

Interdisciplinary Legal Studies

Legal 275

Tu/Th 11:30am-12:45pm

Prof. Leila Kavar

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Office Hours:

Course Description:

This course examines the interaction between the law and movements for social justice in the United States from the Civil War to the present day. How has constitutional change shaped social movements? And have social movements, in turn, affected American law? We will approach these questions from several different angles, including the struggles for racial and gender equality and the histories of immigrant and gay rights movements.

Texts:

Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (Knopf, 2011).

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 2012).

Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, 2001).

The readings for this course are available as a coursepack purchased from Campus Design and Copy (403 Student Union).

Grading Policy:

Active, informed discussion is essential to a student's success, and participation is 20% of each student's grade. There will be two midterm essay exams and one final take-home essay exam. The final exam is cumulative. Students will also prepare a book review comparing an outside book to one or two of the assigned readings from the course. Students are required to consult with the instructor during office hours before choosing a book to review.

Midterm 1: 150 points

Midterm 2: 150 points

Final Exam: 300 points

Book Review: 200 points

Participation: 200 points

Total points possible: 1000

If you miss more than four classes unexcused your grade may be lowered. If you miss more than six classes unexcused you risk receiving a failing grade in the course. Absences will be excused only for documented illness, documented family crisis, religious observance, and the like.

It is expected that you will bring a copy of the readings with you to class since they are the foundation upon which our class discussions will be built. We will refer to readings often. Not having the readings with you will impact your participation grade.

Calendar of Major Assessments:

Week 6 – Midterm 1

Week 10 - Midterm 2

Week 10 – book review selected

Week 13 – book review due

Exam week – final exam

Schedule of Readings

Reading assignments must be completed **before** class.

Week 1: What makes a social movement?

Introductions and syllabus

Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience”

Week 2: White Supremacy

Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness*, chapter 5

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896); *Thind v. United States* (1923)

Week 3: Equal Protection

Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, chapter 2; Excerpts from

Hearings Before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; “Bigger Than a Hamburger”

Korematsu v. United States (1944); *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948)

Week 4: Civil Rights

Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*, chapters 1 and 3

Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States (1964); *Loving v. Virginia* (1967)

Week 5: The Chicano Movement

Marc Simon Rodriguez, *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*, introduction and ch 1

Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, conclusion chapter

Mendez v. Westminster (1946); *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954)

Week 6: Race and Representation

McGuire, chapter 7

First in-class midterm

Week 7: Reproductive Rights

Sarah Weddington, *A Question of Choice*, chapters 1-3

Roe v. Wade (1973); *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014)

Week 8: Second-Wave Feminism

Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, chapter 8

Frontiero v. Richardson (1973); *Craig v. Boren* (1976)

Week 9: LGBT Rights

David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, introduction and chapter 8

Lawrence v. Texas (2003); *United States v. Windsor* (2013)

Week 10: Grassroots Conservatism

Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, chapters 1-2

Engel v. Vitale (1962); *Bob Jones University v. US* (1983)

Week 11: The Religious Right

McGirr, chapter 4

Second in-class midterm

Book review selection must be approved by the instructor by 5 p.m. on Friday of this week

Week 12: American Indian Movement

Dennis Banks, *Ojibwa Warrior*, chapter 3

Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, chapters 7 and 11

Week 13: Mass Incarceration

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, chapters 1-2; Kerner Commission Report (1968); Forman, "Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration"

Terry v. Ohio (1968), *Illinois v. Wardlow* (2000)

** Book review due at 5 p.m. on Friday of this week**

Week 14: Police Violence

Alexander, chapters 3 and 5; ArchCity Defenders White Paper

Jelani Cobb, "Chronicle of a Riot Foretold in Ferguson," *The New Yorker*

The final exam is due five days after the last class.

Course Policies for Assessments and Evaluations

Midterms: There will be two in-class midterms. The midterms will include short-answers and short essays, and will invite you to synthesize the readings and material covered in class up until that point. Absence from an in-class exam will be excused only for serious and unavoidable causes, such as confining illness. Make-up exams may be given only if the student notifies the instructor prior to the scheduled time of the exam and then provides some form of documentation from a professional (e.g., physician, psychologist, etc.) explaining why the exam had to be missed. Please note that you must attempt to contact your instructor by email in advance of the exam. Make-ups for exams will be scheduled at her convenience.

Book review: Students will prepare a book review of 1200-1500 words (approximately 4-5 pages) comparing an outside book to one or two of the assigned readings from the course. Students are required to consult with the instructor during office hours before choosing a book to review.

Final exam: There will be a take-home final exam distributed on the last day of classes and due five days later on Moodle's Turnitin. The final exam will consist of two essays, each with word limits.

Late Policy: The grade on an assignment will be reduced 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours it is late. Late work will be accepted only with the prior approval of Prof. Kavar. Requests for late submission must be made at least 48 hours in advance of the due date/time.

A Word on Grammar: Students often ask whether they will be “graded on grammar.” The answer is both no and yes. “No” in the sense that grammar alone is not a grading criterion. But “yes” in the sense that bad grammar and awkward style detract from the argument and presentation. Errors in grammar make it difficult for a reader to follow an argument and go through the text. You are responsible for understanding the rules governing Standard Written English.

A Note on Grades: Please come to me with any questions or problems you may have with the class material. If you have concerns regarding your grade at any point, please see me as soon as possible to help find ways to improve. The sooner you contact me regarding concerns, the more I can do for you. We will not be able to accommodate students who contact us at the end of the semester with concerns about their grades.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and they will automatically result in failure in the course.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the submission of a piece of work that is, in part or whole, not one's own. Dishonesty also includes submitting

work in this course that you have submitted in another course. When writing papers, sources must be cited! Quotation marks must be used! As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Plagiarism – from the web or from any other source – and all other acts of scholastic dishonesty will be reported to the university.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with what counts as plagiarism and academic dishonesty. To learn more about UMass policies regarding scholarly dishonesty and its consequences, go to http://umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty

If students have any questions about what plagiarism means, they should consult a plagiarism tutorial found at <http://www.ctlw.duke.edu>. Students with any questions or concerns are encouraged to contact the professor.

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Cell Phones/Texting/Computers

All cell phones must be turned off before entering the class. As a reminder: texting is distracting to your instructors and fellow classmates, not to mention impolite. If there is some reason that you need to have your phone out during the class period (i.e. expecting a call from a doctor or about an emergency situation), please speak to me about it before class begins.

Use of computers is discouraged in this course. Studies demonstrate that hand writing notes leads to better comprehension and retention of material. Computers are also distracting to the professor and other students. If you'd like to take notes on your computer, please let me know via email.

Barrier-Free Campus

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let Prof. Kavar know at least two weeks prior to the time when the accommodation will be needed. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Disability Services (tel. 413-545-0892 Voice/TTY; <http://www.umass.edu/disability>) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. Disability Services typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Email

I will use the class list to communicate with the class and I expect that you will check your school email address regularly. The schedule of assigned readings is subject to

change upon reasonable notice, and email will be used to notify you of any updates to the reading assignments. E-mail is also the best way to get in touch with me. Please be aware that it may take me up to 24 hours to respond to your e-mail and that I check email less frequently on weekends. On the night before exams or other assignments are due, I can guarantee that I will answer any questions that I receive by email before 10pm. After that, I may or may not be able to answer the question before assignment/exam is due.