

**SOC350H1S – Sociology of Legal Careers**  
**Professor Ronit Dinovitzer**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Winter 2025**  
**Friday 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Dinovitzer, Ronit  
Email address: [ronit.dinovitzer@utoronto.ca](mailto:ronit.dinovitzer@utoronto.ca)  
Office hours: Zoom TBA  
Course web site: Quercus

Teaching Assistant: Elliott Fonarev [elliott.fonarev@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:elliott.fonarev@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Course Description:**

This course examines the sociology of legal careers. Law represents one of our most elite and influential professions; lawyers are responsible not only for the administration of justice, but also are key players in the country's economic and political life. Understanding who lawyers are, the process of legal education, how lawyers build their careers, which lawyers can (and choose to) attain elite positions, and the clients that lawyers serve are all key issues for understanding access to justice, and for understanding lawyering as a profession devoted to democratic values. This course will rely on empirical research to cover sociological topics related to law school, where lawyers work and the work that lawyers do.

**Prerequisites:**

This is a program-only course and is restricted to sociology majors and specialists. Completion of SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 plus two of the following (1.0 FCE): SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed from the course without notice.

**Goals and Learning Objectives**

The goal of this course is to study legal careers as a window into understanding the power of law in contemporary society.

At the end of the course, students will be able:

- to critically read, analyze and write about sociological (both theoretical and empirical) literature on the legal profession
- to apply course material to real world and daily life examples

- to synthesize course materials from various weeks and demonstrate an understanding of the issue across various contexts

## Textbooks and Other Materials

The course relies on a collection of readings compiled by the instructor and available on Quercus.

## Evaluation Components:

Type	Date Due	Weight
<b>1. Discussion leader</b>		10%
<b>2. Engagement</b>	Ongoing (5 submissions total; as of week 2)	5%
<b>3. Assignment #1 (Movie analysis)</b>	Feb 21 (in class movie screening Feb 7)	30%
<b>4. Empirical assignment</b>	March 14	18%
<b>5. Research presentation</b>	April 4	2%
<b>6. Essay</b>	April 4	35%

## Handing in Assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus. Do not use the Quercus mobile app to submit your assignments. You are responsible for ensuring your essay was successfully submitted to Quercus; if it is not there, we cannot grade it. This link explains how to double check that you submitted your assignment successfully: <https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/submitting-assignments-to-your-course/>

Students must always keep an extra hard copy of their assignment for their own records.

## Discussion Leader

Each student will help to lead discussion (week 2-10, no class 5 or class 12 discussant). Sign ups will be made available after the first class. There will be around 4 students leading the discussion each week.

Each discussion leading group will prepare an individual set of discussion notes and questions, about one page. This will include very short summaries of important aspects of a reading or readings, brief analytic commentary on each aspect, and questions for class discussion. Submit the discussion plan by 6pm the day before class.

### **Engagement (5%)**

Our class readings and discussions do not live purely in the realm of the theoretical. Every week's lecture and readings can be connected to current events that we read about in the media and on social media. In order to encourage you to make these connections, you will have 5 opportunities to post a link to a **current event** (within the past two weeks) that connects to the week's readings. You need to:

- 1) post the link (it can also be a photo that you took, or something you saw on "TV"; in those cases please try to provide some kind of image or link)
- 2) write a short comment about how they are related (about 70 words).

These short writing exercises will be graded on a pass/fail basis, 1% per submission. There are no make-up opportunities for these assignments.

Posts are due by the start of each class, starting with Class #2 (there will be no post available for class #4 or 12). The post is meant to help you prepare for each upcoming lecture, so you will be posting based on the material we are covering that day before the class lecture for that topic.

### **Assignment (30%)**

An analysis of the movie "The Genuine Article", connecting course material to the movie. The movie will be shown in class, and there is no make up date for the movie. Details TBA.

### **Empirical research assignment (18%)**

You will be assigned a short empirical research project (details TBA). This will involve doing minor data collection: for example, you may be assigned a law firm and asked to collect data on the law schools the partners graduated from. You are then expected to summarize your major findings

### **Research presentation (2%)**

Each student will prepare a 3-5 minute presentation using PowerPoint to share your results with the class.

### **Essay: The law firm of the future (35%)**

This essay will rely mainly on course material with additional library research (details TBA). The key is to integrate as much course material as possible and as many specifics as possible. You will also be required to integrate the data collected by yourself and the class in your empirical assignments. Detailed instructions TBA.

## Procedures and Rules

### 1. Missed tests and late Assignments

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero; UNLESS within 48 hours (two days) of the missed test, students who wish to write the make-up test give the instructor an emailed request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test. Instead, the grade assigned for the missed test will be the same as the grade the student earns for the other test in this course.

Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with one of the following:

- Absence declaration via ACORN
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

In the case of late assignments, the instructor will determine whether to grant the requested extension, and length of extension.

