



# The University of Texas at El Paso, Department of Political Science and Public Administration

The College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at El Paso

and

Extended University

Law and Society

(POLS 3322 / CRN 35022)

Summer 2023 (702)

July 3rd, 2023 to August 18th, 2023

Date of final exam exam: August 18th, 2023. (Grades reported to Registrar by August 23rd, 2023).

Online through Blackboard

**Dr. Patrick Timmons, B.A. (Hons), M.Phil., Ph.D., LL.M.**

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## Office Hours

Virtually, via Google Meets. Please send me an email to schedule a mutually convenient time for a virtual meeting.

## Catalog Description

An examination of the legal-judicial arrangements in the Western world and particularly the United States, with emphasis on the interaction of legal systems with society.

## Course Goals and Overview

This class helps students learn and understand the social setting of legal phenomena. In the class, we consider the following questions, and seek answers to them using readings, audio recordings, and films as source materials and evidence:

- What is law? What is society?
- What is the relationship between law and society?
- What is a norm? Where do norms come from?
- How does law become meaningful in society?
- Does law shape society or does society shape the law?
- What methods do scholars use to study the relationship between law and society?
- Does scholarly research in law and society have an impact on public policy formation?

The course begins by introducing students to theories about the relationship between law and society.

It proceeds with an examination of the formal making of the law in a social setting through institutions and moves to consider the function of the law as a tool of social control, with attention paid to different theoretical understandings of power.

Students will examine the role of the law in solving disputes, its role in creating change and the role of the legal profession within society. The course incorporates the assumption that popular culture about law (films, television shows, songs, novels, etc.) is an important mechanism by which societies make sense of law.

Students will take regular tests, a mid-term exam, write and participate in several discussion boards, write a book review and film review (of a book and film used in this course), and submit a final exam.

## Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this course, students should have the following skills or knowledge:

- Have an understanding of the relationship between legal actors and societies in the Western world.
- Be able to analyze, compare and argue over different scholarly approaches to the study of law and society.
  - Be able better to define the concepts of "norm", "law", "society", and "power."

- Have a developed understanding of how scholarly research in law and society issues can inform and advance the goals of public policy formation.
- Be adroit in understanding the importance of popular culture in shaping/capturing orientations towards law.

## UTEP EDGE ADVANTAGE

You can learn about UTEP Edge, here: <https://www.utep.edu/edge/about/index.html>

This class fulfills the following targeted UTEP Edge Advantage skills:

- Communication: Discussion boards, position paper, book and film reviews.
- Confidence: Multiple choice tests to give you a deeper understanding of the textbook.
- Critical thinking: Relationship of law to society, partly based on Foucault.
- Entrepreneurship: Position paper on a law school for El Paso.
- Global awareness: Examining how the United States legal system affects society at home and abroad.
- Problem solving: Multiple choice tests, essay on law school for El Paso, book reviews.
- Social responsibility: examining in depth the way law affects society and vice versa.

## Required readings

The *required* texts for this course are:

Steven Vago and Steven E. Barkan , *Law and Society* Eleventh edition (Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2018).

Paperback ISBN: 9781138720923

It is also available in a digital version, **which I highly recommend.**

**I DO NOT RECOMMEND YOU PURCHASE OR RENT A PHYSICAL COPY.**

John Lewis, *March*. Three volumes. Box set ISBN: 9781603093958

It is also available in Kindle (via Amazon).

**This book will be available to you, in its three volumes, via UTEP Library's Digital Reserves at zero cost to you.**

The weekly assigned readings required for this course will be released to you via Blackboard in the given week's module. However, you should read *March* **as soon as possible.**

## Grading Scheme

**Note well.** Failure to submit **any** assignment, including submitting an incomplete assignment, may result in failing the class.

### Descriptions of graded work

**Note well:** Failure to submit any assignment, including submitting an incomplete assignment may result in failing the class or withdrawal from the class.

#### **Tests (30 points each)**

Seven, due weekly, after reading textbook or other materials, Vago and Barkan. 210 points

#### **Discussion board (50 points each)**

Four, due periodically, worth 200 points in total.

**Midterm** 145 points

**Final** 145 points

**Book Review** 150 points

John Lewis, *March*. (Three volumes).

