

•
Spring 2005
Criminal Justice P300: Sociology of law
Class time: T 2:30 - 5:00
Office hours: TR 9:00 - 11:00 and by appt.

William Alex Pridemore
Sycamore Hall 313
wpridemo@indiana.edu
856-2220

1. FOCUS OF THE COURSE

The main objective of this course is to provide you with a basic sociological understanding of the **interactional relationship** between law and society. This means that we will not be reading court cases and “black-letter law,” but instead we will focus on the construction of legal codes and their societal ramifications. Following an introduction to the **origins** of law, different **types** of legal systems, and **philosophies of punishment**, we will examine law as both a dependent variable (i.e., how laws are created or changed by **social pressure**) and as an independent variable (i.e., law as a mechanism for **social change**). This will allow us to see how law works both as a tool for the **protection** of freedoms and for social **exploitation**.

This is a discussion-oriented course. The reading load is fairly heavy, but includes interesting and thought-provoking works meant to incite dialogue and debate. Your ideas and reactions to these readings and to the topics broached in class are important, so come to class having completed the readings and prepared to participate in a reasoned discussion of them.

2. GRADING

Please do not make your final grade the main objective of this course. I personally believe the grading process is arguably the most unpleasant aspect of teaching. You are expected to **learn** the material, however, and grading is a necessary and imperfect attempt to measure your level of knowledge on the subject. Having said this, **do not** expect an easy A (or for that matter an easy B or C or D). I do not give grades, you earn them.

Your grade for the course will be based on two exams—a mid-term and a final, each comprising one-third of your overall grade—and on ten pop quizzes given throughout the semester that will cover the required readings for that day, which will make up the final third of your overall grade. There will be no opportunities for make-up exams or quizzes; if you care about your grade, exercise responsibility by attending class and being prepared. The format of each exam and the quizzes will be discussed in class.

3. READING MATERIALS

The text for this course is entitled *Law and society* and is available from the campus bookstore. It is in its sixth edition and is authored by Steven Vago. There is also a required reading packet that is available for purchase. **Do the reading!!!**

4. ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Although I do not take attendance, I expect you to be in class. Since this is a discussion-oriented course that demands your participation, your attendance is vital. It is **highly** unlikely that you will pass this course if you do not attend regularly. **Come to class!!!**

5. SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

I cannot provide a strict schedule stipulating exactly which topics will be covered on which days. Learning is not about bureaucratic regimes but about going where the materials and ideas lead us...and being critical at each stage. Below, however, is a general guideline of what we will cover and the readings for each topic. Since this class is heavily discussion-based, you are expected to have the readings completed before each class. To make sure you are doing the work, I will give 10 brief quizzes throughout the semester.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Packet</u>
Origins of law / Types of legal systems / Theories of law	☞ Chapters 1 and 2	☞ Malinowski ☞ Tyler ☞ Merry ☞ Kafka I
Philosophies of punishment	☞ Pages 212-228	☞ Newman ☞ Kafka II
The administration of law	☞ Chapters 4, 5, and 7	☞ Goldstein ☞ Smith and Visher ☞ Pizzi ☞ Nasheri ☞ Lipetz ☞ Movie: 12 Angry Men
Law and social change	☞ Chapter 8	☞ Rev. M. L. King, Jr. ☞ Sullivan v. Wilson ☞ Vermont Guide..., Lambda
Law as a dependent variable	☞ Chapter 6 (pp. 230 - 256) ☞ Review Chapter 5, (pp. 195-206)	☞ NY Times ☞ Lott v. Zimring and Hawkins ☞ Hall ☞ Becker ☞ Reinerman and Levine
Law as an independent variable	☞ Review Chapter 8	☞ Watson ☞ Morse and Elliott

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Packet</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ McDowall, Loftin and Wiersema ✍ Loftin, McDowall, Wiersema, and Cottey ✍ Methvin v. Shichor ✍ Rolling Stone ✍ Tonry

NOTES

1. The mid-term exam will likely cover the material up to and including “Law and social change.” The final exam will be **comprehensive**, but will focus on the material covered after the first exam. We will discuss exam format in class, as well as exact dates and the material to be covered. I will also hold review sessions before each exam to answer any questions you may have.

2. I rarely adhere to any absolutes in class...except the following: cheating on tests and/or plagiarizing papers **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!** Anyone caught doing so (and this is my pet peeve, so I do watch closely) will receive a score of zero on that assignment and will face judicial proceedings with the university.

I **sincerely** suggest you read the Student Handbook concerning these matters. **Please** do not make this an issue.

3. At times we may move quickly in order to cover all the topics listed here. We may not have time in class to discuss all of your questions in detail. However, I am always available outside class. My office hours are listed above: Make use of them...I am your number one resource for this course.

4. I do not assign grades of Incomplete (I) except under extreme circumstances. Even then, I must be made aware of the situation immediately. Do not stop attending, then come to me asking for an incomplete at the end of class.

5. Concerning reasonable accommodation: Any student who has a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your other abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss any accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

6. Concerning religious holidays (from the *Faculty Handbook*): “It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observations and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.”

©Copyright 2005, William Alex Pridemore, Ph.D., as to this syllabus, web material, and all lectures. Students are prohibited from providing, either for a fee or for free, notes of this course to any person or commercial firm, without the written permission of the professor teaching this course.