

**LAW AND SOCIETY
CRJU 3313-X20**

Online Course

Spring, 2023

Dr. Laura W. Fidelie

Contact Information

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Required Texts

Law and Society (11th ed.) by Steven Vago & Steven Barkan. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN # 978-1138720923

You are responsible for obtaining a textbook prior to the beginning of class. Please note that course assignments and deadlines will NOT be modified due to your failure to have access to a textbook and other applicable course materials.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the justice systems of the United States, foreign countries, and international justice systems from a holistic standpoint. Various justice systems will be examined from both a legal and sociological perspective. This course will explore the ways that justice systems reflect the societies in which they exist, and the impact that contemporary society has on the formation and evolution of these justice systems. Special emphasis will be placed on current events, society's influence on lawmaking, law as a means of social control and social change, law as a means of dispute resolution, and the evolution and current state of the legal profession.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Explain and comprehend some of the major relationships and interactions between American society and the laws of the United States, and the ways that each is affected by the other.
- 2) Think like a lawmaker by working with a small group in order to propose realistic solutions to real-world issues.
- 3) Relate the interaction between society and the law to civilization on a national, regional, state, and local level, as well as within your own life.
- 4) Conduct an in-depth exploration of a topic of particular interest and relevance to you, and research the ways that the interaction between society and the law has an impact upon this subject.
- 5) Communicate research findings and applicable topics to others in an effective manner
- 6) Think critically about issues related to society and the law, and be able to participate in a productive and intelligent discussion regarding these issues, problems, and potential solutions.

Course Requirements

1) Discussion Questions

The discussion questions you respond to each week are a critical and integral portion of the course. This is where I can make the determination, or non-determination, that you are (1) reading, (2) comprehending, (3) applying, and (4) correlating the knowledge you learn to other aspects of the course and your degree program in general.

For each discussion question asked, I am looking for a detailed and well thought-out answer that integrates the assigned reading, your knowledge, and your own thoughts and perspective on the question posed. Your answers to the discussion questions should consist of your own analysis and synthesis of the course material presented. **No credit** will be given for answers that are either copied from the textbook or another source, or are substantially similar to the textbook or another source. Your answers to discussion questions must utilize correct grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. When referencing outside material, proper APA citations must be given. If you have any questions on what constitutes a quality answer to a discussion question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your answers must be posted as text within the D2L text box. Do not post your answers as a document attachment. Each question must be answered separately within the thread started for each question. Do not answer all the questions in one posting. Answers that are posted as document attachments or answered all in one posting **WILL NOT BE GRADED.**

Your own answers to the discussion questions will constitute 75% of your grade for each discussion assignment.

2) Discussion Board Participation

Every week throughout the semester, discussions will be held via D2L. Discussions are a vital part of the class, as they occur in lieu of live class discussions that would normally take place in a traditional class setting. Thoughtful participation in each of these discussions is mandatory and will be calculated as a part of your participation grade. Discussions will take place by each student:

- 1) answering each discussion question given for that week AND
- 2) responding to the answer that another student has given to one of that week's discussion questions.

In addition to responding to that week's assigned discussion questions with your own answers, each student must respond to the answer of any fellow student **at least one time per week**. Your response should contain critical comment/analysis of a classmate's response. Your responses to the answers of fellow students must contain a **minimum of 200 words**. This means that there must be **ONE POST WITH A 200 WORD MINIMUM**. Multiple, shorter posts will **NOT** be combined to reach the 200 word minimum. Instead, the longest post will be graded as your response for word count purposes. For responses that do not meet the word minimum, points will be deducted proportionally. Responses must utilize proper grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. When referencing outside material, proper APA citations must be used. Your response to a classmate will count for 25% of your grade for each discussion assignment.

For each discussion assignment, you must submit: 1) your own answer to each discussion question asked; 2) one (1) response to a classmate's posting. So if there is a discussion assignment with four (4) questions, you will submit five (5) postings for that assignment (4 of your own answers, and 1 response to a classmate's posting).

When responding to the answers and thoughts of another student, it is perfectly acceptable to agree or disagree with their answer. However, all responses must be constructive, must not be derogatory in any way, must not use inappropriate language, and must show respect for the thoughts and opinions of your fellow students. If you would not make the comment in the classroom, do not make it on D2L. **Violating these rules of etiquette will result in a loss of all points for that discussion assignment.** If there are any questions about what constitutes an appropriate response, please contact the professor.

3) Examinations

Two essay exams will be given during the semester. The purpose of these exams is to assess your knowledge and application of the information presented throughout the readings, class discussions, and assignments. Because of the nature of an online course, these exams are inevitably open book. As such, I am looking for exam answers that show me that you have taken the materials presented in the course, comprehended them, and applied them to real-life scenarios and to your own thought processes, rather than merely reciting facts from a textbook. As in the discussion assignments, no credit will be given for answers that are merely recitations of information from your textbook.

Exams are to be completed individually by each student. Collaboration with other students is not allowed on exams. Collaboration will be considered an act of academic dishonesty.