**Film review** 150 points

Total: 1,000 points

The total point score is then divided by 10 to provide a percentage. The letter grades break down in the following way:

#### **% Letter**

≥ 89.50 A

79.50-89.49 B

69.50-79.49 C

59.50-69.49 D

≤ 59.49 F

**Late work is unacceptable. You are advised to contact the instructor before the due date if, for any reason, you are going to submit late work. Even if you miss the due date for an assignment you are still required to submit the missing work.**

## WEEKLY TESTS

After you do the assigned readings for a given week, you will take the test (which will have about 30 questions per week). For tests 1 through 5 the questions come from the textbook, Vago and Barkan; for tests 6 and 7 the questions come from the material presented for that week. You should submit your answers to the tests by Monday, 11:00pm (MT) each week, except for the test in week 7, which is due on Friday, August 18th.

## EXAMS

There are two exams for the course. Questions are based on the textbook, Vago and Barkan. The exams will be “open book” so that you will be able to have all support materials you think are necessary to answer the exam questions. The exams will be administered via Blackboard. You will have **several days** to complete the exam upon activation.

The exams are to be taken individually—**it is not allowed to discuss the exam questions with the classmates or anyone else**. Please refer to the section on “Academic Integrity” below to review the university and instructor policies on cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

The exams are designed to consolidate your knowledge of material presented in the textbook. This class is an offering in public law and the permanent, full-time faculty in the Department of Political Science at the University of Texas at El Paso require that this class prepares you factually for the intricacy and complexity associated with grounded legal analysis.

## Make-up exams

Make-up exams will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency (see “excused absences” below). Note that make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam and may require more intensive preparation. If you miss a test and your absence is not considered excused, you will receive a zero on the test. This policy will be strictly enforced.

## BOOK REVIEW

You will write a review of one of the three books in John Lewis's *March* (in three volumes) focusing on **the method by which** it reveals or addresses the relationship between law and society.

**The book review is not a summary.**

Part of the challenge of University scholarship is to expose oneself to new sources, and to new forms of writing. You can find book reviews in scholarly journals, many of which are available via the Library databases. If you do not know how to find a scholarly book review in the Library databases please contact a UTEP Librarian via the Library website. The librarians are here to help you and are delighted when students get in touch with them!

The book review will be two pages in length, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 points. Do **not** use a cover sheet. Use a third page for citations. There is a minimum requirement to cite three sources in your book review.

There will be instructions on how to complete a book review on the class Blackboard page.

## FILM REVIEW

You will write a review of any of the films (documentaries or features) we watch in the class, focusing on how the films reveal to you the relationship between law and society.

**The film review is not a summary.**

**The instructions are similar for the book review.**

The film review will be exactly two pages in length, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 points. Do **not** use a cover sheet. Use a third page for citations. You must use a minimum of three sources in your film review.

There will be instructions on how to complete a book review on the class Blackboard page.

## DISCUSSION POSTS/CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is an important activity of the class, is meant to be challenging, but is meant to bring you into communication with students in the class. You will likely need to log into Blackboard several times during the week to participate effectively in the discussion board for each week.

In the weeks indicated in the syllabus calendar and on Blackboard you will write a discussion board. This activity is made up of the following elements:

- (1) a discussion post in response to a guided question (minimum of **250 words** and maximum of **500 words**); and,
- (2) respond to **at least one** of your classmates' post (minimum of **100 words** and maximum of **500 words**).

Be sure to submit your discussion post and response to your peers for a given week by Monday by 11:00pm (MT) of the week in question to receive credit for your participation.

Class participation via discussion posts makes up a significant portion of your grade in this class.

Check Blackboard for the instruction about the three-paragraph format. **The instructor will not read your discussion post** if you do not use a three-paragraph format and the post will be returned to you with a **grade of zero** and an **instruction to resubmit your post**.

It is a requirement that you comment on other students' submissions on the discussion board. **The instructor will not read your discussion post** if you do not include at least one comment on another student's post, **you will receive a grade of zero**, and an **instruction to resubmit with a comment on another student's post**.

Some suggestions for successful posts:

Write with the **curiosity** of university students.

The instructor is more interested in doubts and the questions you raise rather than providing concrete answers. The expression of doubt and uncertainty is a skill and something to be practiced and developed.

