

**POLI104J/K – Winter/Spring 2017**  
**Student Testimonials**

Professor: Dr. Matthew Bergman

Student #1:

POLI 104J and POLI 104K have been two of the absolute best classes I have ever taken in my three years at UCSD, and I do not see that changing as I head into my fourth year. The reasons being that the two classes are both interactive and engaging. For some classes, the method to succeeding is to memorize key facts and then reciting them onto midterms and finals. To a degree, we did the same in both POLI 104J and POLI 104K, we did memorize key facts. However, we use those key facts and manipulated them into legal arguments. Furthermore, we were able to have independence in our approach. There were no right answers. We were able to explore multiple avenues in our arguments as we advocate for our "perspective clients" and sides of a case. The small class size definitely lends to the feeling of there being no right answers to any particular case. The small atmosphere helped with creating an environment where any opinion and approaches could be shared. In doing so, we often found strengths and weaknesses that we should either emphasize or be ready to defend in our arguments.

The value of having actual alumni be present to coach us and question our argument was invaluable and sets the class above many others. It was such an incredible experience. It made it feel like we were actually practicing law as a normal attorney would. Further, being able to ask them about their own law practices and their own paths served to be a memorable experience. The networking this class enabled was unbelievable, especially when these alumni were able to see each student perform and excel. These two classes definitely prepared me for a future in law.

Student #2:

POLI 104J&K are no ordinary classes; at first, they might appear to be daunting but in the end, you will learn a lot more than you first expected. The complexity of these two classes rests not just on students' ability to memorize theories, laws, and facts. On top of these basic components that make a class a "class", POLI 104J&K enable students to take their own views—there are no right or wrong views—the only thing that matters is how persuasive you are.

Professor Bergman allows his students to approach legal matters in various perspectives—allowing their imaginative capacities to expand. These two classes are not big as there are roughly 15 students enrolled per class. The small size enables students to interact with their fellow classmates in a more engaging manner (heated debates are not uncommon).

One important component that makes these classes great is the involvement of alumni. Alumni from class of 70s, 90s, 2000s, etc. who are now esteemed judges and attorneys participated heavily throughout the past two quarters. They provided us with technical as well as moral support in perfecting our legal arguments. If they could succeed in their legal careers as tritons, we can also do the same.

The true value of a class is evident when students are motivated to learn and to pursue a higher goal. Students were eager to speak out, learn, discuss, etc. It is up to everyone's own discretion to judge the value of a class, and from these two classes, I learned that nothing is absolute.

Of the two classes, I personally love POLI 104K as it provides opportunities for students to experience how law school, or legal advocates to be more precise, actually work. We had the opportunity to argue before real judges; and to be able to do so as undergraduates, we are already one step ahead of everyone else. Being able to have law school experience as an undergraduate is a great way to hone your confidence.

I never really looked forward to taking exams throughout my college years; nonetheless, POLI104K in particular possessed both the fear and excitement that prompted me to look forward to an exam. Overall, a great class cannot be so great without an awesome professor. Professor Bergman cares about his students and their progress. To be honest, the entire class is like a group of friends and Professor Bergman blends in really well with us with his friendly teaching style. I believe that, with the knowledge I obtained from these two classes, I am more than ready for law school.

Student #3:

POLI 104 J and K

These classes were invaluable in helping me make the choice to attend law school. I have a long way to go in developing my legal understanding but, taking the POLI 104 series helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses as well as further my understanding of the current legal landscape. From covering the basics to developing our own legal arguments taking this series really allowed me a hands on experience and exposure (guest speakers) that I would have not else wise been afforded. The guest speakers brought in were all awesome, professionally experience and engaging. I was even offered an opportunity to interview for internship by ones speakers firm. This series is unique from the other classes offered at UCSD with law in the title as it is less of a case study series and more a skill development or workshop series. I believe that the small class size and the series structure were large parts of the courses success as well. I my excitement about law in general has increased greatly and I do not look at the LSAT or even Law School with as much fear and uncertainty as I did before taking the 104 series.

Professor Bergman was extremely helpful and invested in our class's success. One on one group project meetings and feedback on briefs and test were always welcomed and very helpful.

I am lucky to have been a part of this course series.

Student #4:

This class gives an inside look into what law school would look like. It allows for students to explore their interest in law in an experience that most undergrads do not get the opportunity to be a part of.

Although sometimes nerve-wracking and challenging, the sequence is invaluable. The small discussion-based class allowed for everyone to contribute and get comfortable with each other. It made discussions easier and allowed for more in depth learning as the professor or helping alumni were able to interact with everyone on an individual level.

