

LAW-101-1 Introduction to Law & Society

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Introduction

According to founders of the Law and Society Movement, “Law is too important to leave to the lawyers.” This quote is the starting point for this course. Students shall come to understand law through the lens of several disciplines (politics, sociology, history, criminology, anthropology, psychology) outside the field of law. This means the course will focus more on issues about law than discrete law cases (but of course we shall examine law cases as well).

In this course, students will examine the importance, influence and impact of law in society. The course will provide students with an appreciation of how law has a pervasive role in our lives, from the moment we wake up to the moment we nod off to sleep at night. Did you brush your teeth this morning? Law had something to say about the ingredients in the toothpaste. Wearing clothes? Decency laws and Health and safety regulations have a lot to do with what you are wearing. Did you stop at a stop sign? Cross at the crosswalk? Buy a bus ticket last weekend? Once again, law has a great deal to do with all these everyday activities. Law regulates, empowers, inhibits and controls our daily existence. In law and society parlance, students shall examine the role that law plays in determining social control, the outcome of disputes (dispute resolution), and social change. Students shall focus on the multitudinous ways in which law reaches our daily lives.

Law and society also focuses on the gaps in law. We shall examine the many instances where law in the books is different from law on the streets. In this regard, the course shall also gain an appreciation of the limits of law.

Course Perspectives and Goals

- Analyze intersections between law and society
- Identify, define and illustrate basic concepts in law and society
- Develop critical reading, thinking, writing skills
- Develop keen sense of the applicability of law to our daily lives

Course Requirements

In line with the School of Liberal Arts, the following grading scale will be used:

A 94-100%	C+ 77-79%
A- 90-93%	C 74-76%
B+ 87-89%	C- 70-73%

B 84-86%
B- 80-83%

D+ 67-69%
D 60-66%
F 59% and below

Course Grading:

- **Participation/ Discussion/Debates:** 20%
Class participation means attendance, and participation in class discussions. Contributions to the discussion are assessed in terms of relevance, grounding in the readings, and respect for class norms.
- **Discussion Questions:** 10%
- **Paper Briefs:** 20%
- **Class Project:** 10%
- **Final Paper:** 20%
- **Final Exam:** 20%

Required Texts/Readings

Steven Vago, Law & Society (9th Edition)

M. Ethan Katsh, Taking Sides (13th Edition)

Additional reading will be assigned, and revisions may well occur once the semester begins. When possible, readings will be available on Blackboard.

You must read the newspaper (print or online) and stay abreast of news that is related to issues discussed in class.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that involves presenting another person's ideas or work as your own. Academic integrity requires you to document sources and acknowledge quotations in any written work turned in for credit. Students found guilty of plagiarism are subject to a range of penalties, including dismissal from the University. See the Student handbook for a copy of the University's Academic Integrity Policy. If you have questions about how to avoid plagiarism, please see me or visit the Learning and Advising Center website: <http://www.philau.edu/learning>.

Attendance and Participation

Papers, exams and other assignments will incorporate ideas and information discussed in class. Students who do not come to class on a regular basis will be at a disadvantage. Students who miss 3 or more classes are subject to a grade penalty.

Late Paper Policy

Work is due at the beginning of class on the designated day (unless I say otherwise). If you do not hand in your work at this time, it will be counted as late. Late work may be subject to a grade penalty, ½ grade per day late.

Late Person Policy

Please do not be late for class. Repeated lateness may result in a lowered grade.

Technology Statement:

Please be considerate and make sure before class you have turned off cell phones, pagers and other distracting technology.

Portfolio

It is your responsibility to save all your work for this class. All work may show up on final exam. I suggest saving work in two ways: 1) hard copy and on a hard drive and/ or flash drive.

Academic support services

Gutman Library: (www.philau.edu/library)

The home page of the Gutman Library provides students with several information resources, including databases and research guides. Librarians are available online and in person at the information desk to help students with research.

The Learning and Advising Center (www.philau.edu/learning)

The Learning and Advising center provides one-to-one tutoring assistance for writing, study strategies, test taking, and specific Philadelphia University courses. To make a tutoring appointment, students should stop by the Learning and Advising center in Haggar Hall or call 215 951-2799. Academic resources, including information on citation and documentation, note taking, and study strategies are available on the center's website.

Technology Assistance (<http://philau.edu/OIT/>)

For assistance with technology issues, students should contact the Technology Help Desk at 215 951-4648 or send an email to helpdesk@philau.edu. General purpose computing facilities are available in Search Hall and Gutman Library.

Course Schedule:**Week 1**

Monday, August 25.

Introduction to Class

Wednesday, August 27

Introduction to Legal Issues and Political Conventions: Focus: Right to protest. Issues: The 1st Amendment, disputes, social control, social and social change.

Readings: (read at least 1 newspaper article on the democratic convention, and 1 article on protest at the convention. Please also read these 2 articles for background:

http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2004/07/21/protest_zone_draws_ire/
http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Judge_OKs_free_speech_zones_at_0806.html.

