

Lawyers in the American Political System

Professor Hagle
POLI:1120
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Lawyers in the American Political System will introduce students to several topics and issues related to the roles of lawyers and the legal community in the development of the law and more generally the American political system. The course will cover topics such as legal education and culture, types of lawyers and legal jobs, how lawyers influence the law (including how different types of lawyers influence the law in different ways), and how lawyers influence public policy and political institutions. Also included will be discussions and demonstrations on how to use internet resources to keep abreast of legal developments (court decisions, advocacy projects, etc.). The format of the course will be primarily discussion with short lectures on various topics. There will be a weekly discussion on current law-related events.

TEXTS (also ordered through Iowa Book and Supply, 8 S. Clinton; may also be available from other internet sources)

Estrich, Susan, *How to Get into Law School*

Lax, Rick, *Lawyer Boy*

*Lermack, Paul, *How to Get Into the Right Law School*

*Moll, Richard W., *The Lure of the Law*

*Simenhoff, Mark, *My First Year as a Lawyer* (on reserve)

Strunk, William, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition

Turow, Scott, *One L*

Gifis, *Law Dictionary*, 7th ed. (6th ed. or other law dictionary is okay) (recommended)

*Heilbroner, David, *Rough Justice* (recommended, on reserve)

* may be out of print, will need to use copies at Reserved Reading Room if used copies are not available

Class time will primarily consist of discussions of various topics and current events concerning lawyers and politics. The texts will serve as resources that will provide background for some of the topics and writing assignments.

ON RESERVE (Reserved Reading Room, Main Library)

All the books listed above and some additional reference books have been placed on reserve at the reserved reading room in the main library.

ICON

There will be a variety of materials available on ICON including general requirements for the paper assignments, a handout on the value systems of the justices, and a prelaw handout.

GRADING

Grades will be based on participation in class discussions, a series of papers, and, possibly, a few short quizzes over the readings. The grading structure (i.e., the weights given to each assignment) is somewhat open and we will discuss and finalize specifics the first day of class. Regardless of the weight of individual assignments, grades will be based on the following 100-point scale:

90 - 99 = A

87 - 89 = A-

84 - 86 = B+

80 - 83 = B

77 - 79 = B-

74 - 76 = C+

70 - 73 = C

67 - 69 = C-

64 - 66 = D+

60 - 63 = D

50 - 59 = D-

0 - 49 = F

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS (general requirements)

The material on ICON contains an extensive list of general requirements for the paper assignment (*Style Manual*). You should familiarize yourself with these requirements as soon as possible. Some of the material won't apply to the short papers I plan for this class, but its guidelines may be helpful for other courses.

A FINAL COMMENT

I have found that some students have a tendency to suffer in silence. By that I mean that they will not say anything to the instructor if they are having problems with a course. This does no one any good. If you have a problem with the course (readings, assignments, lectures, etc.) come and talk to me about it. I cannot explain procedures or try to correct problems if I do not know they exist. Waiting until course evaluations to voice your opinion will not help you, and probably not me.

ROUGH OUTLINE OF TOPICS

Below is a rough outline of the course topics we will cover during the semester. The schedule will be somewhat flexible to allow for discussion of current events, additional time on these topics, or other topics of interest.

- 1/21 & 1/23 Introduction, ICON material, web resources; Writing and Editing (read Strunk and White, *Style Manual*, and Writing and Editing material--all on ICON)
- 1/28 & 1/30 Writing and Editing; editing assignment given (**edits due 2/4**)
- 2/4 & 2/6 Why Study the Law (read *The Lure of the Law*), **edits due 2/4**; current events
- 2/11 & 2/13 Preparing for Law School: Courses (read *Prelaw FAQ*); interviewing notes and exercise; start books for next week
- 2/18 & 2/20 Preparing for Law School: Extracurriculars (read *How to Get Into Law School*, and *How to Get Into the Right Law School*); expected value and gambles exercise
- 2/25 & 2/27 Law School (read *One L*); current events, LSAC website
- 3/4 & 3/6 Law School (read *Lawyer Boy*); long paper assignment given, review *Style Manual*, *Checklist*, and *Citation Form* handouts; read a case
- 3/11 & 3/13 Law School (view *The Paper Chase* in class); begin interviews
- 3/18 & 3/20 No class: Spring break; interviews should be done at this point
- 3/25 & 3/27 Being an Attorney: First Jobs (read *Rough Justice*, maybe Simemhoff book too); speaking notes, current events
- 4/1 & 4/3 Being an Attorney: Private Practice; group activity
- 4/8 & 4/10 Being an Attorney: Government Jobs; group activity
- 4/15 & 4/17 Being an Attorney: Judges (read Value Systems handout on ICON); **interview papers due 4/17**
- 4/22 & 4/24 Presentations (sign up on sheets)
- 4/29 & 5/1 Presentations (sign up on sheets)
- 5/6 & 5/8 Presentations (sign up on sheets)
- 5/? **Long papers due** (due on the day of the scheduled final exam, determined midsemester)

Any changes to the information contained in this syllabus will be announced in class.
Continue to Parts 2 (policy statements) and 3 (bureaucratic mumbo jumbo) of the syllabus.