

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY  
COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

CRIJ-4330  
Law & Society  
Spring, 2018

Instructor: Michael Ferguson, MS  
Office: Virtual  
Telephone: 903.686.0205 or via Skype™ at mvferg  
Electronic Mail: mvf002@shsu.edu  
Class Hours: n/a  
Classroom: Online only, via Blackboard LMS  
Office Hours: By appointment only

**Required Textbook:**

Walsh, A. & Hemmens, C. (2010). *Law, Justice, and Society: A Sociolegal Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-027275-3

**Course Description:**

The nature, functions, limitations and objectives of law; civil procedure; civil law and selected social problems, for example abortion, euthanasia; the civil courts; the grand jury and petit jury; torts; civil liability for police and correctional officers; family law.

**Course Objectives:**

1. The student will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the function of law and informal social control mechanisms in American society.
2. The student will be able to describe sources of law and how law is made.
3. The student will be able to define the proper use of law and informal social control mechanisms in addressing controversial social matters.
4. The student will be able to apply legal analysis and critical thinking to novel issues.

**Course Requirements:**

This course is divided into five sections:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. The Nature of Law and Justice       | Chapters 1, 2, and 3    |
| 2. Criminal Law and its Administration | Chapters 4, 5, and 6    |
| 3. Non-Criminal Law                    | Chapters 7 and 8        |
| 4. Social Control and Social Change    | Chapters 9, 10, and 11  |
| 5. The Law and Diversity               | Chapters 12, 13, and 14 |

- A. Quizzes: Online, timed quizzes will follow each chapter. Quizzes must be completed during the week for that chapter before 11:59 pm Central on Sunday.
- B. Weekly Discussion Boards: For the discussions, you are expected to enter the forum board for each topic and contribute to the discussion there. Your weekly contribution should address: (a) something you learned from the reading and/or video materials, (b) application to your own experiences, and (c) comments by others on the board (e.g., responses in respectful agreement or disagreement).

Discussion forums will open at the beginning of the week for each topic. You should make a preliminary contribution by mid-day Wednesday and make appropriate responses during the remainder of the week. Simply saying “Yeah!” or, “I agree!” doesn’t count as participation. I want you to thoughtfully engage in meaningful dialog with your colleagues in the course. I’m not asking you to write a book each week, but I am asking you to show me that you’re learning from the material we’re covering and I’m asking you to interact with your classmates in a collegial way.

- C. Reaction Papers: For each of the five sections into which the course is divided, you will be assigned a video to augment your study of the topics covered in the book. The paper reacting to the video should include your name, SHSU email address, a title to indicate which reaction paper it is, and be no longer than two double-spaced pages. You should use at least a 12-point font and have one inch margins all the way around. If you cite any sources, please use APA 6 as your citation style. If you’re not familiar with APA 6, go to [www.apastyle.org/learn/](http://www.apastyle.org/learn/) for an excellent tutorial.

The papers should address: (a) something you learned; (b) some feeling the video caused you to experience, and why; and (c) some way in which you view things differently from how you did before (or, alternatively, some way in which your pre-existing views were reinforced). Papers will be due by 11:59 pm Central on Sunday of the week assigned. Please note that this is not a “follow this formula exactly!” paper. This is a reaction paper - I’m asking for your opinion, your feelings, and your feedback.

Remember that this is a university course, so proper spelling and grammar are important. It is my opinion that all teachers are English teachers. As such, I expect you to write on an appropriate level! Please remember that whether you like it or not, people evaluate you by your writing — it’s an important skill you should practice constantly.

The videos on which the papers will be based are (by section):

1. *Debate on Resolution on Religion*
2. *Trial by Jury*
3. *A Class Divided*
4. *Legislating Morality*
5. *A Class Apart*

- D. Final Exam: The final exam will be a comprehensive, objective, timed instrument designed to determine your mastery of the material from the course. The questions on the final exam will be drawn from the chapter quizzes you've taken over the course of the semester.
- E. Communications with the Instructor: If you need to ask me a question, feel free to send me an e-mail ([mvf002@shsu.edu](mailto:mvf002@shsu.edu)) from your SHSU e-mail account. **The email must come from your SHSU account.** This assures me that the message is, in fact, coming from you. Make sure to include your name and the section number of the course you're in, please! I am regular in my habit of checking email and checking the class page, so you should never have to wait more than a day or so for a response.

I am available for virtual office visits if the need arises. These conferences will be conducted via Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com), free to download, no charge for computer-to-computer calls). Please note that all Skype conversations will be recorded and retained as documentation of the discussion. You are required to use a computer with a webcam and microphone for any Skype conferences. If you wish to have a conference, please email me with the details of the issue you'd like to discuss and with a range of dates/times you'll be available. Remember that your comportment and your dress should be the same as if you were going to a traditional, face-to-face office visit.

