

SUNY, Potsdam College
Department of Politics

Politics 327: Law and Society

Fall 2017
TuTh 2:00-3:40
Satterlee Hall 319

Daniel Lempert
Satterlee Hall 309B
lempersd@potsdam.edu
Office Hours: MW 1:30-3:15

Course Description and Objectives. A wide variety of scholarly perspectives and substantive topics are covered in courses that are taught under the name “Law and Society.” Perhaps this is not surprising, given the multifaceted relationship between law and society. To explore this relationship in a single semester is an ambitious undertaking, and necessitates difficult choices about what to include, and what to exclude. In this course, we will learn about and evaluate several major social-scientific theories of law and society, and consider a number of central questions in the field of law and society. *Inter alia*, we will ask: Why do people turn to the law in disputes? What is the character of lawyers’ work, and how is it influenced by hierarchies? What are the bases and contents of individuals’ beliefs about punishment? How can law shape identity (and vice versa)? How and why do people come to accept legal conspiracy theories? What factors determine whether regulation will be successful? By the completion of the course, I expect that you will be able to use the theories and evidence we have reviewed to analyze these, and other, important questions, even as straightforward answers may be elusive.

Course Structure. Class time will include both lecture and discussion, with emphasis on the latter. The balance may shift for individual class sessions, based on a number of factors. To make this class a success, students must work to pay careful attention to the readings, participate regularly in class discussions, and make considered evaluation of competing viewpoints.

Grading. Course grades will be based on the following components:

In-class participation, 20% of final grade.

Response Papers, 35%

Final Paper, 20%

Final Exam, 25 %.

Grading Scale. The grading scale is standard. 92-100: 4.0; 90-92: 3.7; 88-90: 3.3, etc.

Extra Credit. There may be opportunity for extra credit, worth 2% of your final grade. I will give details in class, and post information on Moodle.

Late Paper Policy. For *final* papers that are late because of reasons not cleared with me in advance, I will subtract 3 % of the total possible points for each day (or fraction thereof) it is late. For *final* papers more than 14 days late, no credit will be assigned. No credit for late *response* papers.

Response Papers. For the Calavita chapters, I will ask you to bring three questions to class that occurred to you as you read the assigned chapters. That will be your response paper; I will not ask you to summarize the chapters. *However, starting on 9/26* you should turn in a response paper that is a summary of the reading for each chapter of the Larson and Schmidt book that we cover and for each of the four (perhaps five) articles we will read. For the Larson and Schmidt chapters, which are themselves quite brief, the summary should be short: perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ single-spaced pages per chapter. For the articles on Moodle, which are longer, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 single-spaced pages is appropriate. I will grade a random sample of response papers; others will be scored on a complete/incomplete basis. Summaries of our articles will always be graded, and will be weighted more heavily than the chapter summaries.

Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes. Class attendance is required, and is part of the participation grade. Coming to class prepared--having read and thought about the readings--is crucial for the ability to contribute intelligently to class discussion. At my discretion, I will administer unannounced quizzes covering the readings for a given session, at the beginning of a class. (These quizzes are part of the participation grade.) When discussing the readings, remain respectful of opposing viewpoints, and refrain from personal attacks. Regular contribution to class discussion is very important, but remember to focus on quality and not just quantity. Unless necessary for taking notes or another class-related function, please do not use your computer or any other electronic device in class.

Final Exam Policy. Failure to take the final exam at the scheduled time will result in a 20% reduction of the final exam grade. Once the exam starts, students may not leave the room until their exam is turned in.

Assistance. I want to give you any help with the course that you need. My office hours are listed at the beginning of the syllabus; you can always stop by at these times. Feel free to send me an e-mail when you have a question or concern; my e-mail address is listed also. My office phone number is 267-2716. I will often be in my office, even outside of office hours; you can stop by, although I cannot guarantee that I will always be free. If you'd like to meet outside of office hours, it is safest to email, or call, to set up an appointment. If you notice that you are struggling with any aspect of the course, it may be a good idea to meet with me as soon as possible, so that we can discuss ways of overcoming the struggles before there is a serious impact on your grade.

Academic Honesty. Please review the Honor Code:

<http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode/index.cfm>

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). To be explicit, this means that "working together" is not allowed on written submissions (including exam notes), unless explicitly authorized in writing. Any case of cheating, plagiarism, or other academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, where it will be handled according to college policy. The default penalty for plagiarism is the 0 on the plagiarized assignment or 1.0 grade reduction in the course for a first offense (whichever reduction is greater), and a 0 in the class for any subsequent offense.

Accommodations/Disability. I rely on Accommodative Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you are a student with a disability who will require accommodations in this course, please meet with Accommodative Services in Sisson Hall Room 111 for assistance in developing a plan for accommodations. If you are already working with Accommodative Services, please set up a time to meet with me, or come by during office hours, to discuss accommodations. For more information, visit the Accommodative Services website at <http://potsdam.edu/support/oas>.

Textbooks Required:

Calavita, *Invitation to Law & Society*, 2nd ed. Chicago (abbreviated “C”).

Larson and Schmidt. *The Law & Society Reader II*. NYU (abbreviated “LS”)

Schedule of Readings and Topics. Readings are to be read before the session below which they are listed. All articles listed will be available on Moodle for you to download and print.

Week 1, Tuesday, 8/29.

Thurs, 8/31.

C, Chs. 1 and 2.

Week 2. Tuesday, 9/5.

C, Ch 3.

Thurs, 9/7

C, Ch 4.

Week 3. Tuesday, 9/12

C, Ch.5.

Thurs, 9/14

C, Ch.6.

Week 4. Tuesday, 9/19.

C, Ch.7.

Thurs, 9/21

C, Chs. 8 and 9.

Week 5. Tuesday, 9/26.

LS, Chs. 1,3.

Thurs, 9/28

LS, Chs. 5,6,7.

Week 6. Tuesday 10/3.

LS, Chs. 8,9,11.

Thurs, 10/5

LS, Chs. 13,14.

No class 10/10(Tu).

Week 7. Thursday, 10/12.

LS, Chs. 15,16,17.

Week 8. Tuesday, 10/17.

LS, Chs. 20,21.

Thurs, 10/19

Engel, “The Oven Bird’s Song”

Week 9. Tuesday, 10/24.

LS, Chs. 22,23.

Thurs, 10/26

LS, Chs. 24,25.

Week 10. Tuesday 10/31.

Kahan, "What Do Alternative Sanctions Mean?"

Thurs, 11/2

LS, Chs. 26,27.

Week 11. Tuesday, 11/7.

LS, Chs. 28,29.

Thurs, 11/9.

LS, Chs. 30,31,32.

Week 12. Tuesday, 11/14.

LS, Chs. 33,35.

Thurs, 11/16

LS, Chs. 36,37.

Week 13. Tuesday, 11/21.

LS, Chs. 38,39,41.

No class 11/23(Th).

Week 14. Tuesday, 11/28.

Koniak, "When Law Risks Madness."

Thurs, 11/30.

Harris, "Vultures in Eagles' Clothing."

Week, 15. Tuesday 12/5.

TBD.

Thurs, 12/7.

Catch-up and Review Session. *Final Paper Due 12/7.*

In-class final exam:

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 12:30 - 2:30 pm

Good luck on the final!