**Social Justice Lawyering**

LAW6816 Section 31580

Spring 2022

3 credits

**Professor Jonathan Barry-Blocker (he/him; él; li)**

Visiting Professor

[j.barryblocker@ufl.edu](mailto:jbarry-blocker@law.ufl.edu)

352.273.0666 (office)

**CLASS TIME**: M, T, & W 1:15-2:10 pm

**CLASSROOM**: Room 285D Holland Hall

**OFFICE HOURS**: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 3:30pm, Room 356 Holland Hall

**COURSE MATERIALS & PARTICIPATION**

**There is no textbook or case book**. All readings, visuals, and other course material are linked to the **class modules** on the CANVAS course page. A module covers a week’s worth of class material. Each module’s materials are accessible on the Wednesday prior. No additional reading materials are needed.

Nonetheless there’s a wealth of accessible, germane information in academic journals, case dockets, lived experiences, historical texts, and news media. Consume it, digest it, and share your reflections in class. Do not hesitate to recommend supplemental material to the class.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course explores how legal professionals can advance social justice. First, the course will examine the meaning of social justice and the variety of structural factors that contribute to legal inequality. Then it will explore ways in which legal assistance is funded and delivered to low-income and underrepresented individuals; different substantive legal arenas in which social justice is pursued; and the diverse ways in which individuals can work for social justice, both in and out of the courtroom.

The course is designed to be introspective and interactive. By the end of this course, students will have:

* Discussed the historical origins and various theories of lawyering for social justice in the United States;
* Compared skills and methods used by public interest and social justice lawyers with those used by traditional lawyers;
* Evaluated landmark case law in substantive areas of social justice such as antidiscrimination, education, voting rights, reproductive rights, and criminal justice;
* Created their own Social Justice campaign

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES**

**Attendance**

Per ABA requirements, attendance at either in-person or remote classes is mandatory, unless you e-mail me in advance with a legitimate excuse. Up to 1/3 of this course will be held remotely for all students; remote classes are indicated on the syllabus and the CANVAS page. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

After Week 1, attendance will be taken for each class. Tardiness and absences can affect grades.

**Assigned Materials**

**Unless otherwise noted on the syllabus or on the CANVAS course page, all readings, visuals, and assignments are to be completed BEFORE class on the day they are assigned.** Class discussions will be focused on the assigned materials for that day and, as with all law school courses, it is essential that students are prepared and ready to participate in class. Being prepared means having read the materials carefully enough to understand, summarize, discuss, and form an opinion about them. If cases are included in the readings, being prepared means being able to brief the cases. It is anticipated that you will spend an average 2 hours out of class reading and/or preparing for every 1 hour in class.

**Weekly Assignments**

Social Justice should not be an intellectual pastime. It requires constant vigilance of current affairs, lived experiences, and developments in innovation. Therefore, each week you must identify, [lightly] research, and evaluate a relevant social justice issue. The issue should tie to that week’s readings/lessons. **Write between half to a full page (12 size font, margins no bigger than 1 inch, single line spacing) and submit your reflection to me via email or CANVAS. Weekly written reflections are due by Tuesdays at 1pm.**

These assignments are graded (3 pts.) Your submissions should contribute to the general discussion. Grading will not only be on the quantity, but also on the quality. The following criteria will be used to assign 0-3 points to each assignment:

**0 points:**

Failure to engage the assignment criteria in some meaningful way, such as:

* Failure to submit assignment or failure to submit by deadline;
* Failure to address stated topic;
* Failure to adequately communicate any cogent thoughts.

**1 point:**

The post has no fatal shortcoming, but:

* The writing is unclear or seriously flawed in key parts;
* The post barely addresses the topic;
* It is apparent the post was written and submitted at the last minute without any thought.

**2 points:**

The post is competent in that it:

* Fulfills all the requirement of the assignment;
* Contains writing that is generally clear and absent of major flaws;
* Fully addresses the stated topic.

**3 points:**

The post is excellent in that it:

* Fulfills all the requirement of the assignment;
* Contains writing that is clear and absent of all but minor flaws;
* Fully addresses the stated topic and provides a clear comprehension of the subject matter.

**Final Exam/Final Project**

The **final exam/final project** will cover concepts from the semester. It includes (1) creating a policy campaign for a social justice issue and (2) drafting a truncated litigation memorandum. The policy campaign addresses a social justice issue of your choosing. I will provide the topic and relevant law for the truncated litigation memorandum. **Policy campaigns are due by Noon on April 11, 2022. The truncated litigation memorandums are due no later than May 4, 2022.**

**Grading**

Grading for Social Justice Lawyering is calculated as follows:

* Attendance and participation – 15%
* Graded assignments – 35%
* Final exam - 60%

The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/forms-applications/exam-delays-accommodations-form).

