

**POL SCI 250 – LAW AND SOCIETY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
SPRING 2013**

Instructor: Shawn C. Fettig

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm

CLASS MEETING TIME: M & W 12:30-1:45PM, NWQ G570

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide a broad overview of the American legal system, including legal traditions, institutions, and processes. You should expect to read about and discuss topics related to the nature and organization of law, legal theory, and the role of the courts, judges, juries, lawyers, and legislators. We will also examine a number of debates in law and society, including, but not limited to, same-sex marriage, abortion, religion in society, and the death penalty. This course is not dedicated to rote memorization, but rather to a broader understanding of legal systems and how they do, or do not, influence society. As a result, you will notice that only about 50% of your in-class experience will be devoted to lectures. The rest of the time will be dedicated to discussion, which means that you are an important member of this community. Your input will be necessary to the success of the class. See below for specifics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Vago, Steven. 2012. *Law and Society*. 10th ed. Pearson Publishing.

United States Constitution and Bill of Rights: Text can be found:
<http://constitutionus.com/>

CLASS CONDUCT

I encourage class discussion. We will be talking about law in society and this will require that we discuss some potentially sensitive issues. I expect that you will come prepared to talk about these issues, as they relate to the readings, and that you do so in a respectful way. There is no room for disrespect and I will not tolerate it.

Additionally, you are expected to turn in your papers on the required deadlines. I will not accept any late work unless you have a valid, documented reason for missing a deadline. This also applies to missing an exam. You are expected to notify me **IN ADVANCE AND PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION** if you are going to miss a deadline, unless it is an emergency. In the case of emergency, you will need to provide adequate documentation the next time you are in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this class. Anyone found guilty of cheating or plagiarism or of any other violation of academic integrity will be assigned an automatic grade of **F *IN THE COURSE*** and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent through University channels. Notes on

plagiarism can be found here <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. UWM's policy can be found here: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm. Be sure you know the definition and know how to avoid it. I am absolutely serious about this policy. It is indeed plagiarism to copy someone's words without citation or attribution or to copy the summary of a speech, book, article, or reading found on the web or any other source. **I will notice the plagiarism and you will fail the course. Consider this your ONLY warning.**

READINGS, PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE

You are expected to do the readings for each week prior to class and come prepared to talk about them. It may be beneficial to come with some questions and comments to stimulate discussion. Your attendance will be taken, which will be bundled into a participation grade.

COURSE TIME COMMITMENT

In class	33.75 hours (2.5 hours per week)
Reading Assignments	45 hours (3 hours per week)
Homework Assignments	35 hours (2.3 hours per week)
Final Project	30 hours (2 hours per week)
TOTAL	143.75 HOURS

EXAMS

There will be two exams in the course: one midterm and a final. We will discuss the format of these exams as the dates for each draw nearer.

GRADES

Attendance/Participation	10%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Paper Project	30%
Presentation	10%

PAPER PROJECT/PRESENTATION

You will be expected to turn in one paper project (preceded by an annotated bibliography due April 1st) this semester that summarizes the legal history and development of a specific issue. These issues are outlined in the syllabus as case studies. You will each be randomly assigned into one of eight groups, with each group being assigned one of the issues. The fact that you share a group with some others taking the course does not mean that you will be working on a group project, per se. While you can certainly work together as a group, each of you will be required to turn in your own paper that is reflective of your own work and research. Your group will also be expected to lead the discussion about your assigned issue on your group's assigned day, as noted in the syllabus. You may notice that four of the case studies come earlier in the semester. Students in those groups will need to lead the discussion on those days; however *your final papers will not actually be due until May 8*. We will talk about the paper and presentation requirements later in the semester.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale is as follows*:

100 – 93	A
92 – 90	A-
89 – 88	B+
87 – 83	B
82 – 80	B-
79 – 78	C+
77 – 73	C
72 – 70	C-
69 – 68	D+
67 – 63	D
62 – 60	D-
59 – 0	F

* The instructor reserves the right to curve grades, should the need present itself.

STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS

Any students with special needs due to a physical or learning disability should see me as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs. See www.sac.uwm.edu for more information.

TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE

January 23: Introduction to the course, course objectives, and policies

January 28: Origins: Read the Constitution and Bill of Rights

January 30: Origins Cont'd

February 4: Introduction to Law, Vago: 1-27

February 6: Organization of Law – Courts, Vago: 83-122

February 11: Organization of Law – Legislatures, Vago: 122-128

February 13: Organization of Law – Administrative Agencies and Police, Vago: 129-146

February 18: Lawmaking – Administrative and Judicial, Vago: 159-170

February 20: Lawmaking – Influence and Impetus, Vago: 170-188

February 25: *Paper Guidelines/Citation/Questions*

February 27: Law and Social Control, Vago: 194-242

March 4: *Case Study: Death Penalty*

March 6: *Case Study: Prostitution*

March 11: *Case Study: Medical Marijuana*

March 17-24: ***Spring Break***

March 25: *Exam Review*

March 27: Midterm (*Material through Vago 242*)

April 1: *Erin Brockovich*

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

April 3: *Erin Brockovich*

April 8: *Discuss Erin Brockovich/How Elections Influence Law (Wisconsin Gubernatorial/2012 Presidential)*

April 10: Law and Dispute Resolution, Vago: 255-280

April 15: Law and Dispute Resolution, Vago: 280-300

April 17: Law and Social Change, Vago: 309-324

April 22: Law and Social Change, Vago: 324-338

April 22: **NO CLASS: WORK ON YOUR PAPERS**

April 24: *Case Study: Same-Sex Marriage*

April 29: *Case Study: Right to Die/Euthanasia*

May 1: *Case Study: Gun Control/Rights*

May 6: *Case Study: Abortion*

May 8: Exam Review

PAPERS DUE

May 16: FINAL EXAM 12:30-2:30 IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM (NWQ G570)