

## Course Syllabus

# Course Overview

## Instructor


Instructor: Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd, J.D., Ph.D.

Email address: [ngaf@polisci.rutgers.edu](mailto:ngaf@polisci.rutgers.edu); (<mailto:ngaf@polisci.rutgers.edu>) please contact me through Canvas. It is

Phone number: (848)932-9283

Office hours: M 12-1 online via Webex & other days/times by appt.

## Course Delivery

This course is fully online, and all assignments and activities will take place online. To access the course, go to [onlinelearning.rutgers.edu](http://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu) (<http://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/ecollege-student-faq>) and log in under the "Students" menu, or log in directly at [rutgers.instructure.com](https://rutgers.instructure.com). For more information about course access or support, you can contact the Online Learning Help Desk via  at [help@canvas.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@canvas.rutgers.edu) (<mailto:help@canvas.rutgers.edu>) or call 877-361-1134.

## Course Description

This course will provide a general introduction to the study of law and society. Scholars have examined a wide range of approaches in thinking about the interrelationship of law and society, including, but not limited to, the nature of law, crime and punishment, the "adversary ethic," morality, race, feminism, and dispute resolution. We will study a variety of these themes, with a special emphasis on social justice.

## Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to successfully:

- Be broadly familiar with the major debates and themes within law and society scholarship;
- Be aware of competing ways of understanding the nature of the law, and its operation and interpretation; and
- Be better equipped to understand how the law changes and evolves in response to culture and politics.

## Course Information

### Prerequisites

- None

### Important Dates

The course begins on 9/1/2020 and ends on 12/10/2020, and the last day to drop the course without a “W” grade is 9/14/2020.

### Important Copyright Guidelines

(Note: language provided by Rutgers AAUP-AFT).

Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, original presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](https://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/10.2.13%20-%20current.pdf) (<https://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/10.2.13%20-%20current.pdf>).

Similarly, these copyright protections extend to original papers you produce for this course. In the event that I seek to share your work further, I will first obtain your written consent to do so. Finally, as the instructor for this course, I have the responsibility to protect students' right to privacy. Classroom recordings of students will therefore be treated as educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that

governs access to educational information and records. Instructors and students must provide notification if any part of online sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.

## Course Materials

### Required Text(s)

The following book may be purchased at the Rutgers Barnes & Noble Bookstore:

Bonsignore, John, et. al. 2006. *Before the Law: An Introduction to the Legal Process*. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

### Required Videos and/or Website Materials

The Road to Brown. Available for rental on Vimeo for \$2.99. Please register for Vimeo now to facilitate ease of rental. URL: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/roadtobrown>

### Optional Materials

Stevenson, Bryan. 2015. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Spiegel & Grau.

## Technology Requirements

### Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses



Basic computer and web-browsing skills

- Navigating Canvas

### Technology skills necessary for this specific course

- Live web conferencing using the Conferences tool (BigBlueButton)
- Collaborating on VoiceThread
- Recording a slide presentation with audio narration
- Recording, editing, and uploading video

### Required Equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7 or newer) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone

### Required Software

- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Excel or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

## Assessment

### Assignment Summary

Below are the assignments required for this course and the value of each assignment to the course grade as a whole. Please refer to the assignment table at the bottom of the [Syllabus](#) for specific due dates.

Assignment	Points/Percentage	Assignment Overview
Discussion & Other Learning Activities	40	Discussion and Activities • Details will be provided with each module. There will be
Quizzes	60	
Total	100	

4 10 pt discussions.

#### Quizzes

- Quizzes will test the material covered for the week/module and will not be cumulative. There will be 10 6 pt quizzes.
- Quizzes will be available Friday through Sunday of each week only.

### Grading Scale

(Source: Rutgers standard undergraduate grade scale)

Grade	Range
A	90 – 100
B+	85 – 89
B	80 – 84
C+	75 – 79
C	70 – 74
D	60 – 69
F	Below 60

## Student Participation Expectations

Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Logging in: AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**

Be sure you are logging in to the course in Canvas each week, including weeks with holidays or weeks with minimal online course activity. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me as soon as possible.

- **Time Commitment: 8-10 HOURS**

To be successful in this course, you should plan to dedicate approximately 8-10 hours per week.

