

**Law in Society**  
**UGS 303 (66875, 66880, 66885)**  
**FALL 2009**

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The primary goal of this course is to get you to think critically about our legal system (Common Law) and how it works, both in theory and in practice. "Thinking critically" does not mean criticizing; it means trying to understand and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the system. You all know something about what our law is and how it works. I want to get you thinking about issues and problems you may not have thought about. In the course of the semester we will read about some of the major legal theories that have tried to explain how our legal system really works. We will also examine several other legal systems, ancient and modern, from around the world; the methods and approaches these systems developed to problems faced by all human societies are in many cases quite different from ours, but not necessarily inferior or less effective.

Students are required to attend the two lectures and one discussion section every week. The lectures will also include some discussion. **Students should come prepared** -- i.e. do the reading before the lecture and be prepared to discuss issues or questions that may arise. Three of the lectures will be given by visitors. You are all expected to attend these and to do the assigned reading (if any) beforehand. Finally, it is a requirement of the Signature Course program that students attend one of the lectures in the University Lecture Series; for this course, the lecture on September 21 is required.

**NOTE All laptops, cell phones, pdas, ipods, etc. must be turned off and put away during the lectures and discussion sections.**

An additional goal of the course is to help students improve their writing. To this end five short papers (100 or 200 words) are required, and some attention will be paid in the lectures and discussion sessions to the topic of writing.

**Books required for the course**

Honoré, Tony, *About Law: A Short Introduction*. Oxford 1995. At the Coop.  
Sophocles, *Antigone*. Trans. Paul Woodruff. Hackett 2001. At the Coop.  
Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Trans. GMA Grube. Hackett 1975. At the Coop.  
Course Reader. Available at Jenn's, 2200 Guadalupe (downstairs).

\*\* Items from the Course Reader are underlined in the Schedule below.

**Schedule**

(The following schedule is subject to change)

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
W 8/26	Introduction	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i> (for Friday)
M 8/31	Law and History	Honoré 1-21
W 9/2	Common Law	Honoré 77-86. <u>Common Law</u> . <b>Paper 1</b>

M 9/7	Labor Day (no class)	
W 9/9	Common Law in the US	<u>United States Law</u>
M 9/14	Justice, Natural Law	Honoré 97-108, <u>Natural Law</u>
W 9/16	Law and the Poor	<u>Poverty</u> (Visiting Speaker)
M 9/21	Tribal Law	<u>Folk Law</u> , <u>Bohannan</u> . <b>Paper 2</b>
9/21	<b>Required Lecture:</b> “The State of the Economy”	(7PM Bass Concert Hall)
W 9/23	Athenian Law	<u>Athens</u> , <u>Demosthenes 54</u>
M 9/28	Law and Literature	<u>Lysias 1</u> , <u>Antiphon 1</u>
W 9/30	Erotic Justice	<u>Medea</u> (Visiting Speaker)
M 10/5	Socrates	Plato, <i>Apology</i> . <b>Paper 3</b>
W 10/7	MIDTERM 1	
M 10/12	Law, Government, Constitution	Honoré 23-34, 87-95, <u>Obama</u> , esp. 84-95
W 10/14	The Supreme Court	Visiting Speaker
M 10/19	Legal Theory 1	<u>Classical Legal Theory</u> , <u>Positivism</u>
W 10/21	Legal Theory 2	<u>Legal Realism</u> , <u>Critical Legal Studies</u> . <b>Paper 4</b>
M 10/26	Legal Theory 3	<u>Critical Race Theory</u> , <u>Feminist Legal Theory</u>
W 10/28	MIDTERM 2	
M 11/2	Religion and Law	<u>Religion and Law</u> , <u>Religion: US Law</u>
W 11/4	Islamic Law	<u>Overview</u> , <u>Sources and Methodology</u> , <u>Genres</u>
M 11/9	Islamic Law	<u>Legal and Ethical</u> , <u>Spheres of the Law</u> , <u>Transmission</u> . <b>Paper 5</b>
W 11/11	Islamic Law	<u>Criminal Law</u> , <u>Commercial Law</u> , <u>Women</u>
M 11/16	Islamic Law	<u>Egypt</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Southeast Asia</u>
W 11/18	Chinese Law	<u>History</u> (Ming Dynasty to the present)
M 11/23	Chinese Law	<u>Lawyers</u> , <u>Procedure</u> , <u>Rule of Law</u> . <b>Paper 6</b>
W 11/25	(no class)	
M 11/30	MIDTERM 3	
W 12/2	Conclusion	

**PAPERS.** You will write six papers, each with a strict word limit. The paper must be within 10% of the assigned words. Thus, paper 1 (100 words) must be 90-110 words -- no more, no less).

Your paper should be well-organized, clearly-written, concise, and direct. Decide what you want to say and say it. You should write for an educated but non-specialist reader, and the tone should be relatively formal; avoid slang, colloquialisms, contractions, etc.

-- Always double space.

-- Do not use a separate title page -- it just wastes paper. At the top of your first page put your name and the date. You do not need a title, but if you wish to have one, keep it simple.

-- These papers are not research papers. I want to see what you think about an issue or how you would approach a problem. You may draw on books or articles you have read but I do not want you to go out and look for information. I want you to think about the problem and then organize your thoughts into a clear, coherent essay. You may discuss the matter with others in the class or outside it, but the final product should be your own thoughts.

-- If you do draw on other works, you must document every quotation from or reference to it. You may put bibliographic information in the text (in parentheses) or as a foot note. Format it any way you wish, but give enough information so that I can find the work if I wish. If it is something assigned for the class, your reference can be brief: i.e. *Antigone* line 123, *Apology*

20B-C.

- Put the word count at the end of the paper. You can add this by hand if you wish.
- The papers are due at the beginning of each class.

**(Paper Topics may Change)**

**Paper 1** When (if ever) is civil disobedience justified? 100 words.

**Paper 2** Is Folk Law law? 100 words.

**Paper 3** Should Socrates have been convicted? 100 words.

**Paper 4** What's right, what's wrong with Legal Realism? 200 words.

**Paper 5** What are the advantages and disadvantages of connecting law to religion? 300 words.

**Paper 6** Would we be better off with fewer lawyers? 200 words.

**EXAMS.** The three midterms will primarily be essay questions. There will be a mixture of shorter and longer essays and a few factual questions on the reading and lectures. There will be some choice. For these exams, you will be responsible for all the material in the reading and for the ideas presented in the lectures and discussions.

**GRADING.** Papers           25% (5% each)  
                  Midterms       75% (25% each)

Attendance and participation in class discussions can affect a grade (negatively or positively).

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Scholastic dishonesty on any graded assignment will result in an automatic F for the course.

Scholastic dishonesty includes any kind of cheating; if you are unsure about the exact definition you should consult the General information catalogue, Appendix , Section 11-802, or the information on-line at

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi01-02/app/appc11.html>

If you have any questions about this, see me.

Students with Disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please let me know now if you will need such accommodation. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641, or the information on-line at

<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/ssd/index.html>

Religious Holidays. Students can make up work missed for a religious holiday if they bring documentation of the holiday fourteen days ahead of time.