**SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE LAW**

**SPRING 2020**

# Instructor: Jacquelyn Bridgeman

**Course Numbers:** AAST 4990; CRMJ 4990; INST 4990; 5990; LAW 6915; LTST 4990; NAIS 4990; POLS 4710, 5710; WMST, 4500; 5000

# Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 3:10-5:40 pm

**Class Room:** Law School Room 186

**Office:** Ross Hall 114; Law 242A

**Phone:** 766-5259

**E-mail:** [jbridge@uwyo.edu](mailto:jbridge@uwyo.edu) (This is the best way to reach me.)

**Office Hours:** By appointment (please email, call or speak to me during class for an appointment).

*Due to my administrative duties and the mix of students in this class, regular office hours are a bit difficult to maintain. However, please know that I am happy to meet with you and help you as much as you need throughout the semester. Please don’t let the fact that you need to make an appointment serve as a deterrent from getting any help you may need throughout the semester.*

**Please note that you can email me with questions at any time.**

# Class Website: UW WyoCourses for Social Justice & The Law (accessed through your WyoWeb Dashboard)

**Course Description and Objectives:** During this course we will look at the rather amorphous and difficult issues of social justice in contemporary American society in the context of the law. During the first few classes we will work to develop/build a theory of social justice jurisprudence, with an eye towards using that theory to recognize, understand, theorize, and develop law and policy with respect to contemporary social justice issues. Once our theory is established, we will spend the remainder of the course applying that theory to a range of present-day social justice issues. The goal in the latter part of the course will be to understand the complexity of such issues from a legal perspective, to critically evaluate how the law helps or hinders the goals of social justice in each instance, and to explore what that means with respect to the development of future law and policy.

**Texts:** Class Reader (available on the class website)

**Grading:**

This class takes a “Community of Scholars” approach, which means that each member of the class is responsible for helping to create and contribute to a positive and productive learning environment for all participants. The approach to grading for this course is meant to emphasize and reward students for being good members of the learning community.

**1) Class Participation—15%**

* This will primarily be a discussion class. Therefore, in order to make the class work it is important that all students participate in the class. Each student is required to attend each class, to do the assigned reading, and to come prepared ready to discuss the day’s topics.

1. **Reaction Papers—10%**

* During the course of the semester, each student will be required to turn in two reaction papers. **The first paper is due on February 19, 2020. The second paper is due on March 25, 2020.**
* Reaction papers may be **no less than two full pages and no more than four pages** in length.
* Each reaction paper should contain your thoughts, reflections, analysis, and questions with respect to the readings and class discussions of the weeks previous to when the paper is due.
  + A good reaction paper will:
    - Focus on a topic and have a main point/thesis.
    - Connect the ideas contained in the paper to broader themes discussed throughout the semester.
    - Contain a thoughtful analysis/discussion of the topic chosen.
* Merely regurgitating points made by others or explaining/reporting on what was contained in the readings will not earn you a high grade. I am looking for thoughtful papers that show an attempt to think about and wrestle with the complex subjects we will be discussing in class.
* Reaction papers are **due at the beginning of each class** in which they are due**.**
* Each paper should be typed, double spaced, left justified, with font no larger than Times New Roman 12-point font and have one- inch margins all the way around and contain page numbers on each page. Your full name, and the date of the class on which you are turning in the paper, should appear at the top left corner of your paper. I will accept papers that do not meet these formatting requirements, but you will lose points if your paper does not meet these specifications.
* If you are unable to attend class and your absence is foreseeable, you should submit your reaction paper by the beginning of the class you will miss. If your absence is not foreseeable, and you have a University approved absence, you may turn in your paper at the beginning of the following class. **I will not accept late papers.**
* Please submit your paper in hard copy.