***You are strongly encouraged to use the UTEP Writing Center for assistance in drafting all written work, including discussion boards, essay, and reviews. Using the Writing Center is not a requirement. At UTEP we try as hard as we can to make a number of different resources available to you because you are our student and we want to help you very much indeed.***

The instructor expects everyone to actively participate in class and do so in a positive and appropriate way (see the “Online Etiquette and Effective Communication” section below). Keep in mind that class participation is more than just completing the scheduled assignments and taking exams—you should be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class debates via online discussion posts.

Before posting a discussion, please complete the assigned readings and go over your notes.

Exams will cover material from the readings, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage.

Full credit for a discussion post is reserved only for those that follow the online etiquette and effective communication rules below.

## COURSE/INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

### E-Mail Protocol

UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact the instructor: [ptimmons2@utep.edu](mailto:ptimmons2@utep.edu)<sup>1</sup>. Please do not try to contact the instructor via the Blackboard messaging function.

Please **only** email the instructor from your UTEP email account. ***The instructor cannot respond to emails from non-UTEP accounts.***

When e-mailing me **from your UTEP account, please put the course number (CRN) in the subject line.** In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

The instructor will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will respond to weekend messages by Monday at the latest.

### Online Etiquette and Effective Communication

It is essential that the **utmost respect and professionalism** be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics.

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<sup>1</sup><mailto:ptimmons2@utep.edu>

Please avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views.

One of the best ways to develop your voice as a scholar at the University is to focus on writing about sources. All of your writing should be anchored in sources you have read, viewed or listened to. You are not being graded on how well you write about your personal experiences or things that seem right or wrong to you.

You are being invited to engage in source-based analysis as scholars.

*\*No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.\**

Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the University and it is at the professor's full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

## Online Etiquette and Effective Communication Policy

Please carefully read the following rules for online etiquette and effective communication:

**Language:** Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language, all capital letters, and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting it, in order to remove any strong language.

**Respect:** A web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your professor and your fellow students with respect. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.

**Be Forgiving:** If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the professor in an email. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion is also new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the professor.

**This is Permanent:** Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent, there is no taking it back. When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

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*Treat your fellow students with respect.*

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**Edit Your Work:** The grammar, spelling, and punctuation of a message are part of the grading criteria – you should not expect your professor and peers to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed



sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them.

**Test for Clarity:** Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly and if you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.

**Follow the Parameters/Stick to the Point:** Follow the posting requirements and parameters set up by your professor. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents. Also keep in mind that no credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates' comments carefully and thoughtfully.

**Read First, Write Later:** Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.

**Use the sources, keep first person to a minimum:** You should anchor all of your writing in an analysis of the course material. You are, with emphasis, not being asked to use yourself as a source. You should only use the first person (I or we) if you can connect the source material with your own experience or outlook.

### Excused Absences and Excuse for Late Work

The instructor will excuse absences and late work **only** when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his faith that happens to coincide with a class session or due date for an assignment, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency.

To be excused, you must notify me *in writing* **prior** to the date of absence.

That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification **as soon as possible** following your absence.

Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance.

The instructor is aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See academic regulations in UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences:

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>.

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies,

“When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

**Cheating** may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.

**Collusion** involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. One example of collusion is preparing a discussion entry for another person or having someone prepare a discussion entry for you. The instructor encourages students to study together and work collectively; however, working together to write any part of a written assignment, research paper, and/or exam is collusion.

**Plagiarism** is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. Be aware, just as the internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one.

**Any** act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to the Office for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/index.html>.

### Copyright Statement for Course Materials

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law.

**The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.**

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the

contact information for CASS: web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: <sup>2</sup>[cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu);<sup>3</sup> location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

## COVID 19 ACCOMMODATIONS

For those of us (I include myself in this comment) who might confront difficulties because of COVID-19, I want to reassure you that I will be flexible and understanding.

There are policies and procedures in place for the possibility that you might go to UTEP's campus.

You are required to follow these policies and procedures for the safety of our UTEP community, and residents of Ciudad Juárez/El Paso/Las Cruces.

Even though this class is 100 percent online, you may decide to go to campus to use the library or other facilities.

