

POL 40: Law & Society

Wednesday 5:00 pm-7:50 pm

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00 pm – 4:45 pm; or by appointment

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POLI 40: LAW & SOCIETY

Students will explore how a government bureaucracy works and the role of administrative agencies as regulators, licensors, and distributors of entitlements. We will focus not only on federal agencies, but also issues that arise for state and local governments through case studies and problems. We will also study the relationship of administrative agencies to other branches of government. Over the course of the semester, each student will participate in a small group exercise and make a presentation.

There are four major goals of the course:

- 1) Teach students basic legal principles in administrative process and help them understand why these principles are important;
- 2) Help students interpret and apply these principles in different situations by examining case studies;
- 3) Engage students to understand when to apply these principles to solve practical problems; and
- 4) Expose students to technology-based learning by using the Internet and on-line research.

Students will break down into groups of up to 10 to discuss, negotiate and present their findings on issues presented in case studies. Groups will be selected on the first day of class.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Class will be conducted using a modular approach. A modular approach provides a context within which to understand substantive legal principles. Each module includes lessons that summarize the basic principles, questions that test comprehension and application, resources and other help tools. The modular approach is designed to be very interactive, focusing on skill-based learning such as applied reasoning, creative problem solving, and analytical thinking through simulations and role playing.

There will be three modules in this course:

Module 1 is entitled the "Politics of Government in our Society" and will focus on the legislative process and separation of powers among the different branches of government. Students will apply these principles in the context of case studies on the Role of Women in Politics; Corruption in Government; Establishing National Voting Standards; Gays in the Military; and Use of Torture as an Interrogation Tool.

Module 2 is entitled "Music Piracy: In Search of a Compromise." This module will introduce basic principles of intellectual property, copyright and the tension between protecting ownership rights and encouraging the free flow of ideas, innovation, and public good. The case study will focus on the controversy over copyright ownership and music piracy.

Module 3 is entitled "Government Oversight in Quality of Life Issues" and focuses on the government's role in education; and how zoning and land use controls are used to address a wide range of issues from race, crime, and morality. Students will apply these principles in how zoning laws are used to determining the antenna towers, and desegregation cases currently before the U.S. Supreme Court.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course examines the nature, function and role of government and the law in U.S society. This course has four learning outcomes

- 1) To promote an understanding of fundamental questions of why, when, and how law and its interpretation impact our lives, using the Constitution as the source of that law;
- 2) To teach students a knowledge and mastery of basic concepts in administrative law and process, such as separation of power; rulemaking, licensing and adjudication;
- 3) To expose students to computer-assisted instruction that is interactive, targets skill-based learning, and provides multiple forms of assessment and evaluation; and
- 4) To teach students how to apply these concepts in a variety of context and situations in small group discussions.

The course will target four measurable skills:

- 1) Critical analysis and reasoning;

- 2) Applied reasoning;
- 3) Oral and written communication; and
- 4) Creative problem solving.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course materials will be presented through lecture, class discussion, role playing, oral presentations and negotiations. The skills that will be integrated into the course, measured and evaluated are statutory construction, critical and analytical thinking, applied reasoning, and creative problem solving.

Students will also use a Cyber Workbooks entitled, "Law and Society" Cyber Workbooks are web skill-based learning modules that include lessons, questions and answers, hint and help tools. The URL is www.cyberworkbooks.com. To access a Cyber Workbook module, purchase for \$25.00 a license from the bookstore. You will be given an envelope with instructions, a user name and password. Keep your receipt. Students will be asked to research sites on the Internet to be used in class presentations and discussions.

Most of the law review articles and news article may be accessed from links on the Professor Johnson's course webpage.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

There are three types of graded assignments in this class. The Cyber Workbooks module will give you some foundational principles related to how government functions and interacts within the different branches; public-private efforts to address internet piracy; and land use principles to address social goals. Students will go through the modules individually. User responses will be recorded, timed and scored. Points will be awarded based upon the mastery of the substantive material, the user's ability to apply basic legal principles to various case studies, and then formulate possible solutions to an unresolved problem. Each skill will be measured based upon a point system that assigns appropriate weight to the measure of difficulty and competency of a skill. The goal is to answer the questions correctly in the fewest number of tries.

Students will be divided into groups of 10 and will have to identify and presents solutions to a case study discussed in class. Each group will present on one case study.

There will be a take-home final comprised of 5 typed pages, 1 ½ lines, 12 point font with footnotes. The question will ask students to apply principles learned to a problem.

Grading for each assignment is as follows:

Cyber Workbooks Module	35 points
1 CPS Worksheet.....	20 points
Take-Home Final	45 points

	100 points
Extra Credit	10 points

Extra Credit Assignment: Government Effectiveness in Responding to Katrina (Assignment Due 3/15/07) Students will focus on the Federal Emergency Management Administration, an agency under the Homeland Security Department, an executive agency. In light a reorganization and the recent Katrina, Rita, and Wilma hurricanes, students will focus on the problems that created the crisis, reforms that have been implemented and the effectiveness of recovery efforts

- a. Matt Apuzzo, "Judge Orders Federal Agency to Resume Payments for Housing Hurricane Katrina Refugees" AP 11/29/06
- b. Ann Simmons, "New Orleans mayor accentuates the positive," LA Times 11/8/06
- c. Katrina Website
(<http://www2.cwsl.edu/faculty/ajohnson/katrina/Index.htm>)
- d. Phil Harris interview, See article
<http://www.sdcitybeat.com/article.php?id=3542>

Teaching Assistants:

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