



# UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of Sociology  
Department of Sociology Website: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

## SOCI 429 The Sociology of Law

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|---------------|--------------------|----------|
| • Spring 2019 | • T/TR 1:00 – 3:45 | • ES 443 |
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### Course Description

Sociological problems regarding the origin, impact and definition of law, dispute resolution, and the relationship between law and social change. This course may not be repeated for credit. Prerequisites: Sociology 327 and 313, or consent of the Department. Sociology 325, 331 and 333 are also recommended.

### Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

This class takes a transdisciplinary approach to the study of law and society. Transdisciplinarity is embraced as a means through which to assist students gain deeper learning and, also, to help students start thinking outside the box. Through this course, students will learn to make connections across disciplines, creating an opportunity for greater depth and complexity of their legal knowledge. In addition to transdisciplinarity, this course selects an experiential case studies approach as its tool and adopts integrative learning strategies to encourage students to creatively rise to several challenges, including collaboration and professional networking.

### Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials

- There is no required textbook.
- The students will need to have access to The *Paradise Lost* Trilogy. These videos are available on DVD from Docurama as well as through iTunes, Amazon Instant Video, Google Play, Vudu and

HBO On Demand). Or the video *West of Memphis*. This video is available on DVD and Blu-ray and through iTunes, Amazon Instant Video, Google Play, Vudu and Starz On Demand. Students are welcome to choose which of these two films they would prefer to watch.

- All other readings for this course, including trial documents, will be uploaded on to D2L.

## Methods of Evaluation

### 1. **Weekly Group Work Notes (5%) | Due: Throughout the Semester**

At the end of each week the assigned notetaker(s) will submit a note detailing the events in the group that transpired that day. Group notes must follow the DEAL model. This model and a rubric will be posted on D2L. Notes are to be handed in no later than one day (24 hours) after class. A 5% late penalty will apply each day the note is late.

### 2. **Critical Question (5%) and Reflection (10%) (Total 15%) | Due: During Week 6**

Students are expected to attend presentation week. Students will be randomly chosen to ask a critical question at the end of each presentation. Questions should reflect engagement and critical thought. Therefore, it is imperative for students to pay close attention to the presentations. The student assigned to ask a question should then write a short reflection on the topic presented in class. The reflection is to be between 400 – 700 words. If the student is not present the day that they are chosen to ask a question they will not have the opportunity to be assigned a question again and they forfeit the 15%. Only in documented and approved instances will this requirement be waived. The student has one full week to submit their question and reflection after which time if it is not submitted the student forfeits the 15%.

### 3. **Class Presentation (30%) + Slides (10%) (Total 40%) | Due: Week 6**

The students will be expected to present on their case during the last week of class. The presentation will be 50 minutes long (including time for questions). The PowerPoint slides must be submitted to the D2L Dropbox folder the day of the presentation. A rubric for the slides will be decided upon together as a class.

### 4. **Case Document (15%) + Personal Reflection (5%) (Total 20%) | Due: Last Day of Class**

The students will compile a case document throughout the course of the semester. The case document will reiterate the major issues and sociolegal aspects of their case. It will also highlight the contributions of professionals who the students consulted throughout the semester. Students will include a personal reflection at the beginning of the document. The reflection guidelines will be discussed in class. A rubric and exemplar for the case document will be provided at the beginning of the semester. Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day.

### 5. **Personal Progress Journal (20%) | Due: Throughout the Semester**

Each week students will contribute to a personal progress journal. This journal is meant to reflect the personal work that the student is adding to the project and is meant to be a place wherein the student can reflect, professionally, on the progress of the case and how it is developing. There is no minimum or maximum word/page limitations as these are personal reflections. Notes must follow the DEAL model. Journals must be submitted each Friday at 11:00pm. There is a 10% per day late penalty.

### Final Exam Information

There will be no final exam.

### Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

| Grade | Percent range | Grade Point Value | Description                              |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|--|
| A+    | 90 – 100%     | 4.0               | Outstanding performance                  |
| A     | 85 – 89%      | 4.0               | Excellent-superior performance           |
| A-    | 80 – 84%      | 3.7               |  |
| B+    | 77 – 79%      | 3.3               |  |
| B     | 74 – 76 %     | 3.0               | Good – clearly above average performance |
| B-    | 70 – 73%      | 2.7               |  |
| C+    | 67 – 69%      | 2.3               |  |
| C     | 64 – 66%      | 2.0               | Satisfactory - basic understanding       |
| C-    | 60 – 63%      | 1.7               |  |
| D+    | 55 – 59%      | 1.3               |  |
| D     | 50 – 54%      | 1.0               | Minimal pass - marginal performance      |
| F     | <49%          | 0                 | unsatisfactory performance               |

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

### Schedule of Lectures and Readings

#### Class Structure and Expectations

This class has been designed, pedagogically, around the experiential method. This method is immersive, fluid, collaborative, dynamic, and interactive. Students will be assigned a group project, thus the ability to engage in group work is a requirement as is active class participation and discussion. To help facilitate this classes will be broken down, timewise (roughly), as follows: 1:00 – 2:00 (class), 2:00 – 2:10 (break), 2:10 – 3:00 (class), 3:00 – 3:45pm (group work). The instructor retains the right to change this schedule if and when needed.

