

LAW & SOCIETY: POLI 295

SYLLABUS

Fall 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 4-5:15

Maybank Room 252

Instructor: Rhett Dunaway

Office Hours: By appointment in person, via Zoom or by Telephone

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There are no prerequisites for this course. This is a 3 Credit Hour Course.

Course Introduction and Objectives:

Welcome to Law & Society! Law & Society is a broad topic. How do laws impact and interact with you? Our community? Our country? Our world? How did these modern laws develop and how will they continue to evolve? Through assigned readings, guest speakers, thought provoking films and lectures we will explore these questions.

I have been a lawyer for 31 years and for my last 23 years of practice I served as a Public Defender for Charleston County. As a Public Defender I represented thousands of clients on charges ranging from Possession of Cocaine to Murder. I saw first hand many of the issues that are now discussed in our daily news cycle: criminal justice reform, poverty and racial disparity within and outside of our criminal system. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a Public Defender and I love teaching students about this area of the law. I hope my enthusiasm and interest in this course will rub-off on you and that you too will enjoy it. With the exception of our lectures and our one assigned book [The Color of Law](#), everything you need for this course can be found in OAKS. That includes our course schedule, test dates, assignment due dates, and outside readings.

The topic of Law and Society is fantastically broad and while we will cover a lot of ground – this semester we will focus our attention on two primary subject areas: criminal justice and race issues. Both of these topic areas themselves are broad. Because I was active in this area of law I know many lawyers and non-lawyers who actively work in these fields. I will bring in several guest speakers who, I hope, will be able to bring to life specific issues within our areas of concentration. My hope is that these guest speakers will serve a dual purpose: to educate you about specific topics and provide an opportunity for you to see various possible career paths for yourself

Several years ago I was asked to take over this class for one semester as an Express Class. For that class I chose topics that explored the philosophy of various styles of law. I would describe that course as a theoretical examination of concepts and ideas. I started teaching this class again last year as a Full Semester class. I chose a different focus and a different style for our class. I want this class to explore more topical issues that you see in the news today. I want you to learn about issues that are timely and relevant. I want this class to be less theoretical and more practical, more hands-on. I think this will make the class more relevant and I hope more interesting for you. It will

require your active participation in class to be successful. You will be expected to have read the assigned materials prior to class in order to be ready to fully participate in class discussions.

If pandemic restrictions allow – this semester you will observe two sessions of Guilty Plea Court at the Charleston County Courthouse. You will be required to provide a summary of what you saw and a short paper (no more than two pages) about your observations. I will provide more information about this in class.

Our guest speakers will expose you to how the law is applied to various areas by different practitioners. I want you to see a wide array of employment opportunities in the hope that you are moved by these speakers to pursue a career in one of their fields. At a minimum – I hope that you will be motivated to consider the possibility of graduate school or employment in legal areas by hearing from people who are working in jobs where law and society intersect.

We will have at least two True/False style tests – with the possibility of some Multiple Choice questions. The material for the tests will come from the lectures (my lectures and the guest speakers), assigned readings, and various media and activities from our class time. There will be many short, written assignments. Towards the end of this syllabus you will find the breakdown (%s) of the various graded assignments. While there is no Final Exam for this course, there will be a final group project.

Whether we are together in class or meeting as a group by Zoom -- I am fine with and encourage thoughtful differences of opinions. However, disagreeing in a respectful manner is expected. Rude, unkind or disrespectful behavior towards your fellow classmates will not be tolerated.

How To Succeed:

The key to success is to stay on top of your work. Keep an eye out for email messages from me sent to your CofC email. Keep track of your assignment and test due dates. Don't procrastinate and don't fall behind. There is a lot to do and a lot of material to cover.

Take notes during the lectures and read your assigned materials with a critical eye. Taking notes of your assigned reading is a good way to better understand the material and to be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Keep your questions from outside of class written down and ask them in class. Frequently if you have a question – some of your classmates will also have that question too. I think taking handwritten notes (as opposed to typing on your computer) also increases your learning of the material. Your regular and on-time attendance and active participation in this class are expected.

Learning Outcomes:

My goal is to provide you with an opportunity to learn more about specific areas of our laws. How did these areas develop? How do these laws impact our society? How can you think more deeply and more critically about issues related to these areas we examine? Hopefully what we learn in this class will allow you to apply that learning to other areas of our laws. Further, I hope the methods we use to uncover the story behind the laws will be useful to you as you progress as a Political Science student or whatever major you pursue. Ultimately, I want to provide you with tools that will make you more curious and better able to analyze laws and concepts for yourself.

