this course is to become skilled at close text analysis. Therefore, you should spend at least one hour doing the reading --- more for theory heavy passages or longer selections. Read actively, as you need to produce a reading analysis that is meaningful and contributes to the discussion.

Your reading journal must reflect close reading and analysis. It should be written to someone who has already read the assigned reading --- this means that you should not summarize the reading, nor should you include any direct quotations. Instead, cite passages by page number, interpret the reading, make connections to other texts we have read (especially theoretical concepts introduced in Rawls, Krishnamurthy, and McFate), and discuss how what you have read relates to political and economic systems. You may want to do some research on topics or concepts mentioned or that you think relate to the reading; if you do so, please cite your sources. You should read other student's reading journals from previous class periods and engage with them in the context of your reading journal. Reading journals should be at least 350 words long and must be easily read, free of any errors, and contain deep and meaningful analysis. You can (and should) reference your reading journal during our class discussions.

Evaluation: Submit each reading journal prior to when the reading is due on Brightspace in your assigned discussion forum. I will read and comment on some students reading journals each class. You will complete a self-assessment of your reading journal at three points throughout the semester. The self-assessment will include the following questions:

1. Describe your process of close reading. When and where do you read? How do you approach the reading? How much time do you spend on the reading? How have your strategies changed and improved since the last assessment? (for assessments two and three)
2. Discuss your engagement with the text including citing passages by page number and making connections to other texts we have read.
3. Discuss your engagement with external sources including research that you conducted and cited and connections you made to other student's reading journals.
4. Discuss how you crafted your reading journals. What was the process like? How can the process be improved and/or how have you improved your reading journals throughout the course?
5. Confirm that your reading journals are solely your own work.
6. If you were to evaluate your reading journal with a grade from A to F based on the criteria above, particularly the reading process and journal writing, what grade would you assign and why?

Class Engagement

The fun part of a book club is that everyone participates and supports the leader. This course only succeeds if you are engaged and if you encourage others to be engaged. Engagement means being prepared (via the reading journal), being present, and making meaningful contributions. You must actively participate and contribute to each class session.

Evaluation: You will evaluate your class engagement at three points during the semester:

1. Describe how you actively participate in each class session.
2. Discuss your class engagement strategy. How do you decide when to participate and what to contribute? How do you use your reading journal to facilitate meaningful contributions?
3. Reflect on your past class engagement and prospects for the future. What are you doing differently since the start of the semester? Since the last contract assessment? What do you plan to do differently in the future?
4. If you were to evaluate your class engagement with a grade from A to F based on the criteria above, what grade would you assign and why?

Discussion Leader Plan

As a discussion leader, you are responsible for leading the class on the days you have selected. You will usually be leading the class with another discussion leader, but you should plan the entire class discussion. In your planning, remember that our class is 1 hour and 15 minutes long and that you should reserve about 10 minutes at the beginning of the class for the object of the day presentation and any announcements that I might have. You must be present to present on your discussion leader days.

Discussion leader plans should have the following components:

1. A list of objectives that you want to accomplish during the discussion.
2. Clearly defined sections to the discussion. Each section should link to one or more of the objectives. Each section should be between 10 and 30 minutes; the length of the section should correspond to the activity in the section. The total time for all sections should add up to approximately 50 minutes to an hour.
3. Plans should include a variety of activities that can include discussions on specific themes or sections of the reading, close reading, individual writing or reflection, partner discussions, group work, short research or online activities, short video or audio (under 2 minutes), and pretty much anything you can come up with. If you want to do a simulation, that could be fine, but you will need to check with me to get approval for your idea in advance. For each section, describe what students will do and what you will do by:
 - a. Describing the purpose of the activity in the section in a few sentences. Each activity must somehow involve the reading and comparative political economy.
 - b. Prepare an introduction for the section. This can be anything from instructions that you distribute, to introducing an idea, to referencing student reading journals, et. cetera.
 - c. Prepare sufficient instructions and reminders for yourself during the section so that you can conduct it effectively. For example, if you want to discuss a theme in

the reading, you should have all the relevant quotes from the reading prepared, have read some student reading journals, and be ready to facilitate a discussion. If you want to lead a short small group activity, you should know what you are going to say, have practiced the instructions to ensure that they make sense and are achievable in the time you allotted, and know what you are doing during the activity (i.e., how are you ensuring that the activity is proceeding successfully?).

- d. Prepare a conclusion for the section. This can be as simple as a transition sentence to move from one section to the next or it could involve sharing out information or moving from individual/small group work to small group/larger group work (these could be their own sections in some cases).

