

SOCI 230-08
The Sociology of Law and Public Policy:
Defining Social Problems and Creating Change

Instructor: Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer
Email: stambolm@dickinson.edu (Please list your name and the title of the course in the subject your email. Note: I will respond to email within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.)
Office Hours: Mondays 3pm-4pm; Wednesdays and Fridays 10:30am-11:30am; or by appointment.
Office: Denny 113

Course Statement

What is the law and what are public policy interventions? This course invites you to think about these questions by revealing the people and processes behind these institutions integral to contemporary democracies. We will cover the theoretical and methodological foundations of the sociology of law and public policy. You will also learn about the people and groups who produce, dispense, and interpret the law as well as the effects (intentional or not) their actions have on our lives. Finally, through examples of current issues, such as same-sex marriage, sexual harassment, and “fatherhood politics,” we will explore how people resist laws and policies as they fight for change in an increasingly globalized world.

Evaluation

Two essays (6 pages each)	45% (20% for first, 25% for second)
Midterm	15%
Final	20%
Presentation	10%
Participation	10%

Attendance Policy

Class discussion and participation are important for this course. Attendance is therefore mandatory. You are allowed two unexcused absences for the term. For each additional class that you miss and are unable to participate in, your final grade will be reduced by 3.6%. Formal evidence of an illness or death in the family can be used to excuse an absence (e.g., emergency room notice).

Readings

Weekly readings will be posted to the course website. In addition, we will be reading from the following book, which can be purchased at the College Bookstore or online:

Calavita, Kitty. 2010. *Invitation to Law and Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Stone, Deborah. 2011. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Third Edition. W. W. Norton & Company.

Yoshino, Kenji. 2006. *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*. New York: Random House.

Overview

- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: Theoretical Foundations
- Week 3: Culture, Structure, and the Law
- Week 4: Lawyers, and Juries
- Week 5: Law in Everyday Lives and Legal Consciousness
- Week 6: Creating Legal Change
- Week 7: Law and “Experts” / **Essay 1 Due**
- Week 8: Spring Break
- Week 9: A Sociological Reframing of Civil Rights. The Case of “Covering”
- Week 10: From Law to Public Policy / **Midterm**
- Week 11: Defining Problems – Problematizing issues and measuring them
- Week 12: Defining Problems – The Importance of Causal Narratives
- Week 13: Defining Problems – Disseminating information and trust / Youth, Homelessness, and Health Policy (Part I)
- Week 14: Youth, Homelessness, and Health Policy (Part II) / Social Movements – The Case of Fatherhood Politics Part I
- Week 15: Social Movements - The Case of Fatherhood Politics Part II / **Essay 2 Due**

Detailed Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- Monday, Jan. 25
- Wednesday, Jan. 27
 - Calavita, Kitty. 2010. *Invitation to Law and Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 – “Introduction” and 2 – “Types of Societies, Types of Law”

Week 2: Theoretical Foundations

- Monday, Feb. 1
 - Calavita: Chapter 5 – “Many Laws, Many Orders”
- Wednesday, Feb. 3
 - Sutton, John R. 2000. *Law/Society: Origins, Interactions, and Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 4 “Law and the State: Max Weber’s Sociology of Law” (pp. 99-132).

Week 3: Culture, Structure, and the Law

- Monday, Feb. 8
 - Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. “The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field.” *Hastings Law Journal* 38:805.

- Wednesday, Feb. 10
 - Saguy, Abigail Cope, and Forrest Stuart. 2008. “Culture and Law: Beyond a Paradigm of Cause and Effect.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 619(1):149–164.
 - Schwartz, Richard D. 1954. “Social Factors in the Development of Legal Control: A Case Study of Two Israeli Settlements.” *The Yale Law Journal* 63(4):471–91.

Week 4: Lawyers and Juries

- Monday, Feb. 15
 - Heinz, John P., Anthony Paik, and Ann Southworth. 2003. “Lawyers for Conservative Causes: Clients, Ideology, and Social Distance.” *Law & Society Review* 37(1):5–50.
 - Sutton, John R. 2000. *Law/Society: Origins, Interactions, and Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 8 “Law as Profession” (pp. 223-252).
- Wednesday, Feb. 17
 - Eigenberg, Helen, Karen McGuffee, Gale D. Iles, and Tammy S. Garland. 2012. “Doing Justice: Perceptions of Gender Neutrality in the Jury Selection Process.” *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 37(2):258–75.

Week 5: Law in Everyday Lives and Legal Consciousness

- Monday, Feb. 22
 - Calavita: Chapter 3 “Law in the Everyday, Everywhere”
- Wednesday, Feb. 24
 - Nielsen, Laura Beth. 2000. “Situating Legal Consciousness: Experiences and Attitudes of Ordinary Citizens about Law and Street Harassment.” *Law & Society Review* 34(4):1055–90.

Week 6: Creating Legal Change

- Monday, Feb. 29
 - Calavita: Chapter 7 “Law and Social Justice”
- Wednesday, March 2
 - Richman, Kimberly D. 2009. *Courting Change: Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law*. New York: New York University Press. Chapters 1 and 5.

