Legal Studies/Political Science 217: Law, Politics and Society
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 2:00 PM and Thursday 4:30 – 5:30 pm
Lecture Times: Tuesday and Thursdays 3:00 – 4:15pm
Classroom: Psychology 103

Required Textbooks:

Course Outline: Set forth is an outline of the material we plan to cover. We might vary from this schedule. Assignments may be changed by the instructor for any given class or topic listed below. Additional readings might be assigned. Please check Learn@UW at least once a week.

Calendar Description: This class is an introduction to the legal process by examining how law intersects with politics and society. The course has three broad and overlapping sections. First, we will begin with theoretical concepts of law and justice. Next, we will review the structure and development of legal institutions in the U.S. Finally, using pending and recent cases from the Supreme Court, we will look at particular issues in law and the connection between law and social change.

Consider how fundamental the following questions are to defining a society and government. What are the rules of behavior in the society? How are those rules and laws made? Do people always obey the laws, and why? How can an individual influence the lawmaking process? How do people think about their government? How might this influence how they think about their community and their own behavior? The questions will focus on in this course are: 1) What are law, politics, and society? How are they created, and what influence do they have over our lives? 2) How do law, politics, and society relate to one another? 3) How do law, politics, and society play out in the United States?

Expectations: I expect you to participate in lecture. Many of you will not have had much practice talking about these subjects, and some of the topics we will explore are controversial and may feel uncomfortable to you. THIS IS NORMAL! It is crucial that we all remember that every person is living with a and sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, size, belief system, nationality, etc, and each person’s individual perspective is relevant to our conversation. Speak up and feel free to disagree with me, or your peers, but always stop and think about how you can phrase your words to respect everyone in the room and their unique experiences. Likewise, push yourself to assume that everyone else in the class is coming from a place of good intentions, of trying to learn and struggle with the concepts of the class. Come with an open
mind, respect the different experiences of others, and be prepared to rethink your own assumptions about politics and law.

**Department learning objectives:**
Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Legal Studies Program:

- *Communicate Skillfully:* Legal Studies students write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- *Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:* Legal Studies students can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

**Office Hours:** Many students are intimidated about going to an instructor’s office hours. But please, don’t be afraid to stop by my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me during the semester. You do not have to be having difficulty in the course or even have any profound questions to come to office hours. I am willing to answer questions stemming from lecture, the assigned readings, or simply talk about the random news, tv show, or Youtube video you saw that made you think about something related to this course. If you are unable to make it to regular office hours, and would like to make a separate appointment, please do so [https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/WQuqgOLS.html](https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/WQuqgOLS.html) Don’t be a stranger, my door is always open!!

**E-Mail Etiquette:** Email should be composed in formal, professional language, and with attention to the propriety accorded to the position of the writer, and the addressee. I will not respond to emails that do not meet this standard.
Before sending me an email about logistics or information related to the course, reread your syllabus, check Learn@UW, the UW-Madison website, and check emails you’ve received related to this course. I can guarantee you the answer is there 9 times out of 10. I will not respond to questions whose answers can be found in any of these places. If your question requires a lengthy and complicated response, I really prefer we talk in person. I can usually talk for a few minutes before or after lecture, but the best time would be during office hours or you can make an appointment to meet with me. A good rule of thumb: if your questions cannot be answered in two sentences or less, or if it is a question that you should solve on your own through the course of your reading, then it is not appropriate for email. Lastly, you can expect a 24 hour turn-around to your email. If more than 48 hours have passed since your email, please resend it.

**The Writing Center:** It is always useful to develop your academic writing skills as early as possible. The UW Writing Center provides you with a diverse range of resources to help you write as a scholar and with style. The Writing Center is located in 6171 Helen C. White Hall. Their hours are Mon-Thu 9:00am-8:30pm; Fri 9:00am to 3:00pm. For more information, visit their website at www.writing.wisc.edu or call 263-1192.
Please contact me if you are having difficulty with any aspect of this course. We are more than willing to discuss the course and offer suggestions to improve your study, examination, or writing habits. Head off problems before they turn into emergencies.

