

LAW AND SOCIETY (LWSOC-GA)

LWSOC-GA 1001 Sociolegal Studies I (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This seminar (1) surveys approaches for understanding the relationship between social and legal thought and (2) examines their methodologies. Readings examine the extent to which social science and law have common theoretical and methodological foundations. Focus is on analytical, doctrinal, institutional, and philosophical perspectives and approaches to the study of law and society. The interface between legal and social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena is studied through critical debates as well as from a historical and comparative perspective.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

LWSOC-GA 1002 Sociolegal Studies II: Law & Social Policy (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Scholars have debated for centuries the relationship between law and social policy and whether law leads or follows social change. Regardless of one's position on these issues, most agree that law and society are interwoven such that law constitutes a field where social policies are created, reinforced, and transformed. This course utilizes the lens of the courts to examine the relationship between law, social policies, and social change. The first part of the course analyzes how social policies are created, reinforced, and transformed in constitutional courts. Students begin by examining the consequences of U.S. Supreme Court decisions in both creating and eliminating race and gender segregation. Next, they explore the role of constitutional courts in transforming social welfare policies in transitional societies such as postcommunist Central Europe. The second part of the course analyzes how social policies are created, reinforced, and transformed in trial courts. Students consider the relationship between social policy and the transformation of criminal courts in the progressive era; they then investigate this relationship in the contemporary context. In particular, the relationship between social policies and current criminal court transformations involving plea bargaining, sentencing guidelines, and the recent creation of problem-solving, specialized drug and domestic violence courts is explored. The third and final part of the course examines how social policies are created, reinforced, and transformed in international courts. In particular, students explore human rights policies and the development of the International Criminal Court.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No