### 2. Late Assignments - Time Bank

**Time bank:** In this course, we will be using time banks. Our time bank is made up of 72 hours total across all assignments in the course. This means that you have a 72-hour grace period to be used as you need (e.g. for one assignment or distributed across different assignments). The time bank will be calculated using 12-hour time blocks, meaning you have 6 time blocks total ( $6 \times 12 \text{ hours} = 72 \text{ hours}$ ). For example, if you use 12 hours for your proposal, that means you have 60 hours left to use for your essay.

To use your time bank credit, you must inform us by using the assignment comment box on Quercus when you submit the assignment. Do not notify us by email.

You cannot use the time bank for tests.

*Late penalties:* Late assignments outside of the time bank limits and circumstances described above will be penalized 5% of the assignment marks per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted via Quercus.

You are expected to keep a back-up, digital copy of your assignment.

## Grade appeals

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the TA of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
  2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.
  3. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark beyond the course instructor. In order to meet this deadline, you must inquire about the mark with your instructor no longer than 15 days after receiving your mark. If you are not satisfied with the instructor's re-evaluation, you may appeal to the Associate Chair, if the term work is worth at least 20% of the course mark. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark.

### **If you wish to appeal:**

- A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.
- B. Attach to your written explanation your original assignment, including all of the original comments. Scan all documents and submit via email to your TA.

## Communication

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus or your utoronto account.
- All emails must include the course code (e.g., SOC 350) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 72 hours of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., "how much is assignment X worth") will not receive a response.

**Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

## Academic integrity

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

‘Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com 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. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service is described on the Turnitin.com web site.’

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %), unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence

In this course, you may use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot, as learning aids and to contribute to your understanding of course materials. However, any submitted work (term paper, CRPs, in-class activities, online contributions) needs to be your own. Students who choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools as they work through the essays in this course must document this work in an appendix. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. Any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately. Many organizations that publish standard citation formats are now providing information on citing generative AI (e.g., MLA: <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>).

Failure to disclose the use of generative AI in the submission of course work will be treated as an academic offense. While some generative AI tools are currently available for free in Canada, please be warned that these tools have not been vetted by the University of Toronto and might not meet University guidelines or requirements for privacy, intellectual property, security, accessibility, and records retention.

Generative AI may produce content which is incorrect or misleading, or inconsistent with the expectations of this course. These tools may even provide citations to sources that don’t exist—and submitting work with false citations is an academic offense. These tools may be subject to service interruptions, software modifications, and pricing changes during the semester.

## Attendance

Students are responsible for all material covered in class and in the assignment readings.

**Student resources**

**Accessibility.** If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

If required, the link for the Accommodated Testing Services (ATS):

<https://lsm.utoronto.ca/ats/>

## Weekly Schedule

Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

### 1. Jan 10: Introduction

- Sutton, John. (2001) "Law as a Profession," pp. 223-252 in *Law/Society: Origins, Interactions and Change* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
    - <http://knowledge.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/law-society/n8.xml>
  - Dinovitzer, Ronit and Meghan Dawe. (2020) "Lawyers in Canada." To appear in the volume *Lawyers in the 21st Century*. Edited by Richard Abel, Ole Hammerslev, Ulrike Schultz, and Hilary Sommerlad.
    - [http://individual.utoronto.ca/dinovitzer/Publications/Dinovitzer and Dawe Lawyers%20in%20the%2021st-Century%20Societies.pdf](http://individual.utoronto.ca/dinovitzer/Publications/Dinovitzer%20and%20Dawe%20in%20the%2021st-Century%20Societies.pdf)
  - **Important background reading:**
    - <http://individual.utoronto.ca/dinovitzer/images/LABReport.pdf>
- Discussion theme:** Introductions and goals

### 2. Jan 17: Legal Education

- Malcolm Gladwell. (2019). "Puzzle Rush" & "The Tortoise and the Hare"
  - <http://revisionisthistory.com/episodes/31-puzzle-rush>
  - <https://reason.com/2019/07/10/malcom-gladwell-took-the-lsat-but-what-did-we-learn/>
- Mertz, E. (2007). *The Language of Law School: Learning to 'Think Like a Lawyer'* *Researching Law*, Vol. 18, No. 4.
  - <https://www.americanbarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/rl-fall07.pdf>
- Daniel Markovits (2015) "A New Aristocracy" Yale Law School Commencement Address, May 2015
  - <https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/departments/studentaffairs/document/markovitscommencementrev.pdf>
  - Short media articles:
    - <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/news/heres-look-class-2021>
      - Before the JD: <https://www.aals.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BJDReportsHghlights.pdf>

**Discussion theme:** What is the purpose of education?

The admissions game – design your admissions system

(<https://lsutil.azurewebsites.net/>, <https://7sage.com/predictor/> )



