

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CJ 430 Law & Society
Fall 2007

Course Syllabus



PROFESSOR: Ken Balusek, J.D.
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CLASS HOURS: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:20 a.m., Room CJC C210
OFFICE HOURS: MW 10:00-11:00 AM; TTH 9:30 – 11:00 AM or by appointment

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR:

Office hours are as stated above. I will be available before and after most classes and by appointment. Email is usually the best way to contact me. You may also contact me by telephone. If I am not available by phone, please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Walsh, A. & Hemmens, C. (2000). *From Law to Order: The Theory and Practice of Law and Justice*, American Correctional Association

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This upper level, writing enhanced, undergraduate course allows students to explore the study of law from a social perspective, as well as a legalistic one. Our focus will be on the legal process, the creation of law, the law's impact on society, the role of government in lawmaking and social control, as well as on socio-legal issues found in today's headlines.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this semester, the student should:

1. Recognize and understand the role of precedence used in the study of law and in its daily application;
2. Understand the influence that law has on society and the influence that society has on the law;
3. Understand the influence of discretion in decision making in the legal process;
4. Appreciate the complexity of efforts to apply the law uniformly across all social and political groups;
5. Have developed the ability to think critically about the law and its relationship to society and be able to demonstrate this ability verbally and in writing.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class attendance will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401. Attendance will be taken by means of a seating chart. On the third day of class a seating chart will be made. If you are not in your assigned seat when attendance is taken, you will be counted absent. If you are late to a class, inform the professor after class, to make sure you are not counted absent.

Students can miss up to four classes without a penalty. On the fifth absence, the student’s final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. On the sixth absence, the student will receive a final grade of “F” for the course. Whether absences are excused or unexcused makes no difference in the calculation of absences.

GRADING POLICIES:

Grades will be based on two exams, including the final exam, term paper and homework assignments/class participation. Each grade will be weighted as follows:

Mid-term	30%
Final Exam	30%
Term Paper	30%
Attendance/Class Participation	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Exams will consist of essay questions. Answers should be typed, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman, size 12 font. Essays will be graded on both substance and grammar. It is suggested that if you are not comfortable with your writing skills, you should seek assistance from the writing center early in the semester.

TERM PAPER:

The term paper will be a combination of research and critical analysis/thinking. The topic of the paper will be decided by the student. I will be flexible as to the topics of the paper, but the papers must focus on a topic that is related to law, law and society, criminal justice, criminological theory, etc. The paper will be submitted in three stages. First, a mini-proposal, which will consist of the topic you will research and an outline of the paper. The second stage will be the first draft of the paper that will be graded. Third, a final draft of the paper will be submitted, which will also be graded. The grade on the first draft may be dropped at the professor’s discretion.

The first and final drafts of the papers must be submitted in hard copy and in electronic form. The papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com for a plagiarism evaluation.

The following requirements should be followed: 8-10 typed pages, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, size 12 font. Points will be deducted if these specifications are not followed. The paper should be well organized, well thought out and grammatically correct. Furthermore, sources should be properly cited using the APA citation format. Sources cited should be scholarly sources. Wikipedia is not a scholarly source, nor are most Internet sources. Due dates for the various stages of the paper are in the class schedule below. The purpose of the paper is for the student to demonstrate their ability to research an issue, analyze the issue and to construct a logically sound argument regarding the issue.

MAKE-UP EXAM POLICY:

No make-up exams will be given unless approval is granted prior to the scheduled exam. Only in the most extreme circumstances will students be allowed to make-up missed exams. It is in the discretion of the instructor to determine which circumstances warrant a make-up exam.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.html

SERVICES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS:

<http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html>

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAY POLICY:

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday>

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course will be taught from a lecture/class discussion format. It is imperative that each student contribute to the discussion. All students will have opinions or thoughts about the topics that will be discussed. Students are strongly encouraged to share their opinions and thoughts with the professor and the rest of the class. It has been my experience that when all students participate in the discussion class is more interesting to the students and a more conducive learning environment is created. Remember, class participation does count in your final grade. Furthermore, each of us will be respectful and tolerant of others opinions and thoughts. There will be no tolerance for malicious criticism designed to demean, degrade or intimidate another member of the class.

Tentative Class Schedule
Subject to change!*

Date	Readings and Class Discussion Topics	Notes
Tues. 8-21	Introduction; Syllabus Review; Class Expectations	First Class Day
Thur. 8-23	Ch. 4: Civil vs. Criminal Law; Court Systems;	
Tues. 8-28	Ch. 3: Sources of Law; Law making process; Precedence	
Thur. 8-30	Legal Research; Constructing a logical argument	
Tues. 9-4	Legal Research; Constructing a logical argument	
Thur. 9-6	Ch. 1: What is law; Theories of law	
Tues. 9-11	What is law; Theories of law	
Thur. 9-13	Influences on judicial law making	
Tues. 9-18	Influences on legislative law making	Term paper proposal due
Thur. 9-20	Strict Constructionism & Judicial Activism, pp. 218-232	
Tues. 9-25	Ch. 8: The Law and Social Change	
Thur. 9-27	Ch. 8: The Law and Social Change	
Tues. 10-2	Ch. 2: What is Justice?	
Thur. 10-4	Ch. 2: What is Justice?	
Tues. 10-9	The Death Penalty, pp.189-193	
Thur. 10-11	The Death Penalty and Mentally Disabled Offenders	Mid-term Posted
Tues. 10-16	Plea Bargains: Good or bad practice? pp. 186-187	Mid-term due
Thur. 10-18	Law Enforcement: Use of Deadly Force	
Tues. 10-23	Prosecutorial Power & Prosecutorial Misconduct, pp. 100-101	
Thur. 10-25	How can a lawyer represent a criminal he knows is guilty? pg. 101	First Draft of term paper due
Tues. 10-30	Incompetency & Insanity, pg. 116	
Thur. 11-1	Incompetency & Insanity	
Tues. 11-6	The Jury	
Thur. 11-8	“Outrageous” jury verdicts: Are they really outrageous? If so, who is to blame?	
Tues. 11-13	Abortion	
Thur. 11-15	Abortion	
Tues. 11-20	Library work day	
Thur. 11-22	No Class	Thanksgiving
Tues. 11-27	Civil Commitment of Sexually Violent Predators	
Thur. 11-29	Civil Commitment of Sexually Violent Predators	
Tues. 12-4	Review/Catch-up	
Thur. 12-6	Review/Catch-up	Final Draft of paper due
Week of 12-8	Final Exam	Final Exam due

*** Changes will be announced in class!**