Late Assignment Penalty:
Please take note of the due date for the assignment. All papers are due via electronic submission on Dropbox in Learn@UW. A late penalty of 5% may be assessed to the paper grade for each partial day or day that your assignment is late. This means that your paper will be graded and the penalty will be deducted from that initial grade. A student requiring (not simply desiring) an extension MUST discuss and have their request approved PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE.

Grading Scale: Letter grades will be assigned as follows:
A = 92 - 100%
AB = 88 - 91%
B = 82 - 87%
BC = 78 - 81%
C = 70 - 77%
D = 60 - 69%
F = below 59%

NOTE: I WILL NOT GIVE YOU A GRADE “BUMP/BOOST” JUST BECAUSE YOU ASK FOR/WANT/HAVE YOUR LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION DEPENDANT ON ONE! SAVE US BOTH THE TROUBLE AND PLEASE DON’T ASK.

Grading Rubric:
A-range: Student demonstrates serious and substantial intellectual engagement with the material. The student provides ample evidence of having read the requisite texts and offers sharp critical analysis, not mere summary of the material. The work is well organized, the argument presented clearly. The work is free of major grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors.

B-range: Student demonstrates an above average grasp of the material, but does not fully explore its potential; the subject leaves some aspect of the topic insufficiently developed or unexamined altogether. The “B” paper has organizational flaws and some grammatical/spelling/punctuation errors.

C-range: Student demonstrates average analytical ability. This work meets the minimal acceptable requirements of the assignment in a satisfactory but lackluster fashion. Overall organization is weak, with ideas unfocused or undeveloped. The student offers summary, rather than analysis, of the topic at hand, or makes generalizations rather than specific comments. The work contains numerous errors in presentation.

1 Prior to the due date means a minimum of 48 hours before the assignment is due; except in rare circumstances.
D/F-range: Student presents seriously flawed work, or failed to meet the basic requirements of the assignment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Introductory Card (2%): I like getting to know students in my class. I like to put names with faces. So to that end, you will need to create an “ID card” of sorts on 1 8x11 piece of paper with a picture attached and information you feel most important about you! (Such as your preferred name if it differs from the one on my roster, favorite subject, least favorite color, vegetable you hate most, whatever!). For this you will earn points that will go toward your final grade. It’s an opportunity to be creative. Due IN HARD COPY: September 8, 2016 before the start of lecture.

Participation/ Attendance – (8%) 
Attendance is not monitored but students are responsible for all material conveyed in lectures or by email. Students also are responsible for any announcements made in lecture or by email, irrespective of whether the student is present in class or whether the student reads the email. Such announcements include, without limitation, modifications in the assigned reading schedule (including deletions and additions); modifications in examination content, format, and/or scheduling; and explanations of material in preparation for the quiz or examinations. In the case of unavoidable absence, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor as soon as possible. In the case of a missed test, exam, or assignment due date, a medical certificate must be provided.

Participation grades are awarded based on in class participation, and participation via Twitter, using the hashtag #UWLPS. This will be discussed on the first day of class.

Academic Response Paper – (15%) September 29, 2016
This paper is a 4 page response to “The Case of the Speluncean Explorers” (available here https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/_file/TheCaseOfTheSpelunceanExplorers.pdf) and is designed to familiarize you with writing in a scholarly way. This paper will emphasize skills such as paraphrasing, quoting and creating a proper bibliography. You will be required to use 2-3 outside sources to argue in support of the judge’s decision you agree with most. Please be consistent in your citation style and ensure your paper is double spaced, in Times New Roman or equivalent, with 12 point font. Papers that are unreasonably over or under the page limit will be penalized. Clear writing, proper grammar, and structure are extremely important. See “Grading Rubric” for what is expected of an “A” paper.

Midterm Exam – (25%) October 18, 2016
There is one in-class midterm exam. They will be comprised of multiple choice, fill in the blank, true/false and short answer questions. The material for the exam includes all required readings and all lecture materials. It will be discussed in class closer to the date of the exam. Study tips and sample questions will be provided in class.

Election Analysis – (15%) November 10, 2016
This 4 page paper will require you to engage with the presidential election and to look beyond the traditional pundits and political rhetoric. Read news coverage of the election from multiple
sources, including nontraditional media sources (twitter, blogs, etc.). Compare coverage from multiple sources, including sources that have different political opinions than your own. What role does the media play in our understanding of politics and law? How did the media shape this election? Reflect on your experience. Citations and Bibliography required and excluded from the page count.