In addition to our one assigned “textbook” (The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein) we will have lots of assigned reading – all available to you on OAKS.

Midterm Grades will only reflect your first test score. You will have many of your grades back from Thank You letters – but I will not include those grades in calculating your midterm grade. They will be used in calculating your final grade at the end of the semester. Attendance and participation will not play a factor in the midterm grade but will be a part of your final grade as well.

Final Grades will be calculated from: your attendance and your active participation in class (25%); Two tests (25%); Thank You Letters (20%); a Guilty Plea Write Up (10%) and a final group project (20%). **There are no scheduled make-up tests.** If you are aware of a conflict or have an excused absence at the time an assignment or a test is due, then it is your responsibility to notify me well in advance to determine if alternative arrangements can be made. Finally, if there are any special circumstances that will hinder your ability to complete the course work, tests or other requirements, or any issues that will limit your potential to succeed in this class – then please let me know.

Grading Totals:

Attendance and Participation:	25%
Two Tests:	25%
Thank You Letters:	20%
Guilty Plea Write Up	10%
Final Group Project:	<u>20%</u>
	Total 100%

Grading Policy:

A 94-100 A- 90-93 B+ 87- 89 B 83-86 B- 80-82 C+ 77-79
C 73-76 C- 70-72 D+ 67-69 D 63-66 D- 60-62 F below 60

The Center for Student Learning (CSL) offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking and writing skills, and course content. Services include tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills appointments and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and these services are available to you at no cost. Their website is

<http://csl.cofc.edu> and their phone number is (843) 953-5635. Their office is located on the 1st floor, Room 116 of the Addlestone Library. This is free help for students – so take advantage of what they have to offer.

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help you with writing for this course and all of your CofC courses. They offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call them at (843) 953-5635 or visit them at <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>

Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing: If you find yourself experiencing physical illness, please reach out to student health services (843-953-5520). If you are experiencing mental health issues (anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, loneliness or homesickness, etc.) please contact either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at <http://counseling.cofc.edu>) 843-953-5640 located on the 3rd floor of the Robert Scott Small Building, or Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting “4support” to 839863 or visit <http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php>) or meet them in person on the 3rd floor of the Stern Center. These services are here to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

Food & Housing Resources: Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the Dean of Students for support (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/salt.php>). Also, you can go to <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php> to learn about food and housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd Floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need.

Disability/Access: The College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center for Disability Services (SNAP) (843-953-1431) or me so that an accommodation may be arranged. If you are already a SNAP student, then please present me with your SNAP letter in the first days of class.

OAKS, including Gradebook, will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the Syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted.

Recording of Classes (via Zoom): In the event we are required to meet by Zoom as a class, then please know that class sessions on Zoom may be recorded – both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in the class, the student (you) consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction: In the event that in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available at CofC to provide students with these essential tools. Because I have taught this course as an online course several times, we are well suited to be able to continue with our course in the event of the school's closure. If you are required to leave campus, please be prepared to bring along your laptop, textbook, notes and class materials with you. If you have access to the internet - wherever you might be – then our class can continue.

Inclusion: The College of Charleston offers many resources for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff along with their allies.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity:

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of the deception involved.

As is true with all College of Charleston classes, lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of the deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding or confusion will be handled by the instructor. The instructor designs an intervention or assigns a grade reduction to help prevent the student from repeating the error. The response may be recorded on a form and signed by the instructor and the student. It may then be forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course. Indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at: <http://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>.

Statement on “Religious Accommodation for Students”: The College of Charleston community is enriched by students of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices and beliefs. We value student rights and freedoms, including the right of each student to adhere to individual systems of religion. The College prohibits discrimination against any student because of their religious belief or any absence thereof.

The College acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observances in some traditions may cause conflicts with student schedules. In affirming this diversity, like many other colleges and universities, the College supports the concept of “reasonable accommodation for religious observance” in regard to class attendance and the scheduling of examinations and other academic work requirements, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship on the College. Faculty are required, as part of their responsibility to students and the College, to ascribe to this policy and to ensure its fair and full implementation.

The accommodation request imposes responsibilities and obligations on both the individual requesting the accommodation and the College. Faculty members are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices. Examples of reasonable accommodations for student absences might include: rescheduling an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student’s presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment dates. Regardless of any accommodation that may be granted, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives, requirements and prerequisites as defined by the instructor and by the College.

A list of recognized religious holidays can be found on the CofC Dean of Students’ web page.