4) **Research Paper**

A research paper of your own original work is required for this course. The paper will be written on a topic of your choice in accordance with the topic guidelines given for this assignment. The paper should show your ability to reflect upon topic(s) discussed in the course and show how the topic(s) are affected by society and the law, as well as what impact society and the law have upon your chosen topic(s.)

The paper should be between 10-12 double-spaced pages in length, **excluding title page(s), references, and appendices**. This means 10-12 page of substantive text (ie, 10-12 pages of your own writing). The paper should be written in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. Papers should be carefully edited to eliminate grammatical errors. For each full or partial page that the research paper is short of the length requirements, **one (1) letter grade will be deducted from your final research paper grade**.

The paper must utilize a minimum of five (5) scholarly journal articles. Scholarly journal articles are papers that are published in peer-reviewed academic journals. You may use other sources in addition to the required scholarly journal articles, but these should be the foundation of the research utilized in your paper. If there are any questions about the acceptability of a certain source, please contact the professor.

APA 6th edition referencing should be utilized throughout the paper. Exploring the scholarly work of others is an important part of active research. However, when the work of others is reflected in your own paper, credit must be given through proper citation. Failure to do this is plagiarism and constitutes academic dishonesty.

Your research paper must be an original work, created and submitted *exclusively for this course*. Submitting a research paper identical to or substantially similar to a paper submitted for any other course, at either MSU or another academic institution, will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.

More specific information regarding the research paper assignment will be given later in the semester.

5. Research Paper Summary

Prior to submitting your research paper, you must submit a summary of the topic on which you plan to write your research paper. The summary is a brief 1-2 paragraph description of your chosen topic and how you plan to examine that topic's relationship to law and society. The research summary must include a minimum of **five scholarly sources with APA citations** that you plan to use in writing your paper. After the summary is submitted, you are permitted to add more sources to your paper.

I will read your summary, either approve or disapprove your topic and sources, and return the summary to you with feedback that will help you in writing your paper. While the research summary will not be given a numerical grade, it will be given a completion grade. Failure to either submit a research summary or to submit a revised research summary (if applicable) **will result in a deduction of one (1) letter grade from your final grade on the research paper.**

Please feel free to contact me about any questions you have regarding course assignments.

Grading Policy

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Exam I | 10% |
| Exam II | 10% |
| Research Paper | 30% |
| D2L Discussion & Participation | 50% |
| | <u>Total 100%</u> |

Failure to complete any of these assignments will result in a grade of F for the course.

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale.

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit assignments on the due date and late assignments will **not be accepted**. Unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor, students will receive **no credit** for an assignment submitted past the due date.

Your final grade will be determined on the following scale:

| | |
|----|----------|
| A= | 90-100 |
| B= | 80-89 |
| C= | 70-79 |
| D= | 60-69 |
| F= | 60-below |

Contacting Me

I am available to answer any questions you may have about the course. When a question arises, you may contact me at laura.fidelie@msutexas.edu

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH ME MUST COME FROM YOUR OFFICIAL MSU EMAIL ADDRESS OR THROUGH D2L EMAIL. ANY EMAILS FROM EXTERNAL EMAIL ADDRESSES WILL NOT BE READ OR RESPONDED TO.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is something that I take very seriously. As future professionals, it is something that you should take seriously as well. Establishing ethical work habits and maintaining both your own integrity and that of your profession begins during your education and training.

Each student is expected to abide by the rules of ethical and academic honesty as defined by the student handbook. All cases of academic dishonesty will result in a **failing grade for the course** and a letter to the Dean of Students requesting that you be **withdrawn from the University**. If there are any questions as to whether an action is academically dishonest, please consult with the professor.

Extenuating Circumstances

In the event of extenuating circumstance, such as illness, death in the family, etc, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Assignments and deadlines may be modified on a case-by-case basis. Verifiable documentation of the circumstance may be required. The more quickly you let me know what is going on, the more options I will have for allowing you to complete the course.

I look forward to working with each of you this semester!

OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, January 22):

Read Vago, Chapter 1

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Submit Biographical Information and Syllabus Agreement (for the syllabus agreement, just send me an email stating that you have read the syllabus and agree to abide by its terms throughout the semester)

Weeks 2 & 3 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, February 5):

Read Vago, Chapter 3

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Week 4 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, February 12):

Read Vago, Chapter 4

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Week 5 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, February 19)

Exam I

Weeks 6 & 7 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, March 5)

Read Vago, Chapter 5

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Weeks 8 & 9 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, March 26)

Read Vago, Chapters 6 & 9

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Research Summaries due (assignment located in "Course Assignments" folder)

Week 10 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, April 2)

Read Vago, Chapter 7

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Week 11 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, April 9)

Exam II

Week 12 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, April 16)

Read Vago, Chapter 8

D2L Discussion Questions and Response

Weeks 13 & 14 (due by 11:59 PM, Sunday, April 30)

Research paper (assignment located in “Course Assignments” folder)