You can find the most up to date policies and procedures related to COVID, here:

<https://www.utep.edu/resuming-campus-operations/news/index.html>

## SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

You will need the following software on your computer to efficiently work in this course (your computer may already have some of these programs installed):

🔗 **Adobe Acrobat Reader.** To get this program, go

to <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/products/pdf-reader.html> <sup>4</sup>and follow the instructions.<sup>5</sup>

🔗 **QuickTime Player.** To get this program, go to <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

and follow the instructions.

🔗 **Microsoft Office.** If you do not have a word-processing software, go to <https://my.apps.utep.edu>. Using My.Apps interface, UTEP students can access most<sup>6</sup> software offered in student computer labs (including Microsoft Office) from their personal computing devices. Students can use any laptop, tablet, or smartphone with an Internet connection and use the software from anywhere at any time. For more information, go to <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73740> <sup>7</sup>and follow the instructions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

<sup>3</sup><mailto:cass@utep.edu>

<sup>4</sup><https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/products/pdf-reader.html>

<sup>5</sup><https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/products/pdf-reader.html>

<sup>6</sup><https://my.apps.utep.edu/>

<sup>7</sup><http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73740>

<sup>8</sup><http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73740>

## UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: <http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/>.<sup>9</sup>

## ALTERNATE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

The instructor strongly suggests that you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a back-up in case there is a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer.

This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit.

If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, you can always email the instructor ([ptimmons2@utep.edu](mailto:ptimmons2@utep.edu))<sup>10</sup> your back-up document. However, this is just to prove you completed the assignment. The instructor will ask you to resolve your technology issues and submit the assignment via Blackboard once they are resolved.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND TASKS – WEEKS AT A GLANCE\*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE WEEK SPECIFIC READINGS AND VIEWINGS WILL BE SPECIFIED IN BLACKBOARD.**

### Week 1: 07/03 to 07/10

Read the syllabus. Take the syllabus test before Thursday, July 6th, 2023, by 11pm MT. *you must **not** proceed to the rest of the class without taking the syllabus test.* The syllabus test will be available by 5pm MT on Monday, July 3rd by 12pm MT.

- Review the posted materials in “Welcome and Course Introduction.”
  - Introduce yourself to the class via “Student introductions” with original contribution due on Thursday, July 6th by 11pm MT, and comment to another student due by Saturday, July 8th by 11pm MT.

In Week 1 module: do the required readings

- Take the weekly test, submit by Monday at 11pm MT.

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<sup>9</sup><http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/>

<sup>10</sup><mailto:ptimmons2@utep.edu>

## Week 2: 07/10 to 07/17

In Week 2 module: do the required readings or viewings, and:

- Take the weekly test by Monday at 11pm MT.
- Submit a post to the discussion board and comment on another student's post by Monday at 11pm MT.

## Week 3: 07/17 to 07/24

In Week 3 module: do the required readings, and:

- Take the weekly test by Monday at 11pm MT.
- Submit a post to the discussion board and comment on another student's post.

## Week 4: 07/24 to 07/31

In Week 4 module: do the required readings, and:

- Take the weekly test by Monday at 11pm MT.

**Midterm Exam – will be activated on Monday, July 24th @ 11:00am and due on July 29th @ 11:00pm (MT).**

## Week 5: 07/31 to 08/07

In Week 5 module: do the required readings, and:

- Take the weekly test by Monday at 11pm MT.
- Submit a post to the discussion board and comment on another student's post by Sunday at 11pm MT.

## Week 6: 08/07 to 08/14

In Week 6 module: do the required readings, and:

- Take the weekly test by Monday at 11pm MT.

**Book review on John Lewis, *March* (one of the three volumes), is due on Friday, August 11th at 11pm MT.**

## Week 7: 08/14 to 08/18

In Week 7 module: do the required readings, and:

- Take the weekly test.
- Submit a post to the discussion board and comment on another student's post. Please check the due dates this week: there is less time to complete the assignments this week.

***Final Exam – will be activated on Monday, August 14th @ 11:00am and due on Friday, August 18th @ 11:00pm (MT).***

***PLEASE NOTE THE DATES FOR THE FINAL EXAM***

**\*The designated time zone for the submission of all course assignments and tasks is Mountain Time (MT).**

***Please don't forget to evaluate the course! Your instructor, UTEP and Extended University value your assessment!***