On the day of the discussion, you should arrive early to the classroom and make any necessary preparations (e.g., logging into the computer and pulling up instructions, preparing handouts, writing on the board, arranging desks/seats). Remember that two students are assigned to most discussion days. Once I start class and we are ready for the discussion section, I will call on one student to lead the discussion for about 20-25 minutes. After about 20-25 minutes, I will call on the other student to continue the discussion until approximately the end of the class period. In an instance where only one discussion leader is present, you will lead the discussion for the entire time, but I will contribute more to help you as the discussion leader if you like.

Additionally, you are welcome to involve me in any activity that you design (though I cannot lead the activity). You may call on me at any point during any activity for help. I may also interject into an activity if I feel that it is beneficial for the class if I do so.

Evaluation: Submit your discussion leader plan to Brightspace prior to each class period where you are responsible for leading the discussion. You will evaluate your discussion leader plan after you lead a discussion:

1. Describe how your plan outlined meaningful and achievable objectives linked to the assigned reading and course content and themes.
2. Describe how you approached breaking up the discussion into sections and designing each section. What were your goals? How did your design change from the last discussion you led or how will it change in the future?
3. Discuss additional research you conducted to prepare to lead the discussion. This can include how you found and introduced materials into the discussion, scholarly research or media publications, et. cetera.
4. If you were to evaluate your discussion leader plan with a grade from A to F, what grade would you assign and why?

Discussion Leader Reflection

Reflect on your experience as a discussion leader. What worked? What could be improved? Write a 500-word reflection that describes specific strengths and weaknesses of your discussion leadership and outlines appropriate and attainable goals for the next time you lead a discussion.

Evaluation: Submit your discussion leader reflection to Brightspace prior to each class period following the one where you were responsible for leading the discussion. You will answer these questions in your self-assessment:

1. How does your discussion leader reflection discuss strengths and weaknesses and outline goals for improvement?
2. If you were to evaluate your discussion leader reflection with a grade from A to F, what grade would you assign and why?

Object of the Day

This is like academic show and tell. Find an object that you own or that you interact with regularly. To the extent possible, your object should be different from those other students have already presented in class. My recommendation is to select a simple object with few component parts. If you select your car, for example, then you will need to describe the entire process of car manufacturing. If you select a specific washer on one bolt of your car, it is easier to describe the manufacturing process.

Trace the economic journey of your specific object: where was it made? Who made it? What were their working conditions like? How was it made? What materials were used, and where did they come from? Were machines used? Which ones? How has the object's manufacture changed over the history of the object? Are there other, similar objects produced in different ways? How did you acquire the object? How are any component parts of the object made or assembled? What is the supply chain that provides the component parts? How is the object distributed (i.e., how did it come from the manufacturer to you)? How is the production of the object affected by political factors? To answer these questions, you will likely need to do some research, so be sure to cite any sources used. Write a minimum 1000-word report with your results.

Bring the object to class or take and bring enough pictures of the object to meaningfully describe and share it.

Then, prepare and deliver a two-minute presentation about your object and its economic journey. You should practice your presentation so that it is two minutes and that it is comprehensive and well-rehearsed.

Evaluation: Submit your object of the day report to Brightspace prior to the class where you are assigned to present the object of the day. You will bring in your object and present it. Then answer these questions on your self-assessment:

1. Describe how your report is thorough, uses sources effectively, and fully traces the economic journey and political implications of the production of your object.
2. Describe how you prepared and practiced the two-minute presentation.
3. If you were to evaluate your object of the day report and presentation with a grade from A to F, what grade would you assign and why?

The Project

This project is called *the* project because it is a project that you propose, design, and implement. The project should be meaningfully related to comparative political economy, that is, the interaction between economic and political systems. The project must fulfill the criteria listed below. You can propose anything that fits these criteria.

Project criteria:

- Creative: the project cannot be an essay or paper, and it should reflect your creativity. Ideally, the project would be related to helping you develop skills relevant for your intended career.
- Significant effort: the project cannot be completed in just a few days of work.
- Relevant: the project must be directly linked to the readings and to theories and concepts from comparative political economy.
- Researched: the project must involve conducting research beyond what you have learned in class.
- Reflective: the project should incorporate some of your analysis and reflection on course content.
- Process-based: the project should include some end product, but should also include the research, planning, background information, and other work that you completed as part of the project.
- Project medium: the project can be any medium. If you produce any physical items or things that cannot be submitted to Brightspace, submit pictures on Brightspace and bring the physical items to class to submit to me on the project due date.

One example:

- Infeasible: Record 30-minute audio on your phone talking to one guest with little editing.
- Potentially feasible: Record 30-minute podcast in an appropriate recording studio with several guests. You produce the podcast with some professional features included. Provide detailed description of research for the podcast. Distribute the podcast episode so someone other than students in this course can listen to it.

You may choose to work with at most one partner on the project if you would like to do so. If that is of interest, it must be specified in the project proposal. The project proposal must include a detailed breakdown of tasks assigned to each person. It must also include a brief description of how the project scope and work is approximately double that of an individual project. Choosing to work together means that both students will receive the same project grade. If students choose to work in a group, only one submission to Brightspace is needed per group.