- **Office hours and live sessions: FLEXIBLE**

I have set office hours each week, but can arrange to meet at other times, as well. All live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are flexible. For optional, live presentations, I will provide a recording that you can watch later, unless otherwise indicated. If you are required to discuss an assignment with me, please contact me



at the beginning of the week if you need a time outside my scheduled office hours.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Topic (start date)	Topic	Reading(s)	Activities	Due Date
1 (9/1)	Introduction  --General		Discussion •initial post •2 responses  Quiz (Syllabus)	by Wed midnight  by Fri midnight

	Background  --Course  Expectations/  Anatomy of an Argument, cont.			Days 5-7  Fri-Sun
2 (9/7)	What is the Law?  The nature of the law: Tough decisions	Forward, pages xiii-xxi)	Quiz	Days 5-7
3 (9/14)	The role of precedent: Stare Decisis      The Road to Brown  (documentary)	BTL, pages 1-17	Discussion	Day 3 Post response     Day 7 Respond to 2 classmates by this date.
4 (9/21)	The role of the judge	BTL, 2.1 and 2.4.	Quiz	Days 5-7
5 (9/28)	Laws and Values	BTL, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6.	Quiz	Days 5-7

6 (10/5)	Critical Theory: Marx	BTL, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.11	Quiz	Days 5-7
7 (10/12)	Critical Legal Studies	Sakai: Peter Gabel, Mark Tushnet, and Duncan Kennedy readings.	Quiz	Days 5-7
8 (10/19)	Feminist Legal Theory	Sakai readings.	Quiz	Days 5-7
9 (11/2)	Critical Race Theory	Sakai. Derrick Bell reading.	Discussion	Day 3 Post response  Day 7 Respond to 2 classmates by this date.
10 (11/9)	Critical Race Theory, cont.	BTL, 7.4 & 7.5	Quiz	Day 5-7
11 (11/16)	Training lawyers	BTL, Ch 11 intro, 11.1  BTL, Ch 12 intro, 12.2, 12.3	Quiz	Day 5-7
(11/23)	Thanksgiving	Break!!	Enjoy!!	

12 (11/30)	Lawyers as Adversaries		Quiz	Day 5-7
13 (12/7-12/10)	Juries		Discussion	Day 3 Post response  Day 7 Respond to 2 classmates by this date.
(12/11 & 12/14)	Reading Days			

## Course Policies

### Academic Integrity

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Please review the [Rutgers' academic integrity policy](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/) [\(http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/\)](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/).

▶ Academic integrity means, among other things:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

If you are in doubt about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with your instructor.

Other sources of information to which you can refer include:

- [Rutgers' Academic Integrity website](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu) [\\_ \(http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu\)](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu)
- [Code of Student Conduct](http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student) [\\_ \(http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-](http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student)



[conduct/](#)

- [Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/cardinal-rules.html) [\\_\(http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/cardinal-rules.html\)](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/cardinal-rules.html)

## Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Sakai, Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Students who do not agree should contact the course instructor immediately.

## Accessibility Statement

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: [see documentation guidelines](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines) [\\_\(https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines\)](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the [Registration form on the ODS web site](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form) [\\_\(https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form\)](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).

For more contact information, see the [Support Services](#) page.

## Discussion and Communication Guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** You should remember to write using standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please also refrain from using slang, profanity, or all CAPITAL LETTERS, as this is often interpreted as shouting.

- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across well online. Treat your instructor and fellow students with respect at all times, and in all communications.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processing program (e.g. Word, Pages, Open Office), where you can save your work, and then copying and pasting into the online discussion.

## Late Work and Make-up Exams

[Quizzes can only be made up, if there is an excused absence completed and submitted in a timely fashion. The excused absence form is in the files folder.]

## Faculty Feedback and Response Time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can email [help@canvas.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@canvas.rutgers.edu) (<mailto:help@canvas.rutgers.edu>) or call 877-361-1134 if you have a technical problem.)

### Grading and Feedback

 For weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**.

### E-mail

Please contact me via Canvas only, so that I can get notified of your email as soon as possible.

I will reply to e-mails within 48 hours on school days (M-F 9 am-5pm).

Please include the course number in the subject line.

Please include a greeting and salutation with all email communication.

### Discussions

I will check and reply to messages in the discussions every 48 hours on weeknights.

Return to the [Syllabus](#) or continue on to the [Modules](#).

## Next Steps

After reviewing information in this syllabus, including the course schedule below, please click on [Modules](#) in the course navigation menu at the left and proceed to the content items listed under the [Getting Started](#) and [Course Essentials](#) modules.

icon of a square, gray hard drive Save or print a copy of the syllabus for offline reference. For a printout of this page, including the schedule, see [Print a Page: Chrome](https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/1379552?hl=en) (<https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/1379552?hl=en>) or [How To Print Web Pages in Firefox](https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/how-print-web-pages-firefox) (<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/how-print-web-pages-firefox>).

Once you have completed these steps, proceed to [Module 1](#).