The Levin College of Law’s mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College’s website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Point Equivalent** |
| A (Excellent) | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.67 |
| B+ | 3.33 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.67 |
| C+ | 2.33 |
| C (Satisfactory) | 2.0 |
| C- | 1.67 |
| D+ | 1.33 |
| D (Poor) | 1.0 |
| D- | 0.67 |
| E (Failure) | 0.0 |

The law school grading policy is available at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies>

**Classroom Electronics Use**

**Please silence and store your cell phones during class time – whether you are in-class or remote.** If you have an emergency where you must have access to your phone, you must inform the instructor before class.

**Impermissible use of a laptop during class WILL affect your grade**. Please note the following excerpt from the College of Law’s Computer Policy: “*Students may use laptops in the classroom for notetaking and for class purposes as directed by the professor. Other uses are not permitted, including, but not limited to, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, ecommerce, game playing, etc.”*

**COMMUNICATION POLICIES**

**Preferred Name and Pronouns**

Some of you have a preferred name that is not the name provided to me on the official roll. It is critical that you feel welcome, safe, and recognized in this course. Therefore, I will refer to you by your preferred pronouns and surnames. If your preferred name is not listed on the official UF roll, please inform me ASAP.

I expect reciprocal courtesy from all students.

When generally addressing your fellow students, use your colleague’s preferred pronouns and names.

**Humanizing Language**

Traditionally, the law uses sterile or dehumanizing language – especially in the criminal justice context – to address parties and participants. This can include the litigators. Furthermore, professional practices can permit cultural insensitivities and disrespect. Younger or newer attorneys are challenging these practices with more inclusive and humane communication. Therefore, make efforts to persuasively communicate without denigrating classmates and visiting speakers.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

This following represents current plans and objectives.  This schedule is subject to change in order to enhance the class learning opportunity.  Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Weeks 1 - 4 will develop the professional framework for the practice of law in the social justice arena. Weeks 5 - 12 will focus on the foundation for and implications for social justice lawyering within a variety of substantive areas of the law. The final week will be devoted to summarizing and reviewing the course.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **WEEK** | **DATES** | **TOPIC** |
| **1** | Jan. 18-19 | Intro. To Social Justice Lawyering |
| **2** | Jan. 31 – Feb. 2 | Legal Services & Access to Justice; Facets of Representation: Individuals |
| **3** | Feb. 7-9 | Facets of Representation: Communities |
| **4** | Feb. 14-16 | Criminal Justice Reform |
| **5** | Feb. 21-23 | Voting Rights & Electoral Access |
| **6** | Feb. 28 – March 2 | Voting Rights & Electoral Access |
| **7** | Mar. 7-9 | SPRING BREAK |
| **8** | Mar. 14-16 | Education & Children’s Rights |
| **9** | Mar. 21-23 | Education & Children’s Rights |
| **10** | Mar. 28-30 | Reproductive Rights & Bodily Autonomy |
| **11** | Apr. 4-6 | Reproductive Rights & Bodily Autonomy |
| **12** | Apr. 11-13 | Spatial Justice |
| **13** | Apr. 18-20 | Review |

**OTHER UF POLICIES**

**Accommodations for Differently Abled Students: (UF Policy)**

Differently abled students who request accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that they must present to me when requesting accommodations. Follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Academic Honesty: (UF Policy)**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php

**Class Recording Policy:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled.  The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.  All other purposes are prohibited.  Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

  A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does notinclude lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

  Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.”

**Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

**Health & Wellness Resources**

* *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu,](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](https://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
* *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](https://counseling.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
* *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](https://shcc.ufl.edu/).
* *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](https://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
* *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the Classroom Ethos**

As a law student and future lawyer, it is important that you be able to engage in rigorous discourse and critical evaluation while also demonstrating civility and respect for others. This is even more important in the case of controversial issues and other topics that may elicit strong emotions.

As a group, we are likely diverse across racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic, religious, and political lines. As we enter one of the great learning spaces in the world—the law school classroom—and develop our unique personality as a class section, I encourage each of us to:

* commit to self-examination of our values and assumptions
* speak honestly, thoughtfully, and respectfully
* listen carefully and respectfully
* reserve the right to change our mind and allow for others to do the same
* allow ourselves and each other to verbalize ideas and to push the boundaries of logic and reasoning both as a means of exploring our beliefs as well as a method of sharpening our skills as lawyers

As part of my commitment to teaching and serving the diverse UF Law community, I have signed the UF Law Anti-Racism Resolution (if applicable).