Political Science 217: Law, Politics and Society
Spring 2017

Instructor: Christopher N. Krewson
Office: 411 North Hall
Office Hours: T/TH, 1-2pm or by appointment
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Course Description

This course will provide you with an introduction to the American legal system and challenge you to explore the intrinsic interconnectedness of law, politics, and society.

Textbooks

Anthony Walsh & Craig Hemmings. Law, Justice, & Society: A Sociolegal Introduction. (4e)
Lawrence Baum. American Courts: Processes and Policies. (7e)

Grades

Participation (10%)

Participation is based on attendance and engagement during lecture.

Take-home exam (20%)

Your grasp of material from the first few weeks of class will be demonstrated through a written assignment.

In-class exam (25%)

The midterm will take place in March and will focus primarily on material since the take-home exam.

Response paper (15%)

In April, the Law School’s Institute of Legal Studies will host workshops on social movements and administrative law. We have cancelled two sessions of class to provide you an opportunity to attend either one of these events. The purpose is to expose you to cutting-edge research taking place in law today. You will be required to attend one of these session and submit a brief response paper.

Final Exam (30%)

This will be cumulative and it is more heavily focused on material since Spring Break.
Classroom Policies

Phones and Laptops: Please silence your phones before class begins, and note that texting is distracting and rude. I ask that you do not do it during class. If you need to take a call or tend to other pressing business, please step outside to minimize the distraction to your classmates. Laptops should not be used in class either, for similar reasons.

Make-up exams: It is very rare that I will allow a student to take a make-up exam. There are a few exceptions, but other than a documented medical emergency, you must inform me of the need for an alternate testing date in advance. I may deny you the make-up exam option, but if I agree, you will take a separate exam before the class's scheduled exam time.

Grade changes: You must wait at least 24 hours before addressing any issues you may have concerning grading. If you do wish to have your grade changed, you must prepare a memo (300-500 words) explaining why you think I should reevaluate your work.

Attendance: Attendance is critical. Being present has three clear advantages: it will help you learn and process the significant amount of material that we will cover every week, it will provide an opportunity to ask questions (which helps both you and your classmates), and it will facilitate meaningful classroom discussions. As such, you are expected to attend class each week; however, I understand that events and illness occasionally make attendance difficult or impossible. If you must miss class, please email me in advance (or as soon after as possible) to let me know.

Accommodations

If you require classroom or testing accommodations or otherwise have a disability that affects your learning, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center at 702 W. Johnson St (Suite 2104), (608)263-2741, or mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu. Please notify me of your McBurney status (or intent to seek McBurney status) within the first two weeks to discuss support and accommodations. I am happy to work with you to ensure that you are able to fully participate in the classroom experience.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

All students will be strictly held to the University's academic integrity standards. Students engaging in academic misconduct (including plagiarism) will be reported to the Dean of Students and may receive a zero on the assignment and/or an F for the course. If you have questions or concerns, please speak with me during office hours.
Course Schedule

January 18: Syllabus and Expectations

January 23: The Rule of Law
  Fuller, “Eight Ways to Fail to Make Law”

January 25: Understanding Law
  LJS, chapter 1

January 30: Sources and Purposes of Law
  Abdication or Delegation? Congress, the Bureaucracy, & the Delegation Dilemma

February 1: Criminal and Civil Law
  LJS, chapters 5 and 7

February 6: Legal Principles
  Readings will be posted online

February 8: Court Organization
  Baum, chapter 2

February 13: Review; Take-home exam

February 15: No class

February 20: The Legal Profession
  Baum, chapter 3

February 22: Judges
  Baum, chapter 5
  1 or 2 more readings will be posted online

February 27: Judicial Selection: State
  Readings to be posted online

March 1: Judicial Selection: Federal
  Readings to be posted online

March 6: Trial Courts: Criminal
  Baum, chapter 6

March 8: Trial Courts: Civil
  Baum, chapter 7
March 13: Review

March 15: In-class exam

March 18-26: Spring Break

March 27: Appellate Courts and Political Litigation
   **Baum, chapter 8**
   **New Directions, chapter 12** (222-225)

March 29: Equal Justice
   **LJS, chapter 12**
   **LJS, chapter 13**

April 3: The Supreme Court: Internal Processes
   Readings to be posted online

April 5: No class: Social Movements Workshop

April 10: The Supreme Court: External Constraints
   Readings to be posted online

April 12: No class: Administrative Law Workshop

April 17: The Supreme Court: Constitutional Law
   **LJS, chapter 3** (57-62)
   **LJS, chapter 6**

April 19: The Court’s Legitimacy
   **Routledge chapter**

April 24: Implementation and Compliance
   **Baum, chapter 9**

April 26: The Supreme Court and Social Change
   Readings to be posted online

May 1: Comparative and International Courts
   **LJS, chapter 14**
   **New International reading, chapters 3 and 4**

May 3: Review for Final Exam

May 7: Final Exam
   7:45-9:45am
   Rm. TBD