## Tentative Course Schedule

### Week 1. Welcome, Introduction to the Case, and The Need for Legal Reform

#### Week Overview

Social change involves reforming the institutions that structure and govern our society – including corporations, labor unions, administrative agencies, schools, child welfare institutions, religious organizations, and yes, even the courts and the justice system. These institutions influence and effect several sectors of society and therefore it is essential that we develop a critical understanding of the areas/aspects of these systems that are working and those that are not. When confronting aspects that are not working or that are serving to further marginalize, displace, or oppress people, we must then be able to collectively organize and advocate for reform. This week's classes will enable students to understand where and why reform is necessary and will set a foundation for understanding how to harness existing political, social, legal, and economic institutions for the purpose of reform.

#### Group Progress Tracker

This week you will assign yourself to a group. Together, the group will begin to explore the chosen case in more detail. The theme of this week is knowledge generation. By the end of this week students should be able to have a strong understanding of the major aspects of their case and be able to communicate those aspects with confidence.

### Week 2. Organizing Social Movements

#### Week Overview

People are at the heart of social change. Therefore, it stands to reason that social movements and the mobilization of organizations for the purposes of legal advocacy must also involve critically engaged and civilly minded people. The question of how people can facilitate movements directed at legal change and how social movements can contribute to the restructuring and/or development of new laws will be the focus of this week's classes.

#### Group Progress Tracker

By this time the students should have developed a comprehensive understanding of their case. Now, students should begin to identify particular sociolegal aspects of their case that could be expanded upon critically. The theme of this week is idea generation.

### Week 3. Electoral Politics

#### Week Overview

Change often comes through the political arena. Change can also be stifled through the political arena. Electoral politics, a major component of democracy, is perhaps one of the major factors that influences

and directly impacts law and legal change. This week we will explore how electoral politics intersect with issues such as prosecutorial misconduct and wrongful convictions.

#### Group Progress Tracker

By this week the students should have identified several sociolegal aspects of their case and begun to expand on them critically. This week, students should reach out to professionals whose work intersects with the sociolegal issues they have identified. The theme of this week is question generation.

### **Week 4. Litigation**

#### Week Overview

Litigation is a historically significant and powerful force for social change. In fact, litigation has been central to many of the most well-known and important achievements in social change work, legal advocacy, reform, and change. This week's class will enable students to develop an understanding of how litigation can function as a tool of social reform. Students in this week's class will learn to evaluate the uses and the limitations of litigation in the context of legal advocacy work.

#### Group Progress Tracker

By this week the students should have reached out to several professionals and gained deeper real-world insights into the sociolegal aspects and issues of their case. This week, students can begin to add critical depth to that knowledge by tying it in with academic literature. Students can begin to work on their case document which will be due the last day of class.

### **Week 5. Law, Media, and The Internet**

#### Week Overview

In contemporary society, almost no movement for legal change succeeds without an effective media and internet component. In fact, in contemporary society, almost all modes of effective legal and social change depend heavily on the social media and the internet. Legal regulation of these outlets is extensive. This week we will work toward an understanding of the ways in which law structures, facilitates, and constrains media and internet.

#### Group Progress Tracker

At this point the students should have begun compiling their case document. Students can now also begin to put together their final presentations.

## Week 6. Group Presentations

Group presentations will be 50 minutes each. There will be a 5-minute break between presentations during which time the group that follows can set up. The audience will be expected to contribute by asking “critical questions” following the presentation. Critical questions are mandatory and graded. Students who are presenting must submit their final case document via the Dropbox the day of their presentation.

### *Presentation Schedule*

#### **Tuesday**

**Group 1:** Aileen Wuronos

**Group 2:** Decriminalization of Sex Work

**Group 3:** Michael Peterson

#### **Thursday**

**Group 4:** Steven Avery and Brendan Dassey

**Group 5:** Decriminalization of Cannabis

**Group 6:** The Central Park 5

### Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one’s mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re- assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

### Technology Use

Please be sure to mute your cell phone and refrain from using it during class.

### Email

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email’s subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. Emails will be answered within one to two business days. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person.

## Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at ICT Food Court.

## Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

## Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

## Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

## Absences and Deferrals

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-forms>

**Deferred Final Exam Form:** Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

**Deferred Term Work Form:** Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at:

[https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf)

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

## Student Representation

The 2019-20 Students' Union VP Academic is Kevin Dang [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

## Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

## Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

## Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)