1. **White Paper—20%** 
   * For purposes of this course, a “White Paper is a short research paper (5-8 pages in length) designed to provide the reader information on a specific and narrow topic from an objective point of view. More information about the specific requirements of the White Paper assignment will be provided in a separate hand-out. The following dates apply to this assignment.
     + February 19, 2020—White Paper Topic Due
     + March 11, 2020—White Paper Drafts Due
     + April 1, 2020—Final Draft of White Papers Due
2. **Blog Entry Assignment—10%**

* Part of the community of scholars approach to this course involves the sharing of one’s work and ideas with one’s classmates. Apart from the class discussions we will have each week, the sharing of ideas will also be accomplished through the creation of a class blog. For this assignment, each student will be required to create a post on the class blog of 250-500 words. Your blog should cover/discuss the main points of your White Paper. More information about this assignment will be provided in a separate hand-out.
* **All blog entries must be posted by April, 8, 2020.**

1. **Blog Entry Commentary—5%**
   * In addition to posting your blog entry, you will also be required to substantively comment on the posts of at least three of your classmates. More information about this requirement will be provided in the blog assignment hand-out.
   * **All three commentaries must be posted no later than April 22, 2020**
2. **Final Exam—40%**

* There will be a take home final examination for this course. The exam will consist of short answer and/or essay questions. Any of the material we cover in the semester will be fair game to appear on the exam. The exam will be made available in the College of Law front office beginning on **Wednesday, May 6, 2020** and will remain available until **10:00 am on Thursday, May 14, 2020.** Students may pick up the exam at any time. Once a student picks up the exam, he/she/they will have 24 hours from the time of pick up to complete and return the exam to the College of Law front office. Any student who turns in his/her/their exam more than 24 hours after it is picked up will be considered to have turned the exam in late and will be penalized according to College of Law and/or UW policy. More specific information will be given closer to exam time.

**Tardiness, Absenteeism and Respect for others**

* We will begin class promptly at 3:10 pm. You are expected to be on time. Late arrival, especially over successive classes, will negatively impact your class participation grade.
* The deadlines for assignments are specified above and below in the course plan. In the event you must miss a class and that absence is foreseeable, as indicated, you are to turn in your assignments by the required deadline. Unless you have an extremely immediate family emergency or a sudden illness that is independently verified, that prevents you from turning in an assignment on time, **I will not take late assignments.** Absent the excuses just specified, there are no exceptions to this rule.
* Throughout the course of this semester we will talk about a lot of difficult and sensitive subjects. In order to foster class discussion and to make the class environment comfortable, for all to participate, it is imperative that an atmosphere of mutual respect is maintained. You should feel free to express your own opinions and to disagree with your classmates, but at all times it is a requirement of this class that you address and treat everyone with respect. A failure to do so will not only lower your overall grade, it may cause you to fail the class outright.

**The readings for each week will be posted on the class website the week before they are due. You are responsible for obtaining and reading these materials in advance of class as though you had a regular textbook. Please note that I may make adjustments to the course plan throughout the semester if I think it will enhance the course. You will be provided with notice of any such changes.**

Course Plan

**Jan. 29** Class Introduction, Introduction to Social Justice, Role of Law and Lawyering in a Social Justice Context.

**Feb. 5** Theories of Social Justice

**Feb. 12** Theories of Social Justice, continued

* **Class decides on final four topics**

**Feb. 19** Legal Framework and Foundations of Social Justice

* + - **Reaction Paper #1—due at beginning of class**
    - **White Paper Topic—due at the beginning of class**

