

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY (**Critical Justice**), SPRING 2024

Email: Hemingway@mslaw.edu

Phone: 978-681-0800 ext. 118

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 pm – 4 pm DROP-IN

Zoom Office Hours: By appointment

Zoom:

<https://mslawedu.zoom.us/j/96249928401?pwd=a3VkeVBDYlJ5ZEt1UXRGd0FmWkNBQT09>

Required Text: Critical Justice Systemic Advocacy in Law and Society, Valdes, Bender, & Hill

Course Description: How can we use law to achieve equal justice for everyone? In this survey course, we will examine key historical, social, economic, and systemic reasons for persistent inequalities and inequities that affect entire groups from generation to generation. This course will introduce systemic advocacy, an emergent form of law practice that connects legal problem-solving to social movements and local communities to “get at” the root causes of persistent and collective social problems. Students will be introduced to a variety of frameworks, critical theories, and ideas such as CRT, LatCrit, and Feminist legal theory, etc.

Oftentimes, as history and current affairs show, systemic injustice correlates consistently to social identities (like race, sex, class, or creed) and to related ideologies (or belief systems) of superiority and inferiority, which distort individual lives, society, law as a system, and perceptions of reality. For this reason, the course centers on four “elements” frequently missing from conventional legal analysis (identities, groups, interests, and power) by incorporating them into legal problem-solving contextually, and from a “bottom-up” perspective. During and through this course, students will be able to work collaboratively in small teams on projects/papers of their choice developing “critical thinking” skills that are built on basic legal training. Upon completion of this course, all students should possess a self-critical understanding of systemic injustice intellectually, and how to overcome it as a systemic advocate practically.

Grading and Course Requirements:

The grade in this course will be based on class participation (30%), reflection pieces (10%), a mid-term (20%), and a final project/paper (40%). The class participation component includes attendance, class facilitation, and participation in class discussions.

Class Participation

Class attendance and class participation are both required. Students are expected to attend every class session, have read the reading assignment prior to class, be prepared to discuss the assigned reading, and participate in class discussions. I will use the following factors to evaluate your class participation:

- Your ability to draw from the assigned readings to enhance discussion.
- Your ability to critique and raise questions regarding the assigned readings or other students' positions.
- Your ability to relate the readings to real-life experiences (your own or others').
- Your facilitation of class discussions by raising questions and suggesting topics for class discussions.
- Your responses to questions and comments raised by other students, including demonstrations of respect for the opinions of others.
- Your ability to defend your viewpoints and/or reconsider and alter them on further reflection, and your openness to considering and exploring alternative points of view.
- Your willingness to enhance other students' presentations by supporting, cooperating, and enthusiastically assisting them with questions, comments, and other appropriate forms of participation.

As part of the class participation grade, you will lead the class discussion (at least once) on the assigned reading of your choice. You can opt to use the questions posed in the book to facilitate discussion and couple it with one of your weekly reflection pieces.

I reserve the right to lower a student's grade in the course by one letter grade (for example C+ to C) for failure to participate in class. This includes class attendance. For example, more than two instances of unpreparedness in class, persistent failures to participate, or excessive (e.g. more than three) class absences (for any reason or for no reason) may constitute ineffective class participation, resulting in the reduction of the student's grade.

Weekly Reflection Pieces

Beginning with week two, you will submit weekly pieces reflecting on one of the discussion questions posed in that week's assigned reading. Most weeks, you can choose which question you answer, however, I may assign a specific question or a few questions to choose from depending on the reading. You should submit your entry thirty minutes *prior* to the start of the class in which we discuss that

chapter. For example, if you choose to write on a question posed in the reading assigned for August 30th, you must submit that reflection thirty minutes prior to the start of class that day.

READINGS

For the most part, we will follow the book, reading one chapter a week. However, because we will use a collaborative method of learning, and the range of interests and topics for papers/ projects we may adjust assignments or rearrange weeks as the semester progresses.

Week 1 – 1/16, 1/18

Table Contents, Editors' Introduction, and Sections 1.1-1.3

Week 2 – 1/23, 1/25

Sections 1.4 -1.6

Sections 2.1 – 2.3

Week 3 – 1/30, 2/1

Sections 2.4 – 2.8

Sections 3.1 – 3.4

Week 4 – 2/6, 2/8

Sections 3.5 -3.6

Sections 4.1 – 4.2

Week 5 – 2/13, 2/15

Sections 4.3-4.4

Sections 5.1 – 5.2

Week 6 – 2/20, 2/22

Sections 5.3 – 5.5

Sections 6.1 – 6.3

Week 7 – 2/27, 2/29

Sections 6.4- 6.7

Sections 7.1 -7.2

Week 8 – 3/5, 3/7

Sections 7.3 – 7.4

Sections 9.1-9.3

Week 9 – 3/12, 3/14

SPRING BREAK – movie assignment

Week 10 – 3/19, 3/21

Sections 9.4- 9.7

Sections 13.1-13.2

Week 11 -3/26, 3/28

Sections 13.3 -13.4

Terms Review

Chapter 14

Week 12 – 4/2, 4/4

Terms/Concepts Exam

Week 13 – 4/9, 4/11

Chapter 15

Week 14 – 4/16, 4/8

Chapter 16

Week 15 – 4/23, 4/25

TBD/Student Presentations

Week 16 – 4/30, 5/2

Student Presentations