Week 7: Law and “Experts” / Essay 1 Due

- Monday, March 7 (Essay 1 Due)
 - Stone: Chapter 14 – Facts
 - Richman, Kimberly D. 2005. “Judging Knowledge: The Court as Arbiter of Social Scientific Knowledge and Expertise in LGBT Custody and Adoption Cases.” *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* (35):3–28.
- Wednesday, March 9
 - Hamilton, Jennifer A. 2008. *Indigeneity in the Courtroom: Law, Culture, and the Production of Difference in North American Courts*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge. Excerpts.

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: A Sociological Reframing of Civil Rights. The Case of “Covering”

- Monday, March 21
 - Yoshino, “An Uncovered Self”; “Gay Covering”; “Racial Covering”;
- Wednesday, March 23
 - Yoshino, “Sex-Based Covering”; Part Three

Week 10: From Law to Public Policy/ Midterm

- Monday, March 28
 - **In-Class Midterm** (covering weeks 1-9)
- Wednesday, March 30
 - Stone Chapter 7 – “Symbols”

Week 11: Defining Problems – Problematizing issues and measuring them

- Monday, April 4
 - Saguy, Abigail C. 2003. *What Is Sexual Harassment?: From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapter 1 – Sexual Harassment Laws on the Books.
- Wednesday, April 6
 - Stone Chapter 8 – “Numbers”
 - Gates, Gary. 2013. *William’s Institute Report “LGBT Parenting in the United States.”* February. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Parenting.pdf>

Week 12: Defining Problems – The Importance of Causal Narratives

- Monday, April 11
 - Stone Chapter 9 – “Causes”
 - Haider-Markel, Donald P. and Mark R. Joslyn. 2008. “Beliefs About the Origins of Homosexuality and Support For Gay Rights An Empirical Test of Attribution Theory.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72(2):291–310.
- *Tuesday, April 12: Mandatory Attendance at Clarke Forum Event – David Paternotte: Gender Ideology. NOTE: You will get 1 extra credit point on your final grade by attending.*
- Wednesday, April 13
 - Frederick, David A., Abigail C. Saguy, and Kjerstin Gruys. 2015. “Culture, Health, and Bigotry: How Exposure to Cultural Accounts of Fatness Shape Attitudes about Health Risk, Health Policies, and Weight-Based Prejudice.” *Social Science & Medicine*.

Week 13: Defining Problems – Disseminating information and trust / Youth, Homelessness, and Health Policy (Part I)

- Monday, April 18
 - Arbuckle, J. Gordon, Lois Wright Morton, and Jon Hobbs. 2015. “Understanding Farmer Perspectives on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: The Roles of

Trust in Sources of Climate Information, Climate Change Beliefs, and Perceived Risk.” *Environment and Behavior* 47(2):205.

- Wednesday, April 20
 - Cronley, Courtney. 2010. “Unraveling the Social Construction of Homelessness.” *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 20(2):319–33.

Week 14: Youth, Homelessness, and Health Policy (Part II) / Social Movements – The Case of Fatherhood Politics Part I

- Monday, April 25
 - Class Guest speakers: Barabara DiPietro, PhD (Senior Director of Policy, National Healthcare for the Homeless Council). Elizabeth Stambolis, RN, CPNP (Director of Pediatrics Healthcare for the Homeless, Baltimore)
 - Reading TBD
- Wednesday, April 27
 - Gavanas, Anna. 2004. *Fatherhood Politics in the United States: Masculinity, Sexuality, Race and Marriage*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. Chapter 1- “The Contested Terrain...”

Week 15: Social Movements - The Case of Fatherhood Politics Part II / Essay 2 Due

- Monday, May 2 (**Essay 2 Due**)
 - Gavanas, Chapter 2 – “Pro-Marriage Fatherhood”
- Wednesday, May 4
 - Wrapping Up

Assignments and responsibilities

Expectations for essays

Essays 1 and 2: You will receive the essay prompts in class three weeks before the paper is due.

Formatting: Your essays should be no more than 6 double-spaced pages, including references (Times New Roman 12 point font, 1” margins).

Academic honesty: Take all precautions to ensure that your writing is your own. We will be discussing how to properly and clearly site your sources. You will submit your essays at the beginning of class on the day they are due.

Expectations for midterm

The in-class midterm (40 minutes) will cover course materials from weeks 1 through 9. You will be expected to answer a series of multiple choice and short-answer questions.

Expectations for final

The Final Exam will be cumulative and cover material from the full semester but weighted more heavily toward weeks 10-15. The Final will be a take home exam

following a similar format to the midterm and will be administered via the course Moodle. You will have 2 hours to complete the exam once you begin and you *must complete the exam by 4 pm on May 17*. We will have short review sessions during the class session before each exam as well as on the last day of the course.

Expectations for class participation and presentations

In addition to arriving to class having completed the readings, you are expected to actively participate in class discussions. It is perfectly normal to have difficulty understanding concepts. If we do not understand an author's ideas, it is often because he or she is unclear or uses opaque writing. I therefore encourage you to come to class with your questions and ideas.

You will each also be responsible for presenting and critiquing one of the course readings and leading a discussion about it. You will sign for a specific presentation day at the beginning of the semester. You are expected to come to office hours to discuss your presentation beforehand in order to make sure that I can help you with any questions you might have with the reading.