

## **POL338W - VICTIMS' RIGHTS POLITICS AND POLICIES**

**3 credit hours**

**TT 12:30 AB1 302**

**Dr. Mitzi Mahoney**

Office Hours: Huntsville campus - Tuesday, Thursday 8:00am-11:00am, 1:50-2:30pm  
The University Center – Tuesday 5:00-6:00pm  
By appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the dynamics of victims' rights politics and policy making. The first section of the course examines the politicization of victims' concerns and the emergence of the victims' rights social movement. The second section of the course focuses on the formulation and adoption of victims' rights policies, including a discussion of the range of policy alternatives under consideration, an analysis of the behavior of the policy making institutions, and the modeling of the determinants of victims' rights policy formulation. The third section of the course examines the actual implementation of victims' rights policies by governments and their agents. The fourth section of the course explores the impact of victims' rights policies. The course offers in depth analyses of victims' rights politics and policies at the local, state, and national levels in the U.S. In addition, cross-national comparisons will be incorporated in the analyses.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** The objectives for students include:

- Building a knowledge base regarding victims' rights
- Learning fundamental principles, theories, approaches in victims' rights field
- Learning how to analyze and evaluate arguments
- Developing skills useful for professionals in the victims' rights organizations

### **COURSE READINGS:**

There are no textbooks to purchase for this class. All readings will be available through the Newton Gresham Library's Electronic Reserves or online, either posted on Blackboard or available through the Internet. I will have you download publications available on various government websites, including the websites of the U.S. Department of Justice, the State of Texas Attorney General's Office, the United Nations, Harris County, Texas, and others.

If you would like a hard copy of NEW DIRECTIONS FROM THE FIELD, you may order one from the U.S. Department of Justice. It is free but shipping is \$5. Go to the link below to order one.

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/app/shoppingcart/ShopCart.aspx?item=DD1795580H&repro=0>

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Exams: Three exams will be given. They will include identification, short answer, and essay questions.

“Pick Two” Research Project: Students must complete two research projects to be selected from the assignments below.

The Politics Project: The goal of this research project is to collect data on the policy goals and political strategies of stakeholders in the victims’ rights field. This entails identifying a group, a government agency, or a policy entrepreneur active in the field of victims’ rights, identifying their political goals and values, their resources, and their strategies for achieving their goals. This will involve interviewing members of the organizations, reviewing the organization’s literature, public statements, websites, and analyzing secondary accounts of the organization’s political activities. Details are found on Blackboard.

The Policy Process Project: The research paper entails analyzing policymaking on a specific victims’ rights issue. In this research project you will select a victims’ rights policy that has been formulated, adopted, and implemented. You will analyze the formulation and adoption process, describe the policy provisions, analyze the implementation process, and evaluate the impact of the policy. Details are found on Blackboard.

Comparative Policy Analysis: This research project entails comparing different approaches to a victims rights’ issue. You may compare two countries’ policies, two states’ policies, two regions’ policies, or the U.S. and international policy (i.e., the U.N.).

Best Practices Project: This research entails exploring how victim service providers formulate policy. Victim service providers exchange information within their professional community regarding “best practices” or the optimal policy for meeting a particular victim need. In this paper you would explore how this information exchange occurs. You would analyze how professional associations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, think tanks, research institutes, and others communicate to improve victim service policy provision.

Civic Engagement Project: This project entails the implementation stage of victims’ rights policies and services. You participate in implementing victims’ rights policies or services. There are many different avenues for participation, including volunteering with a victims’ rights organization, creating and implementing a public awareness campaign, writing a grant proposal, developing an advocacy campaign to promote a victims’ rights policy, or conducting “oral history” interviews with victims.

Details regarding each of the assignments including due dates, style manual, plagiarism, research tools, and sources will be posted on Blackboard. This information, though posted elsewhere, is considered part of the syllabus.

### **COURSE EVALUATION:**

Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Exam III	20%
Research Project 1	25%
Research Project II	25%

An average of 90-100 constitutes an A, 80-89 constitutes a B, 70-79 constitutes a C, 60-69 constitutes a D, and any grade below 60 constitutes an F. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

### **CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

**Make Up Exams:** Make up exams will be given to students who miss an exam because of illness, a death in the family, or an official university activity. You must notify me immediately if you miss an exam. Make up exams will be given at the convenience of the faculty member. Make up exams will consist of essay questions.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class regularly, to be punctual, to be prepared, and to not be disruptive. There are neither rewards nor penalties levied on grades for student attendance.

**Academic Honesty Policy:** Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.**

University policies regarding The Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, Instructor Evaluation, and the Classroom Rules of Conduct will be observed. These policies can be found at [www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/) and at [www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html](http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html).