Friday, August 29

Law, Society and Political Conventions, continued.

(Watch (listen to) Obama's acceptance speech. Take notes. Write one paragraph response. Tell me about 2 "law" related issues in his speech and write a response to them—1) what did he say; 2) do you agree/disagree, and why).

Week 2

Monday, Sept 1, Labor Day. No Class

Wednesday, Sept 3,

What Is Law and Society?

Readings due, Vago, Chapter 1 (pp 1-19); Abel, Richard (1995) "What we Talk About When We Talk About Law" pp. 1-10 (handout, and on Blackboard)

Friday, Sept. 5

Functions and Dysfunctions of Law, and Paradigms of Society (Consensus versus Conflict Models)

Readings Vago, pp 19-30

Week 3--Theory

Monday, Sept 8

Theories of Law & Society

Vago, pp 39-50

Wednesday, Sept 10

Marx and Weber on Law

Vago, pp 51-55

Friday, Sept 12

Critical Legal Studies

Critical Race Studies

Readings, Vago, Pp59-76

Jonathan Turley, "Hitch-hiker's Guide to Roberto Ungar..." (on BlackBoard)

Week 4—Popular Culture

Monday, Sept 15

Law Through Your Eyes (Popular Culture approach to Law)

Law and Popular Culture

Reading: Richard Sherwin, "When Law Goes Pop"

<http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/lpop/etext/sherwin1.htm>

Wednesday Sept 17

Law, Order and Popular Culture

Viewing "Raising the Bar," or "Law and Order," in class

Friday, Sept 19

Response to television show. Write 2 paragraphs. Describe law-based themes from the show. Describe law-based processes in the show (juries, negotiations, trial, etc., and how realistic did they seem?)

Week 5—Law on Books

Law in Reality

Monday, Sept 22

The Actors: Judges, Juries and Lawyers

Vago, pp. 89-113

Wed., Sept 24

Criminal and Civil Cases

Vago, pp. 113-120

Marc Galanter, “Why The Haves Come Out Ahead.” (on BlackBoard)

Fri, Sept. 26

Discretion: Law Enforcement and Prosecution

Vago, pp. 128-148

Week 6—Lawmaking Process

Process of Lawmaking

Monday, Sept 29

School House Rock: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEJL2Uuv-oQ>

Vago, pp. 163-175

Wednesday, Oct 1

President’s Day of Service

NO Class

Friday, Oct 3

Judge-Made Law: Obama versus McCain on issue of judge-made law, (judicial review and court activism)

Vago, pp. 175-195

Week 7 Social Control

Monday, Oct. 6

Law and Social Control: Overview

Vago, pp. 203-213

Wed. October 8

Crime, Incarceration and Death Penalty

Vago, pp. 213-224

Friday, Oct 10

Death Penalty for Juveniles (case)

Katsch pp. 246-261

Week 8 Death Penalty Debate

Monday, Oct 20

Debate on death penalty

Wed, Oct 22

Civil Controls: Involuntary Commitment

Vago, pp 224-227

Fri, Oct 24

No Class Fall Break

Week 9 Victimless Crimes

Monday, Oct 27

Victimless Crimes: Drugs, Prostitution, Gambling

Vago, pp. 227-241

Focus: Gambling in Philadelphia?

Wed, Oct 29

Social Control of Dissent

Katsch, pp.17-41 (case: President Power and wiretapping)

Fri, Oct 31

Law and Dispute Resolution

Lawsuit Reform and Telecom Immunity

Readings TBA on Blackboard

Week 10 Dispute Resolution

Monday, Nov 3

Litigation: Going to Court

Vago, pp. 271- 296

Reading: "Going to Court:" by Sally Merry pp. 36-58 (on Blackboard)

Wednesday, Nov 5

Class-Action, Malpractice Reform,

Reading: Vago pp. 296-320; selections from BlackBoard.

Fri, Nov 7

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

Examination of Useful Websites on ADR

Week 11 Social Change

Law and Social Change

Mon, Nov 10
Readings, Vago, pp 331-348

Wed., Nov 12
Same

Fri, Nov 14
Social Change
Limitations of Law
Readings, Vago pp. 348-363

Week 12 Social Change and Race

Monday, November 17
Law and social change; Race, Voting Rights and Affirmative Action
Readings to be handed out

Wed., Nov 19
Case: Race-Conscious Programs at Public Universities
Readings, Katsch pp374-394

Fri., Nov 21
Debate

Week 13 Legal Profession

Monday, Nov 24
Legal Profession
Reading, Vago pp. 370-400

Wednesday
Reading, Vago, pp. 400-434

Thanksgiving

Week 14 Finale

Monday, Dec 1 Class Project Presentation
Wed., Dec 3 Final Paper Presentations
Friday, Dec 5 Review for Final Exam

Final Project: We shall discuss in class. The topic will have to do with students creating a law and society club on campus.

Final Exam: December 15

Please Note: Changes to syllabus will be made during the semester. You shall be notified of changes in advance.