POL SCI 250 – Law and Society
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Spring 2014

Instructor: Zach Wallander
Office: Bolton 652
Email: zdw@uwm.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30am and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Michael Hansen
Office: Bolton 658
Email: hansenma@uwm.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 10:00am-Noon

CLASS MEETING TIMES: Tues. & Thur. 8:00-9:15am, Lubar N120

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with a broad overview of American legal traditions, institutions, and processes. You will read about topics related to the nature of law, the organization of law, legal theory, and the role of courts, judges, juries, and lawyers. We will also examine a number of debates in law and society, including, but not limited to, the death penalty, juries in democracy, alternative dispute resolution, and affirmative action. By the end of the semester you should have a greater understanding of the interplay that exists between the law and society.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


CLASS CONDUCT

Class discussion is strongly encouraged. However, talking about law and society requires us to discuss potentially sensitive issues. I expect that you will come to class prepared to talk about these issues and that you do so in a respectful way. Being disrespectful to your fellow classmates or the instructor will not be tolerated.

READINGS, PARTICIPATION, AND ATTENDANCE

You are expected to do the assigned readings. This will force you think about the topic before you come to class, thus facilitating class discussion. Therefore, you are required to do the assigned readings before each class period. It may be beneficial to come with some questions and comments to stimulate discussion. Attendance will be taken each class period, which will be bundled into a participation grade.
Make sure you check the course D2L website frequently. Any changes made to the reading schedule, along with special announcements, will be posted here.

**DEBATE PAPERS**

Each student will be randomly assigned to one of four debates for the purposes of developing a debate position paper. You will be required to submit one debate paper this semester for a topic that I assign to you. You may choose the side of the debate you wish to argue (i.e., pro or con). Your paper is not expected to be an exhaustive analysis of the issue. Instead, you should present at least three major arguments (but no more than four) to support your position.

Students should expect to engage in research for the purposes of this assignment. I will require an annotated bibliography be submitted prior to the due date of your debate paper to get students working early on their paper and familiar with academic research. Any reference(s) used in the development of a student’s paper should be cited in the body of the paper followed by a parenthetical citation. Directly quoting language must be denoted by quotation marks around the relevant language and immediately followed by a parenthetical citation. Parenthetical citations are necessary when you are directly quoting, paraphrasing an idea, providing statistical facts, etc. Each paper must also include a works cited list in which the student provides citation for each reference cited in the body of the paper. All references in your works cited list must be cited in the body of your paper.

To receive a passing grade, students must cite at least four different scholarly sources (i.e., books, journal articles) in the body of their paper. Only credible Web sources should be utilized (for example, Wikipedia is not considered a credible or scholarly source). The paper should be approximately 3-5 pages in length and typed (12 point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins). The cover page, works cited list, and any tables/figures, if you choose to include such, are not included in this page limit.

You are required to hand-in hard copies of your papers (Annotated Bibliography and Debate Paper) during class on the due date(s) noted in the syllabus below. I will not accept any late work unless you have a valid, documented reason for missing the deadline. You are expected to notify me in advance and provide documentation. If you cannot notify me in advance, or in the case of an emergency, you will need to contact me within 24 hours after the missed deadline.

**Your annotated bibliography will be due in class (hard copy) on February 25. The due dates for the debate papers correspond to the dates in which the debate topic will be presented in class.**

For writing assistance, please contact the UWM writing center by phone (229-4339) or online (www.writingcenter.uwm.edu). The writing center also has a number of writing resources available (http://www4.uwm.edu/writingcenter/Resources.htm).
The fact that you share a debate with others in the class does not mean that this is a group project, per se. Each one of you is expected to turn in a paper that is reflective of your own work and research. However, you and your group are expected to take an active part in the discussion about your assigned issue on your group’s day. I do not expect you to present your paper in class, but rather I will be there to guide discussion and it is up to you and your group to be the discussion leaders for that day. Come prepared to discuss your debate topic.

Your debate paper assignments will be distributed in class (and posted on our D2L site).

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 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.

EXAMS

There will be two exams in this course – a mid-term exam and a final exam. We will talk in more detail about the format of each exam as the date draws near.

Make-up exams will only be given to students who have a medical excuse, University-excused absence, or other reasonable excuse (as determined by me). To qualify for a make-up examination, students must provide documentation and must contact me prior to the scheduled exam. If a student cannot contact me prior, the student is required to contact me within 24 hours after the missed exam.

GRADES

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate Paper</td>
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GRADING SCALE

The grading scale is as follows*:

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<tr>
<td>92 – 90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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* 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 or contact the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) counselor on campus (414) 229-6287.

SYLLABUS LINKS

Information regarding policies on students with disabilities, religious observances, students called to active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, and final exam schedule requirements can be found here: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

TOPIC & READING SCHEDULE

*This reading schedule is subject to change

Changes will be announced in class and/or posted on D2L*

January 21: Introduction to the course, course objectives, and policies

January 23: Introduction to terms, parties, courts, and legal research
January 28: Introduction to the study of law I – Samuels pgs. 1-13

January 30: Introduction to the study of law II – Samuels pgs. 14-26

February 4: Legal theory I – Samuels pgs. 28-40

February 6: Legal theory II – Samuels pgs. 40-56

February 11: Major legal systems and types of law I – Samuels pgs. 85-97

February 13: Major legal systems and types of law II – Samuels pgs. 97-106

February 18: Foundations of the U.S. legal system I – Samuels pgs. 57-70

February 20: Foundations of the U.S. legal system II – Samuels pgs. 70-83

**February 25:** Structure of the U.S. court system – Samuels pgs. 135-154

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

**February 27:** Paper Meetings (Debates 1 & 2)


March 11: Mid-Term Review – no assigned reading

**March 13:** Mid-Term Exam

March 18: Spring Recess – No Class

March 20: Spring Recess – No Class

**March 25:** Paper Meetings (Debates 3 & 4)
March 27: NO CLASS

April 1: Juries – Samuels pgs. 154-162  
DEBATE1: Is the jury necessary?

April 3: Functions of law – Vago pgs. 194-202 (on D2L)

April 8: Death penalty – Samuels pgs. 276-277 and Vago pgs. 203-213 (on D2L)  
DEBATE 2: Should the U.S. continue to employ the death penalty?

April 10: Erin Brockovich

April 15: Erin Brockovich

April 17: Courts and dispute resolution – Samuels pgs. 169-182

April 22: Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) – Samuels pgs. 182-186  
DEBATE 3: Is ADR a friend or foe?

April 24: Law, social change, social movements I – Vago pgs. 309-324 (on D2L)

April 29: Law, social change, social movements II – Samuels pgs. 186-191 & Vago pgs. 324-338 (on D2L)

May 1: Law and Inequality – Affirmative Action – Samuels pgs. 265-276 & 278-287  
DEBATE 4: Are affirmative action policies necessary?

May 6: Affirmative action – “Affirmative Action versus Reverse Discrimination” (Video presentation)

May 8: In-class review session – Q&A – no assigned reading

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 16 (7:30-9:30am) in Lubar N120 (same room as lecture)