

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

COURSE SYLLABUS

HON 414
The Politics of Law

Spring 2012

Catalog Description:

Prerequisite: acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor.

This course will explore law as an aspect of the foundations of American and Western thought and as a significant source of debate in contemporary politics and culture. We will examine primary texts and secondary materials as we begin to study law as a source of ideas, culture and institutions in American society. (Offered as needed.) 3 credits.

Course Objectives:

- Come to understand the concept of law and the historical development of the American legal system.
- Develop familiarity with major American intellectual and political schools of thought with regard to the law.
- Define and articulate intellectual themes within the American legal tradition.
- Relate the insights and methods of the American legal tradition to other fields of knowledge and experience.
- Elucidate the constituent parts of various arguments or themes in the American legal tradition.
- Evaluate critically cultural expressions and critiques of the American legal tradition.
- Explore the connections and tensions between the American legal tradition and those of other cultures.

Content:

1. Understanding the law
2. Constitutional law and constitutional politics
3. The litigation process
4. Personal injuries and tort law
5. Businesses, consumers, and contract law
6. The law of property
7. Criminal responsibility and criminal law
8. Criminal procedure
9. Law and Social Control

Current Required Texts:

- Jay M. Feinman. *Law 101: Everything You Need to Know About the American Legal System*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press (2010). ISBN 13: 978-0195395136
- Lawrence M. Friedman. *American Law in the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press (2004). ISBN-13: 978-0300102994
- Course Reader (to be distributed)

Instructional strategies:

The class will consist of lectures, Powerpoint presentations, videos, class discussions, student debates, examinations, analysis of contemporary social discourse, and co-curricular experiences. Courts and other sites may be visited, and guest lectures will be arranged with various players in the legal system. Students are expected to complete all reading assignments from the required texts for this section. Students will write essays and reaction papers to enhance their understanding of the reading and gain facility with academic argument. Students will develop well-reasoned arguments and identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments in their own or others' work, using debate, comparison/contrast analysis, a detailed piece of critical writing, or some other, similar instruments.

Methods of Evaluation:

- Short writing assignments reacting to each week's readings: 25%
- Research paper: 50%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Attendance—taken into account for students with borderline grades

Paper Styles and Format:

Academic success requires academic skills, and especially the skill of writing an academic paper. Critical to that task is use of recognized citation formatting. The Chapman Leatherby Libraries has a page directing you to information on the major citation formats; see <http://www1.chapman.edu/library/reference/styles.html> Normally, you should use the format appropriate for your discipline—for purposes of our class the default format will be the MLA style. Papers not using MLA style (or another approved format) for citations will not receive full credit.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy:

The course syllabus should include the following statement:

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university

Students with Disabilities Policy:

The course syllabus should include the following statement:

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for

Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Prepared by: Ron Steiner

Last revised: Spring 2012