This two course sequence has been my favorite out of the classes I have taken at UC San Diego. It allowed me to be introduced into the law and legal writing, something I thought I would be interested in but never had experience with. I would recommend this class to anyone especially those interested in the legal field.

Student #5:

To whom it may concern,

I am a current UCSD student majoring in the Political Science Department. I took both courses taught by Professor Bergman in the academic year 2016-2017, in which the course Political Science 104J: Introduction to Legal Reasoning and Analysis was offered in the Winter quarter of 2017, while the course Political Science 104K: Legal Argument and Formulation was offered in the Spring Quarter of 2017. I would like to state that these courses were more than helpful in regards to the giving insight on what the legal world looks like in terms of work, processes, and preparation for legal appeals. These courses were very helpful with the work being given, it actually felt as if we were preparing for a legal argument in front of a court. It was also very detailed in preparation for that of law school, in showing how a law school courses would appear to be in the near future. Although listed under the category of Political Science this course was more legal and fact oriented than that of politics and ideology. I would definitely recommend this course to any future Political Science majors that hope on going into Law School after learning in the Undergraduate realm of UCSD. I would encourage those as it not only allows for engagement with the coursework, but it offers valuable lessons on becoming more group oriented to perform better in legal analysis and formulation, as now the legal career is becoming more team based rather than individual based. Small class size offers better quality of time and guidance with the instructor as some of the course work could be rather tedious and confusing, given most students is the first time they deal with legal documentation of any sort.

In the end, I believe it would be a great course to continue offering for students here at UCSD as its uniqueness offers more than what other Political Science courses offer with regards to potential law schools applicants.

Student #6:

This class series was valuable to solidify my decision to go to law school. In addition, I feel like this was one of the only classes at UCSD that was close enough to a real law school experience. During my time in these classes I learned how to read and write like an attorney. The small classroom setting was very beneficial because you build a closer relationship with your professor and it made understanding the material better. Overall, this experience makes me feel a lot more confident about my first and second year of law school. I currently volunteer at the Hall of Justice in San Diego and when I speak to law students about my class they always say they wish they would have taken something like this in undergrad. It was a privilege to take this class and to be able to have a more concrete understanding of the legal system. I hope that this class is continued to be offered at UCSD because it will serve as a great asset for students.

Student #7:

I always knew I wanted to be pursue a career in law but there was always a bit of doubt. I was never sure whether I would actually be able to do the work required of a practicing attorney. This class gives you a taste of what you can expect both in Law School and in a legal career. Even more, it has given me the skills and knowledge I need to go forward as well as assuring me that I can learn what I need for this career.

It is almost impossible to attend a class of this size at UCSD and I don't think the class would be as effective if it was offered as a massive lecture. The class always felt very one-on-one and the class discussion ensured comprehension. The ongoing involvement of alumni serves is both a valuable resource and a source of motivation through example.

I am currently on track to take the LSAT in June and apply to law schools before the end of the year. Both this class and the work experience I have gained so far has given me a better idea of the path I wish to pursue. UCSD has been truly life changing, both as a place for intellectual and personal growth.

Student #8:

I'm a visiting student from Renmin (People's) University of China, and the study experience offered by this class has been extraordinary to me. I've taken several courses on laws from UCSD Political Science Department, most of which are just fantastic, yet almost all are big informative lectures with little interactive discussion. The dynamic in this class is what makes it so different. And it requires students to really engage themselves with some substantive projects—preparing for briefs and making oral argument before a mock court is really something more than just a presentation—you put your effort into it because it becomes a part of your accomplishment. That might be a big word for an undergraduate classwork, but it is how it feels especially when considering how much support you've got from the professor and all the alumni involved. Professor Bergman is the best. He is highly available, and always willing to help—this can be the most crucial characteristic required for the instructor of this very class, since all kinds of problems arise when processing a very challenging project. And the alumni's presence also is a great way to enlarge the opportunities for students to see what the legal career looks like in reality. Anyway it is a great connection being made.

Regarding Professor Bergman:

Thank you for the great classes you delivered to us!! The volume of knowledge and benefits I've got from these twenty weeks are tremendous. Your teaching style is truly humorous and relaxing, and I'm always grateful of you being so supportive. Everything was just incredible. I don't see much use of furnishing my language to express my gratitude and feeling of how lucky I am to have taken your classes, because it just cannot be enough delivered. Again, thank you so much.