

VICTIMS' RIGHTS POLITICS AND POLICIES
POLS 3338.01 CRN: 81324 3 credit hours
CHSS 252 Fall 2017 Dr. Mitzi Mahoney

Campus Office Hours: MW 7:30am-8:00am, 10:00am-11:00am

TTh 7:30am-8:00am, 9:30am-10:30am

By appointment

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***This course is taught in the Department of Political Science by Dr. Mitzi Mahoney.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE: A major responsibility of governments is to protect their citizens from harm. Crime victimization could be considered a failure of governments to fulfill this responsibility. Citizens, particularly crime victims, demand that governments meet their obligation to protect but also to repair the harm done and to promote justice. These demands often generate conflict over governments' obligations, individuals' responsibilities, liberties and rights, and the most effective means to protect and restore victims. The purpose of this course is to understand how governments respond to these demands. We will examine the dynamics of victims' politics and victims' policies. The first section of the course considers the nature of victimization, philosophies regarding governments' responsibilities to victims, the history of the treatment of victims, and the politicization of victims' demands in the Victims' Rights Movement. The second section of the course explores victims' policy making, including the nature of the policy process and specific victims' policies such as Victims' Bills of Rights, first responses, victim services, compensation, legal issues, and restorative justice approaches. The third section of the course examines critiques of existing policies, alternatives and innovations, and a discussion of crime prevention. Throughout the course we will highlight three themes: the political conflicts over victims' policies, the challenges of making rational, effective policies, and the advocacy efforts of victims' rights activists. We will develop a research strategy for analyzing the problem and policy options for dealing with Human Trafficking in Rural Texas.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES The objectives for students include:

- Gaining factual knowledge regarding victims' politics and policies
- Learning fundamental principles, theories, approaches to analyzing victims' politics and policies
- Learning how to apply course material to think critically about victims' politics and policymaking, enabling students to evaluate and critique existing policies as well as to formulate better policy options
- Developing skills useful for professionals in the victim services field and for advocates who seek policy change

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

All readings and course materials are posted on Blackboard. These could include government documents, websites, scholarly journals, webinars, news articles, and videos.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Monday Assessment: Every Monday there will be an in-class assignment. Most often it will be quiz over the week's readings, usually 10-20 multiple choice questions. It could also be a brief reading reflection, video review, data analysis, or other task. I will count the 10 highest weekly assessment grades. Each is worth 1.5% of the course grade. The 10 weekly quizzes count a total of 15% of the course grade.

Exams: Two exams will be given – a midterm and a final. They could include multiple choice, identification, short answer, and essay questions. Each is worth 20% of the final grade. Exams count a total of 40% of the course grade.

Policy Analysis: Individuals will conduct a policy analysis in which they explore policy options for solving a specific problem in the field of Victims' Rights/Services. The analysis includes a discussion of the problem, a review of policy options for ameliorating the problem, cost/benefit analyses of each option, and a recommendation regarding the optimal policy. The policy analysis will be presented in the form of a written report. Details regarding the project are available online. The Policy Analysis is worth 30% of the course grade.

Researching Human Trafficking in Rural Texas Project: The purpose of this project is to develop a research design regarding the problem of and policy options for addressing the complex problem of human trafficking in rural Texas. This project includes both group and individual assignments. Details regarding the project are available online. The HT Research project counts as 15% of the course grade.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Monday Assessment	15%
Policy Analysis	30%
HT Research Project	15%

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

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Communication: I will communicate with you via Blackboard and SAM email. Please check your SAM email regularly for announcements, Blackboard updates, and alerts. The best way to communicate with me outside of class is to email me. If you need to meet with me outside of office hours, we can set up an appointment.

Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend class and to be prepared for class discussion. Your attendance and participation in group work is included as part of the group project grade.

If you leave the room during class, you should not re-enter the room. Make sure you take your things with you as you may not return to class. If you have a medical reason or a family emergency, notify me at the beginning of class.

Electronic Devices: Do not have electronic devices out in class. During exams, you may not use electronic devices. If I see one, I assume you are cheating and you will receive an F for the exam.

Makeup Exams and Late Assignments: If you miss an exam without a university approved excuse, you will not be allowed to make up the exam. Make up exams will be scheduled immediately after your return to campus and the exam must be taken within one week. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for every 24-hour period they are late. The late period begins after I collect them in class on the due date.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences requires syllabi to include the information regarding Academic Dishonesty, the ADA, religious holidays, and Instructor Evaluations in addition to that provided above: **These sections are covered on the SHSU webpage at: <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/> and at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>.**

Course Outline

Week	Topics
Week 1	Intro
Week 2	Why Political Scientists Study Victims' Politics/Policy; Nature of Victimization
Week 3	Governments' Role: Philosophy, Culture, and History
Week 4	Politics of Victims' Rights: Victims' Rights Movement
Week 5	Overview of Policy Process
Week 6	Chronology of Major Policies and Funding
Week 7	First Response
Week 8	Services
Week 9	Services/Compensation

Week 10	Compensation
Week 11	Legal System
Week 12	Restorative Justice
Week 13	Parallel Justice and Policy Innovations
Week 14	Policy Innovations
Week 15	Preventing Victimization and Assessing Victims' Policies
Week 16	Finals Week