The Legal Profession
Sociology/Legal Studies 415, Spring 2016

Time: 2:30-3:45pm, Tuesday/Thursday
Location: Social Sciences 6203
Instructor: Professor Sida Liu
Office: 8142 Sewell Social Sciences
Office Hours: 2:00-4:00pm, Wednesday
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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 right 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 mid-term exam is scheduled in the week of March 10-17, 2016 (Week 9) and it accounts for 30% of your final grade. The book review is due at the same time as the mid-term exam 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 final exam is scheduled in the week of May 5-12, 2016 (exam week) and it accounts for 30% of your final grade. Specific information about the two exams will be given at least a week before the exams.
READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction
January 19 (Tuesday)
Course introduction – no reading.

January 21 (Thursday)

Week 2: History: England and the United States
January 26 (Tuesday)

January 28 (Thursday)

Week 3: History: Continental Europe and Asia
February 2 (Tuesday)


February 4 (Thursday)

Week 4: General Theories  
February 9 (Tuesday)  
(Chapters 2, 3 and 5, pp. 14-70, 112-126)  
February 11 (Thursday)  

Week 5: The Social Structure of the Bar  
February 16 (Tuesday)  
(Chapter 6, pp. 127-176)  
February 18 (Thursday)  

Week 6: The Rise of Large Law Firms  
February 23 (Tuesday)  
February 25 (Thursday)  

Week 7: Solo Practice and Small-Firm Lawyers  
March 1 (Tuesday)  
March 3 (Thursday)  

Week 8: Lawyers and Clients  
March 8 (Tuesday)  

March 10 (Thursday)

Week 9: Mid-term Exam
March 15 (Tuesday)
Library research for book review – no reading.
March 17 (Thursday)
Take-home mid-term exam – no reading.

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

Week 10: Legal Education and Professional Career
March 29 (Tuesday)

March 31 (Thursday)

Week 11: Gender Inequality
April 5 (Tuesday)

April 7 (Thursday)

Week 12: Racial Inequality
April 12 (Tuesday)

April 14 (Thursday)


Week 13: Interprofessional Competition and Conflict of Interest
April 19 (Tuesday)


April 21 (Thursday)

Week 14: Lawyers and Politics
April 26 (Tuesday)


April 28 (Thursday)


Week 15: Lawyers and Globalization
May 3 (Tuesday)


May 5 (Thursday)