### **Grading Policy:**

The grading policy for this course is as follows:

100 - 90:	A
89 - 80:	B
79 - 70:	C
69 - 60:	D
59 - 00:	F

Your grade will be determined using the following items and scale:

25%:	Chapter quizzes
25%:	Participation in weekly discussion boards
25%:	Reaction papers - one for each of the five sections
25%:	Final exam
<u>100%</u> :	TOTAL

### **Makeup Exams:**

There are no makeup exams.

## **Academic Policies:**

- A. Academic Honesty: The faculty of the College of Criminal Justice expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion (i.e., the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit), the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college.

The University's Academic Honesty policy (last revised January 16, 2006) can be found at: [http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/documents/810213.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/810213.pdf) .

- B. Students with Disabilities: Students with a disability which affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a video conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

More information on the policies relating to students with disabilities can be found at: [http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/811006.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.html) .

A listing of services for such students can be found at: <http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html> .

- C. Policy Regarding Absences on Religious Holy Days: Students will be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this policy will not be penalized for the absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

If you're interested, the relevant policy can be found at: <http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday> .

A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe religious holy days shall present to the instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy days. The request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

## **Use of Telephones and Text Messages in Academic Classrooms and Facilities:**

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-curriculum.html>

### **Note From the Instructor on Discussions:**

The material presented in this class covers concepts from the mundane to the very contentious. It is imperative that all participants understand the importance of keeping discussions civil and appropriate. We will not have a class where individuals are belittled or berated because of a particular opinion on a topic. *Ad hominem* attacks are the refuge of those who are unable to discuss a position in a scholarly manner.

Remember former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's take on this issue: "Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." One of my favorite quotes on this topic is from Larry Winget. He wrote,

To College Students: You don't need safe-zones to protect your fragile ego. You need big, new, scary ideas that challenge your beliefs and expand your thinking. You need ideas that will offend you, hurt your feelings, stomp on your toes, and make you mad. This is necessary for growth and learning. So stop being offended by everything. Stop being a victim. Grow up.

I'm not asking you to agree with one another; I'm asking you to be civil, thoughtful, and willing to listen. One of the primary ways you learn during your university education is by being exposed to multiple points of view and ideas other than your own. I encourage a spirited, lively, and scholarly discussion of the myriad topics we'll cover. I believe that groupthink is a horrible thing, so I encourage you to research the topic and present your ideas. Don't agree with others simply because it's the easy thing to do. **Be yourself and be willing to stand up for your beliefs.**

Having written the paragraphs above, though, I need to make sure you understand something very important: if you make an assertion of fact, you need to check your source of information and be able to cite the source(s). Just because something is on the Internet doesn't mean it's true. Where did you find your information? Is it a valid, scholarly source? Did the person have a political or personal agenda? Did he or she play fast and loose with the facts? In the words of President Ronald Reagan, "trust, but verify!"

## Class Schedule

WEEK OF	TEXT	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
15 January	Ch. 1	Law: Function & Purpose	Introductory Video <b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
29 January	Ch. 2	Justice & the Law	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
5 February	Ch. 3	Making Law	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board <a href="#">Reaction Paper 1</a>
12 February	Ch. 4	Courts	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
19 February	Ch. 5	Crime & the Law	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
26 February	Ch. 6	Criminal Procedure	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board <a href="#">Reaction Paper 2</a>
5 March	Ch. 7	Civil and Administrative Law	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
12 March	N/A	N/A - Spring Break	N/A
19 March	Ch. 8	Juvenile Justice	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board <a href="#">Reaction Paper 3</a>
26 March	Ch. 9	Law & Social Control	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
2 April	Ch. 10	Limits of Social Control	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board
9 April	Ch. 11	Law & Social Change	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board <a href="#">Reaction Paper 4</a>
16 April	Ch. 12	Women & Law	<b>Quiz</b> Discussion Board

WEEK OF	TEXT	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
23 April	Ch. 13	Minorities & Law	Quiz Discussion Board
30 April	Ch. 14	Comparative Law	Quiz Discussion Board Reaction Paper 5
7 May	N/A	N/A	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> Due by <b>NOON</b> on <b>Thursday</b> , 10 May.

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE FINAL EXAM:**

The final exam **closes** at **NOON** on **THURSDAY**, May 10. If your final is not completed and submitted by that time, the exam grade will be recorded as a **zero**. Do not wait until the last minute to begin your final! You have all day Monday, all day Tuesday, all day Wednesday, and half of Thursday to complete the exam during finals week. I can't—and *won't*—reopen the exam after it closes, so use your time wisely.