Final Exam – (35%) December 15, 2016
The final exam is a cumulative in-class exam. It will cover the entire course with a concentrated focus on the final half of the course. It will include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions.

You MUST provide advance notice to the professor if you are unable to take an exam. Students missing a scheduled exam must provide appropriate documentation (i.e. medical note) in order to write a deferred exam. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for missing an exam.

Class Conduct: Disruptions such as talking, late arrivals or early departures are especially distracting to the instructor and to other students. Please be considerate of the needs and rights of others. Active cell phones, pagers, PDAs, etc. are not welcome. Laptop/tablet computers may only be used to facilitate notetaking, and solely at the instructor’s discretion.

Electronic Recording: Any kind of recording (audio, video, both) of the lecture and its content is prohibited. I want every student to get the most out of lecture and this class, and if you need assistance with using lecture more efficiently please contact me.

Accommodations. Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s web page for details:

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: READ THIS CLOSELY
The overwhelming majority of students are hardworking and honest about their schoolwork. The instructor has great respect for the effort students put into preparing for this course. Part of the value of a degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison lies in the standards of academic honesty and integrity maintained by the campus.
To avoid academic misconduct, it is important that students understand how academic misconduct is defined and the expectations the instructor has of each student. According to University of Wisconsin-Madison academic misconduct policies, academic misconduct is any intentional act "to claim effort for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation" or to assist others in doing so.” This includes (but is not limited to):

- using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting them as one's own without authorization or without proper credit to the originator (for example, copying from your classmate or presenting someone else's work as your own);
- using notes, books, or a programmable device during an exam when such use is not allowed (for example, using a “cheat sheet” or other aids);
- signing someone else's name, or signing on behalf of someone else, on an attendance sheet;
- assisting someone else with quizzes, essays, and homework assignments;
- cutting, pasting, or paraphrasing text from the web or any other source without quotation marks and/or proper citation or attribution;
- helping someone else cheat;
- collaboration that contradicts any other rules created expressly for this course.

Students have the right to expect that they and other students will be graded fairly, and students have rights of due process should they be accused of misconduct. Students also have an obligation to conduct their academic work with honesty and integrity according to University standards. As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask. I take violations of the rules of academic misconduct seriously and will pursue disciplinary sanctions. Those sanctions include, among other things, a grade of “F” for the particular assignment or a grade of "F" for the course grade. Disciplinary measures become part of a student’s academic record. That means, for example, that a student sanctioned for academic misconduct would have to answer “yes” when asked on a law school application if the student had ever been the subject of a disciplinary proceeding.
Lecture/Reading Schedule: Please ensure you have done the readings BEFORE the assigned class.

**September 6: Introduction (To Drop, or Not To Drop)**
Discussion: Why Law and Why Politics?
No Reading

**September 8, 13 – Understanding Legal Theory**
Chapter 1: Law: Function and Purpose

**September 15, 20 – What is Justice?**
Chapter 2: Justice and the Law

**September 22, 27 - Making Law**
Chapter 3: Making Law

**September 29, October 4 – Criminal Law**
Chapter 5: Crime and Criminal Law

**October 6, 11 – Criminal Procedure**
Chapter 6 – Criminal Procedure

**October 13 – Review Class**
**October 18 – Midterm Exam**

**October 20, 25 – Women and the Law**
Chapter 12: Women and the Law

**October 27 and November 1 – Law and Social Change**
Chapter 11: The Law, Social Change and the Class Struggle

**November 8 – VOTE!**
Chapter 13: Racial Minorities and the Law

**November 10 – Election Discussion**
Read news coverage of the election from multiple sources, including nontraditional media sources (twitter, blogs, etc.). Compare coverage from multiple sources, including sources that have different political opinions than your own. What trends/patterns do you notice?

**November 15, 17 – Why Obey The Law?**
Chapter 9: The Law and Social Control

**November 22 – Vice Crimes**
Chapter 10: The Limits of Social Control
November 29, December 1 – Can I Sue?
Chapter 7: Civil and Administrative Law

December 6, 8 – Thugs, Chavs or Delinquents?
Chapter 8: Juvenile Justice

December 13 – Review

December 15 – Final Exam