Sociology of Law
Sociology 641, Spring 2015

Time: 9:30-10:45am, Tuesday/Thursday
Location: Social Sciences 6104
Instructor: Professor Sida Liu
Office: 8142 Sewell Social Sciences
Office Hours: 10:30am-12:00pm, Wednesday
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Teaching Assistant: Maria J. Azocar
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the major theories and empirical studies on various aspects of law through the lens of social science. It shows how law works in the real world, or what socio-legal scholars call “law in action.” “Law in action” is different from “law on the books” in that it emphasizes the social, political, cultural, and historical contexts of law rather than legal doctrines, statutes, or judicial decisions. It is those contexts that constitute the core elements of this course.

The course material is appropriate for both advanced undergraduates and graduate/law students, although the expectations in reading and exams will be higher for the latter than for the former. We begin by introducing the classical and contemporary theories of the sociology of law and then proceed to various themes of “law in action.”

REQUIREMENTS

The course is designed as a combination of lectures and section meetings. Careful reading before lectures and active participation in section meetings are both important. Please communicate with the instructor and/or the teaching assistant if you become ill or emergencies arise so that we will be aware of your circumstances. Reading and class participation account for 10% of your final grade.

Two mid-term exams are scheduled on February 26, 2015 (Thursday) and March 26, 2015 (Thursday). Out of a concern for fairness to all students, there will be no make-up exams except in the case of documented extreme illness. Please mark your calendar now with the exam times so that you can ensure your attendance. If you cannot attend the mid-term exams, you should not take the course this semester. Each mid-term exam accounts
for 25% of your final grade. The final exam is a one-week take-home exam in the format of essay questions. It accounts for 40% of your final grade.

Grading scale (for undergraduate students):

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\begin{align*}
A &= 92-100 \\
AB &= 88-91 \\
B &= 82-87 \\
BC &= 78-81 \\
C &= 70-77 \\
D &= 60-69 \\
F &= 0-59
\end{align*}
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**READINGS**

The course has no textbook. All the readings are available in PDF format at Learn@UW. After logging in to the course website, please click on the “Materials” button and then select “Content”. All the readings are in the “Readings” folder.

You are expected to do the readings BEFORE every class as lectures will be based on the assumption that you have completed the assigned readings. Lack of reading is likely to generate serious difficulties in understanding the lectures and cause major problems for you in the exams.

**LECTURES**

For your convenience in taking notes and reviewing course materials, PowerPoint will be used in the lectures. The instructor will upload every week’s PowerPoint slides to Learn@UW after the Thursday lecture. Please note that the PowerPoint slides are only brief outlines of the lectures, so note taking is still very important for you to do well in the exams.

Attendance of lectures is crucial in the sense that exams will be based on both lectures and assigned reading materials. You are responsible for all lecture materials and for any announcements made in class, whether or not you are present. If you miss a class, you should ask a classmate to review their notes from that day. If you have to miss classes for a prolonged period due to serious illness, you should speak to the instructor as soon as possible.

Please do not arrive late to class as it is disruptive both to the instructor and to your classmates. Repeated tardiness will result in a lower grade. Meanwhile, if you must leave early in a class, please speak to the instructor before the lecture to ask for permission. Otherwise please do NOT pack your things or leave the classroom until the lecture is
over. If any emergency arises during the lecture, please raise your hand and inform the instructor.

OFFICE HOURS

The instructor’s office hours are 10:30am-12:00pm on Wednesday. The teaching assistant’s office hours are 11:00am-1:00pm on Tuesday. You should contact the teaching assistant first with questions about course logistics, but please feel free to come by during the instructor’s office hours to discuss course issues, career questions, or anything else. If you cannot come to the regular office hours due to conflicts of schedule, please email to make an appointment and find another time to meet.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with particular needs that might affect participation, coursework, or examination environment should inform the instructor and the teaching assistant about those needs within the first two weeks of the semester. We rely on the McBurney Disability Resource Center to determine what reasonable academic accommodations a student may require. Students who request accommodations must master all requirements, skills, knowledge, and academic standards of the course. Students who request relief for religious observances should also notify the instructor and the teaching assistant within the first two weeks of the semester.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Introduction

January 20 (Tuesday)
Course introduction – no reading.

January 22 (Thursday)


Week 2: Law in Classical Social Theories

January 27 (Tuesday)

January 29 (Thursday)
**Week 3: Critical Legal Studies**  
**February 3 (Tuesday)**  
**February 5 (Thursday)**  

**Week 4: Legal Consciousness and Legal Pluralism**  
**February 10 (Tuesday)**  
**February 12 (Thursday)**  

**Week 5: Dispute Resolution**  
**February 17 (Tuesday)**  
**February 19 (Thursday)**  

**Week 6: Law in the Workplace**  
**February 24 (Tuesday)**  
**February 26 (Thursday)**  
First mid-term exam – no reading.

**Week 7: Law as a Social Space**  
**March 3 (Tuesday)**  
**March 5 (Thursday)**

**Week 8: The Legal Profession**  
**March 10 (Tuesday)**  
**March 12 (Thursday)**  

**Week 9: Legal Change**  
**March 17 (Tuesday)**  
**March 19 (Thursday)**  

**Week 10: Video and Mid-term II**  
**March 24 (Tuesday)**  
In-class video: *The Road to Brown*  
**March 26 (Thursday)**  
Second mid-term exam – no reading.

------- Spring Break -------

**Week 11: Legal Compliance**  
**April 7 (Tuesday)**  
**April 9 (Thursday)**  
Week 12: Law and the State
April 14 (Tuesday)

April 16 (Thursday)

Week 13: Legal Mobilization
April 21 (Tuesday)

April 23 (Thursday)

Week 14: Law and Development
April 28 (Tuesday)

April 30 (Thursday)

Week 15: Law and Globalization
May 5 (Tuesday)

May 7 (Thursday)