The project has three components:

1. Project Proposal
 - a. Submit a written proposal to Brightspace with a description of what you are going to do, a discussion of how what you propose meets each of the project criteria listed above, and a timeline that lists each task that you will do to complete the project with deadlines for each task between now and the project due date.
 - b. If a group project: assign tasks to each person. Include a brief description of how the project scope and work is approximately double that of an individual project.

2. Project 30% Submission
 - a. Submit the project with at least 30% of the work complete to Brightspace.
 - b. Submit an updated timeline that includes all tasks remaining (if a group project: assign tasks to people) and deadlines for each task so that you can complete the project on time.
3. Project
 - a. Submit the completed project to Brightspace. If you produce any physical items, submit pictures on Brightspace and bring the physical items to class to submit to me on the project due date.
 - b. Submit a 500-word description of the project discussing how it relates to comparative political economy. Be specific, citing readings, theories, and course themes.
 - c. We will prepare a presentation and present during the final exam period.

Evaluation: You will evaluate the project in your final contract assessment. The project proposal and project 30% submission are required components of the project, and projects will not be accepted without them submitted and complete by their assigned deadlines. To evaluate the project, you will write a 250-word narrative on the final contract evaluation discussing how you met the project criteria outlined above and assigning yourself a grade on the project with appropriate justification.

Contract Grading

This course uses a contract grading system that is self-assessed, meaning that you will evaluate how well you fulfilled your contract at several points throughout the semester. At the beginning of the semester, you will review the contract options and commit to a contract you are interested in fulfilling. You will then complete assignments and measure your progress toward the contract before providing a final contract narrative evaluation at the end of the semester. There are two contract grade options in this course: “A” and “B.” “F” is an absence of satisfactory work to warrant passing the course. You must complete all contract self-assessments on time.

You will complete the contract self-assessment at three points throughout the course. To complete the self-assessment:

1. Review your contract and the standards associated with each item in the contract.
2. Review the schedule you outlined for yourself. Ensure that everything is completed on Brightspace by the date of the contract self-assessment.
3. Access the contract self-assessment form on Brightspace.
 - a. Complete the table based on the contract you outlined for yourself.
 - b. Complete the individual contract item assessment.
 - c. Write an overall assessment of your progress thus far in the course. The assessment section should be at least 250 words long. The final overall assessment should be at least 750 words long and should include a full discussion of your performance throughout the entire course including whether you fulfilled the entire contract. The assessment should answer the following questions:
 - i. Have you completed the items in the contract you specified you would complete by this particular date?

- ii. Do you feel that you are making adequate progress toward completing the contract? What are areas you are excelling in? What are areas that you could improve?
 - iii. List actionable steps you are going to take to improve your work during the course. Evaluate your progress in fulfilling those steps at the next contract self-assessment.
 - iv. If you are not fulfilling your contract, can you get back on track? How?
4. Submit the assessment to Brightspace by class time on the day it is due.

Pols 434 Initial Contract

My name is _____. I am working to complete a(n) _____ contract in this course by fulfilling all of the items listed in the contract. I commit to the following:

	“A” Contract	“B” Contract	“F”
Reading Journals	Complete at least 18 reading journals of the 21 possible	Complete at least 15 reading journals of the 21 possible	Complete fewer than 15 reading journals of the 21 possible
Reading	Spend at least one hour per annotations assignment	Spend at least 40 minutes per annotations assignment	Spend less than 40 minutes per annotations assignment
Attendance	Miss no more than 3 classes	Miss no more than 5 classes	Miss more than 5 classes
Class Engagement	Consistently ask questions and participate in class. Uses electronic devices appropriately	Consistently ask questions and participate in class. Uses electronic devices appropriately	Does not participate in class. Fails to use electronic devices appropriately
Discussion Leader	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on all these assignments	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on all these assignments	Miss an assignment or evaluate yourself lower than a “B” on at least one assignment
Discussion Leader Response	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as an “A” or “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as lower than a “B” on this assignment
Object of the Day	Evaluate yourself as an “A” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as a “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself lower than a “B” on this assignment
<i>The Project</i>	Evaluate yourself as an “A” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as an “B” on this assignment	Evaluate yourself as lower than a “B” on this assignment

To help keep me on track throughout the semester and to ensure that other students have an opportunity to benefit from learning from my work, I commit to completing the following by these contract evaluations:

	Contract 1	Contract 2	Contract 3 “A” Contract	Contract 3 “B” Contract
Reading Journals	XX (out of 7 assigned)	XX (out of 15 assigned)	18 (out of 21 assigned)	15 (out of 21 assigned)

Course Policies:

