

We live in and by the law. ... It is sword, shield, and menace... We are subjects of law's empire  
- Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (preface)

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

PHL341

Spring 2025

What is the purpose of a legal system? The nature of legal authority? How does the law relate to morality? How should we interpret laws and constitutions? What (if anything) justifies legal punishment?

Legal Philosophy, also known as Jurisprudence, investigates these and related questions. We will examine various answers and debates, with a focus on understanding the theories and arguments. Along the way we will work to develop your philosophical abilities, including charitably interpreting multiple perspectives on issues, constructing arguments, and effectively communicating philosophical ideas.

## Instructor Info

Dr. Marcus Schultz-Bergin  
Rhodes Tower 1333  
[m.schultzbergin@csuohio.edu](mailto:m.schultzbergin@csuohio.edu)

**Student Drop-In Hours**  
Monday 3:00-4:00pm  
Thursday 3:00-4:00pm  
And by appointment

## Course Info

**Class Meetings**  
BH 441  
Tuesday/Thursday  
12:30-1:45pm

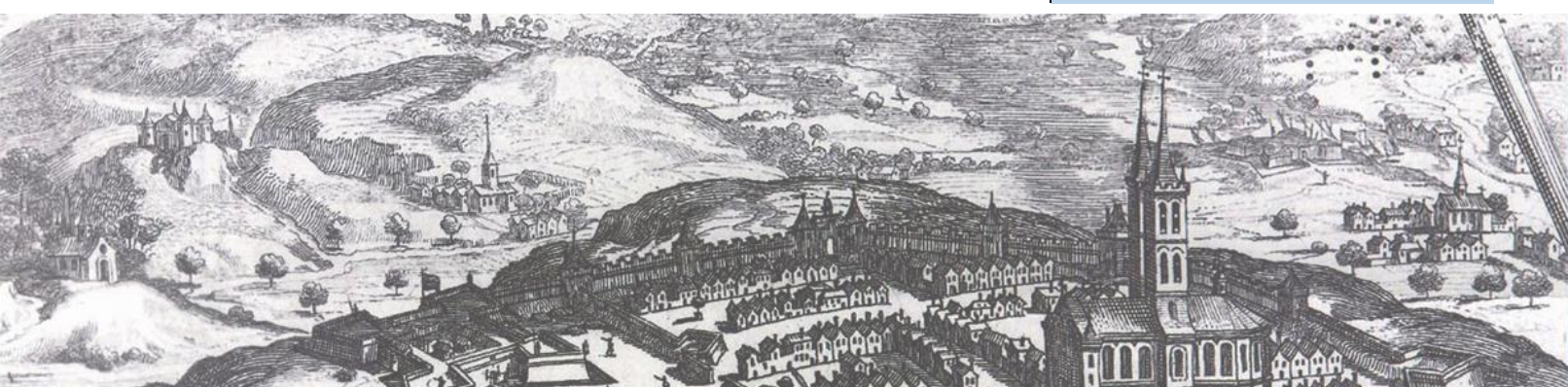
**Required Materials**  
All required readings will be provided on Blackboard. You should have access – preferably on paper – in class.

**How to succeed**  
Complete reading assignments before class. Come to class prepared to actively engage with others about the readings and ideas. Focus on understanding theories and arguments.

## Key Assignment Dates

Exams are completed in class. All other assignments are submitted electronically.

Collaborator Evaluation 1	Sun, Feb 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Exam 1	Tues, Feb 11 <sup>th</sup>
Short Essay 1	Sun, Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Collaborator Evaluation 2	Sun, Mar 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Exam 2	Thurs, Mar 6 <sup>th</sup>
Short Essay 2	Sun, March 30 <sup>th</sup>
Research Essay Topic	Sun, Apr 13 <sup>th</sup>
Research Essay Draft	Sun, Apr 27 <sup>th</sup>
Exam 3	Thurs, May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Collaborator Evaluation 3	Sun, May 4 <sup>th</sup>
Research Essay Presentation	Tues, May 6 <sup>th</sup>
Research Essay Final Draft	Sun, May 11 <sup>th</sup>



# DEMONSTRATING ACHIEVEMENT

Your final course grade is a function of your demonstrated level of achievement, rather than just “points collected” or some arbitrary use of numbers. There are 3 main individual assessment types in this course, each aimed at assessing different types of achievement:

Assessment Type	Level of Achievement
3 in-class exams	Interpretation & Understanding
2 short essays	Engagement & Communication
1 original research essay & presentation	Argumentation & Communication

These demonstrations are supported by two assignment types focused on your effort and engagement, rather than assessing achievement. Together they form the “Teamwork Bonus Modifier” for your final course grade.

Assessment Type	Achievement
In-class teamwork assignments	Complete at least 80%
Effective Collaborator Evaluation	Earn at least 9 of 13 points in total

## FINAL COURSE GRADES

### Core Course Grade

To earn a(n)...	You must...
D	Earn at least a 75% average across the 3 exams
C+	Meet requirements for a ‘D’ and pass 1 short essay
B	Meet requirements for a ‘C’ and pass an additional short essay
A-	Meet requirements for a ‘B’ and pass the Research essay/presentation

### Teamwork Bonus Modifier

If you earn the Teamwork Bonus Modifier, then your ‘core course grade’ is increased by one step:

If your core grade is...	Then it becomes...
D	C
C+	B-
B	B+
A-	A