The Legal Profession
Sociology/Legal Studies 415, Fall 2014

Time: 2:30-3:45pm, Tuesday/Thursday
Location: Social Sciences 6232
Instructor: Professor Sida Liu
Office: 8142 Sewell Social Sciences
Office Hours: 4:00-5:00pm, Tuesday
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the legal profession not from the perspective of law practitioners, but from the social science studies on various aspects of this profession in the United States and other social contexts. It does not teach you how to think like a lawyer, but it provides you social science perspectives for understanding how the legal profession is organized, differentiated, and transformed over time. It also examines the relationship between lawyers and other social entities, such as their clients, market competitors, state regulators, and the process of globalization.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is designed as an advanced-level seminar, and therefore both careful reading and active class participation are important. Every student is required to do a reading presentation at one class during the semester. The instructor reserves the rights to call individual names for answering questions concerning the course readings. Please communicate with me if you become ill or emergencies arise so that I will be aware of your circumstances. Reading and class participation account for 10% of your final grade.

Every student is required to submit a one-page (minimum) summary each week of all of that week’s readings (except for Week 1 and Week 9) to the “Communication → Discussion” forum at Learn@UW by 2:00pm on Tuesday. These summaries account for 20% of your final grade. (You have the option to skip summaries for up to 3 weeks without losing your grade, i.e., the minimal number of your summaries must reach 10 by the end of the semester.)

In addition to reading summaries and class participation, the main requirements of this course consist of a 1,000-word book review and two open-book, take-home exams. The book review is due before class on October 9, 2014 and it accounts for 10% of your final grade. Specific requirements of the book review will be given in a separate document early in the semester. The mid-term exam is scheduled in the week of October 27-31, 2014 (Week 9) and it accounts for 20% of your final grade. The final exam is scheduled in the week of December 15-19, 2014 (exam week) and it accounts for 40% of your final grade. Specific information about the two exams will be given at least a week before the exams.
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.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with particular needs that might affect participation, coursework, or examination environment should inform the instructor about those needs within the first three weeks of the semester so that I reasonably can accommodate those needs properly. I rely on the McBurney Disability Resource Center to determine what 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 also should notify the instructor within the first three weeks of the semester.

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction
September 2 (Tuesday)
Course introduction – no reading.
September 4 (Thursday)

Week 2: History: England and the United States
September 9 (Tuesday)
September 11 (Thursday)

Week 3: History: Continental Europe and Asia
September 16 (Tuesday)
September 18 (Thursday)
Week 4: General Theories: Market Control and Jurisdictional Conflict
September 23 (Tuesday)
(Chapters 2, 3 and 5, pp. 14-70, 112-126)

September 25 (Thursday)

Week 5: The Social Structure of the Bar
September 30 (Tuesday)
(Chapter 6, pp. 127-176)

October 2 (Thursday)

Week 6: The Rise of Large Law Firms
October 7 (Tuesday)

October 9 (Thursday)
***Book review due before class***

Week 7: Solo Practice and Small-Firm Lawyers
October 14 (Tuesday)

October 16 (Thursday)

Week 8: Lawyers and Clients
October 21 (Tuesday)
October 23 (Thursday)

Week 9: Conflict of Interest
October 28 (Tuesday)

October 30 (Thursday)
Take-home mid-term exam – no reading.

Week 10: Legal Education and Pro Bono Service
November 4 (Tuesday)

November 6 (Thursday)

Week 11: Professional Career
November 11 (Tuesday)

November 13 (Thursday)

Week 12: Gender and Racial Inequalities
November 18 (Tuesday)

November 20 (Thursday)
Week 13: Interprofessional Competition
November 25 (Tuesday)

November 27 (Thursday)
Happy Thanksgiving! – no reading.

Week 14: Lawyers and Politics
December 2 (Tuesday)

December 4 (Thursday)

Week 15: Lawyers and Globalization
December 9 (Tuesday)

December 11 (Thursday)