- General:
 - You agree to the provisions in the Common Syllabus, available on Brightspace.
 - All assignments are to be turned in on Brightspace and are due at class time on the date indicated unless otherwise noted.
 - You are responsible for ensuring that your assignments submit to Brightspace successfully and that the file you submitted can be displayed. All file submissions must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format. Files in other formats -- including Google Docs --- cannot be read by Brightspace.
 - Should you have an accommodation, please meet with me during the first two weeks of classes, either during office hours or by appointment, to discuss.
- Plagiarism:
 - Citations must be in American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Use of this style is important, as it governs the writing of professional political science. The APSA style manual is posted on Brightspace.
 - Book format: Grace, Philip. 2016. *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel*. London: Routledge.
 - Journal article format: Walsh, Germaine Paulo. 2002. "Is Jane Austin Politically Correct? Interpreting Mansfield Park." *Perspectives on Political Science* 31(1): 15-26.
 - In-text citation format: Professors at TLU are doing interesting research (Grace 2016; Walsh 2002).
 - Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is an Academic Honesty Violation and is grounds for failure from the course.
 - Always cite your sources. If you are unsure if you are paraphrasing, rewrite to use either a direct quotation or paraphrase differently. Feel free to talk to me if you are unsure whether or how to cite a source.
 - You can use the Turnitin draft coach on Word Online to run a Turnitin report.
 - Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.
 - Artificial intelligence tools will be of little help in this course. Only tools that assist with brainstorming concepts or basic spelling and grammar are allowed in this course. If you use one of these tools, you must cite it. All work must be wholly your own, and sentences must be constructed without assistance. All other uses are Academic Honesty Violations.
- Student Office Hours:
 - Student office hours are a time for you to come by to speak with me without an appointment. Please come by to see me early in the semester. I am happy to discuss your progress in the course, political science topics, and potential career paths. These student office hours are for you; please do not feel like you are imposing by stopping by. If you want to come by but don't know what to ask, ask me about my favorite cat breed!
- Technology:
 - We will use technology in class. As a result, you are expected to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to each of our class sessions (laptop or tablet preferred). If you will not have regular access to one of these devices, you can borrow a laptop

from the library, use a classmate's laptop, or speak with me and we will work out an alternative approach.

- You are expected to use your devices for class purposes only. Using your device in other ways is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% of your final grade or to drop you from the class in serious cases.
- Taking photos, recording audio/video of class, or distributing any class materials is not permitted.
- Attendance:
 - I understand that there are reasons that you may need to be absent from class. I expect that you will be responsible and attend class as much as possible. Accordingly, **you do not need to let me know when you will be absent** unless it is a university sponsored absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what we did from someone else in class, to review all material on Brightspace, and to come speak with me during student office hours if you have questions.
 - Attending class is the biggest key to success in this course. **It is best to limit absences to 3 or fewer during the semester. 6 or more absences result in automatic failure from the course.**
- Late Work:
 - All assignments in this course are most relevant to you and to the rest of the students if they are turned in the day that they are due. As such, assignments will only be accepted late if prior arrangements for an extension have been made.
 - Extensions will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Feel free to speak with me if numerous assignments are due around the same time; we can develop a plan together to help you complete everything on time. To request an extension, you must e-mail me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due with the reasons behind your request. We can then work together to figure out how you can turn the assignment in on time or make alternate arrangements in extraordinary circumstances.
- Grading:
 - This course is contract graded. You will agree to a grade contract at the beginning of the course and self-assess your progress toward completing that contract at three points during the course.
 - You must submit and meet the requirements for all items in a particular contract. Meeting all but one item in a contract will reduce your final grade by at least letter grade. Earning a C, D, or F is possible for students who do not meet all the requirements for an A or B contract.
 - I will assign a final grade for the course based on the contract that you complete. Grades are only changed if I make an arithmetic error or mistake. If you feel that this happened to you, please send me an e-mail no later than three days after receiving the grade detailing the error. Because this course is contract graded, there are no late assignments and no late work.
 - I do not give incomplete grades unless there is a documented medical crisis or documented emergency late in the quarter and you have communicated about this to me when the incident occurs.
- Checking Your Grade:

- Since this course is contract graded, grade records are not available on Brightspace. You have evidence of your own progress toward fulfilling the contract in your contract evaluations.
- Contacting Me:
 - E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of student office hours. Please do not use Brightspace Messages, as I am unlikely to see your message promptly. You can call my office phone, but my e-mail response time is likely to be quicker.
 - I will respond to your e-mails promptly. In general, you can expect a response within 24 hours and that e-mails will be answered between 9AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. While I understand students work outside of these hours, please plan ahead to give me time to respond.
 - Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail.
 - Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an individual meeting. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
 - Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence. E-mails may only come from your tlu.edu e-mail address and should include a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. O'Brochta), a clear message, and a signature with your name and the class you are enrolled in.