This class meets with CJUS-P 340.

Law and Society is a broad field built on research and theory that addresses ways that law expresses society and culture while also being a part of them. Originating in the Law and Society Movement in the 1960s, the field has grown to encompass researchers from numerous disciplines, including law, sociology, anthropology, political science, history, philosophy, and psychology. Its topics range from the study of legal professionals to how communities create their own distinctive systems of law while reshaping state law to their own interests, goals, and identities. In this course, we will examine many different forms of law in society as expressions of popular ways of thinking, communicating, and organizing the world. We will consider how law moves beyond officially legal institutions and processes and into our everyday lives and consciousness through merging with other popular forms of cultural expression and thought. Drawing on an interdisciplinary range of readings and research, we will reflect on how law forms a context for both expressing and shaping notions of responsibility, self, community, truth, rights, power, harmony, and control, and how the world as we envision it can and might be held together.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Martha Nussbaum* proposes several goals for education about the law. These include critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions, expanding one’s connections to other human beings through ties of recognition and concern, and nurturing one’s abilities to think what it must be like “to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself” (p. 270). This course shares these goals. In addition, and as a means of working toward them, this course seeks to increase for each student the visibility of a broad range of legal phenomena and the roles law plays in shaping our thoughts and choices. And, since this is an intensive writing course, it seeks to enhance the writing skills and style of each student.