**Feb. 26** Contemporary Issues: Economics, Poverty, and Wealth

**Mar. 4** Contemporary Issues: Education

**Mar. 11** Contemporary Issues: Politics, Voting, and Government

* + - **White Paper Draft—due at the beginning of class**

**Mar. 18 No Class—Spring Break**

**Mar. 25** Contemporary Issues: Work and Labor

* + - **Reaction Paper #2—due at beginning of class**

**Apr. 1** Contemporary Issues: Health Care

* + - **Final White Paper—due at the beginning of class**

**Apr. 8** Contemporary Issues: Class Choice Topic 1

* + - **Blog Entries Due—must be posted by the beginning of class**

**Apr. 15** Contemporary Issues: Class Choice Topic 2

**Apr. 22** Contemporary Issues: Class Choice Topic 3

* + - **Responses to 3 classmates’ blogs—due by the beginning of class**

**Apr. 29** Contemporary Issues: Class Choice Topic 4

**May 6—May 14 at 10:00 am T**ake home finals available in College of Law front office. **Must be turned in 24 hours after check out.**

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Classroom Behavior Policy**

Failure to abide by the classroom behavior rules may result in your immediate dismissal from the class and a lowering of your grade for a particular assignment or the class as a whole. Repeated violations may result in permanent dismissal from the course and a failing grade.

It is a requirement for this course that all students act in a respectful, civil, and professional manner at all times and that they do not engage in behaviors that disrupt the learning environment. This includes arriving on time, completing work in a timely and professional manner, following instructions from the professor, and adhering to course deadlines. While the expression of different views, spirited debate, and disagreement are an expected and supported part of the course, disrespectful, demeaning, degrading, hateful, harassing, abusive, profane, vulgar, lewd, personal attacks, name-calling, dismissive gestures, and similar kinds of behaviors, whether they be verbal, physical, or of any other nature, will not be tolerated, nor will any other activities and behaviors that fundamentally disrupt the classroom and/or the learning environment.

Any participant in the course who acts in a way the instructor believes violates these conduct rules, or in any other way disrupts the learning environment and/or creates an environment that is hostile and/or not conducive to learning or a positive learning environment, will be warned and/or asked to leave the class immediately. In the event an individual is asked to leave for the afore stated reasons and refuses to exit the classroom, the instructor has the right to call law enforcement to escort the individual out of the class. Further, as the instructor, I have the right to dismiss you from the classroom, study sessions, electronic forums, office hours, and other areas, including staff and work study areas, where disruptive behavior occurs. If such behaviors are repeated it may result in your permanent dismissal from the course and/or a lowered grade, including a failing grade**.**

Additionally, the University of Wyoming Student Code of Conduct and the College of Law Honor Code apply to this course. The Code of Conduct can be found at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct/index.html> and the College of Law Honor Code can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/law/current/resources/forms.html>. Each student is expected to read and adhere to both codes at all times. Failure to do so may result in a student being subject to Code of Conduct and/or honor code procedures and other department or university-level disciplinary actions. Please note, Code of Conduct proceedings and department and/or university-level discipline may be in addition to any of the disciplinary measures noted above.

**Academic Honesty**

University Regulation 6-802, which can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/_files/docs/UW-Reg-6-802.pdf> contains the University policy on academic honesty. It is expected that you will familiarize yourself with these rules and abide by them at all times. Failure to do so may subject you to severe sanctions including but not limited to possibly failing this course or dismissal from the university.

Academic dishonesty is an action attempted or performed that misrepresents one’s involvement in an academic endeavor in any way, or assists another student in misrepresenting his or her involvement in an academic endeavor; e.g., cheating, fabrication of information, plagiarism etc.  A student who plagiarizes at minimum will receive an “F” in the course and may go before a University board for a hearing on the matter.

**Disability**

If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations due to your disability, please let College of Law Dean Kalen or Dean Hoyt know as soon as possible, if you haven’t already. You will need to register with, and provide documentation of your disability to, University Disability Support Services (UDSS), room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact UDSS by phone: 307-766-3073 or email: udss@uwyo.edu. For more information please see http://www.uwyo.edu/udss/.

**Diversity**

“The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning.”

**Duty to Report**

Under Title IX, discrimination based on sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, you are encouraged to report it. Please note that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, faculty members MUST report information you share about the incident to the university’s Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. More information about UW policies and resources can be found at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>.