### 3. Jan 24: The Structure of the Legal Profession: From Two Hemispheres to the Large Law Firm

- Dinovitzer, Ronit and Bryant G. Garth. 2020. "The new place of corporate law firms in the structuring of elite legal careers." *Law and Social Inquiry*.
  - [http://individual.utoronto.ca/dinovitzer/Publications/Dinovitzer\\_and\\_Garth\\_LSI\\_2019\\_Proofs.pdf](http://individual.utoronto.ca/dinovitzer/Publications/Dinovitzer_and_Garth_LSI_2019_Proofs.pdf)
- Henderson, William D. and Galanter, Marc, "The Elastic Tournament: The Second Transformation of the Big Law Firm" (2008). Articles by Maurer Faculty. 117.
  - <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/117>
- *Recommended*: Dinovitzer, Ronit, and Meghan Dawe. "Early legal careers in comparative context: evidence from Canada and the United States." *International Journal of the Legal Profession* 23, no. 1 (2016): 83-107.
- University of Toronto Fall Recruitment Special 2025
  - <https://ultravires.ca/2024/11/toronto-summer-2025-2l-recruit-numbers/>
  - <https://ultravires.ca/2024/11/factors-associated-with-hiring-in-the-toronto-summer-2025-2l-recruit/>

**Discussion Theme:** Who/how should law firms hire?

Exploring an audit study (e.g. Tilcsik and Rivera, and Moneyball for law firms:

<https://www.legalevolution.org/2021/08/moneyball-for-law-firms-associates-a-15-year-retrospective-257/> )

### 4. Jan 31: Working in Large Law Firms

- Regan M. C., Jr. & Rohrer, L. H. (2020). *BigLaw: money and meaning in the modern law firm*. The University of Chicago Press. Chapter 6.
  - <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks6/ucpbooks6/2020-12-07/1/9780226742274>
- Dinovitzer, R., & Garth, B. G. (2007). Lawyer satisfaction in the process of structuring legal careers. *Law & Society Review*, 41(1), 1-50.
  - <https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/4623364?sid=primo>
  - **Recommended**: Garth, B. G., & Sterling, Joyce. (2009). Exploring inequality in the corporate law firm apprenticeship: doing the time, finding the love. *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics*, 22(4), 1361-1394.
    - <https://login.library.utoronto.ca/index.php?url=https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/geojlege22&i=1369>

## 5. Feb 7: Working in Large Law Firms

- **\*\*Movie:** The Genuine Article (TBA)

## 6. Feb 14: Small Private Practice and Temporary Lawyers

- Nelson et al 2023. "Chapter 7: Rethinking the Solo Practitioner" in *The Making of Lawyer Careers*. University of Chicago Press.
  - <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks8/ucpbooks8/2023-08-08/1/9780226828916#page=176>
- Wallace, J. E., & Kay, F. M. (2008). The Professionalism of Practising Law: A Comparison across Work Contexts. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(8), 1021–1047.
  - <https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/20542514?sid=primo>
- **Discussion Theme:** Assignment Check in

## Feb 21 – Reading week, no class

**\*\*\*Assignment #1 due**

## 7. Feb 28: Cause Lawyers, Pro Bono and Public Interest Law

- Nelson et al. 2023. "Commitment, Careerism, and Stratification: Careers in Government, Nonprofits, and Public Interest Organizations" in *The Making of Lawyers' Careers*.
  - <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks8/ucpbooks8/2023-08-08/1/9780226828916#page=226>
- Bliss, John (2018). "From Idealists to Hired Guns? An Empirical Analysis of "Public Interest Drift" in Law School," 51 U.C. Davis Law Review 1973-2032.
  - [https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/51/5/Articles/51-5\\_Bliss.pdf](https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/51/5/Articles/51-5_Bliss.pdf)
- **Recommended:** Chien, Shih-Chun Steven, & Daniels, Stephen. (2021). Who wants to be prosecutor? and why care? law students' career aspirations and reform prosecutors' goals. *Howard Law Journal*, 65(2), 173-224.
  - <https://login.library.utoronto.ca/index.php?url=https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/howlj65&i=189>
- **Discussion theme:** Essay Check in and "identity mapping" exercise

## 8. March 7: Week Nine: Gender

- Kay, Fiona M. and Elizabeth Gorman. (2008). "Women in the Legal Profession." *Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences* 4: 299-332.

- <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/470178>
- Dinovitzer and Mogosanu. 2023. "Hegemonic Masculinity, Parenthood, and Gender Inequality" in *The Making of Lawyer Careers*.
  - <https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks8/ucpbooks8/2023-08-08/1/9780226828916#page=289>
- Recommended
  - Choroszewicz, Marta, and Fiona Kay. (2022). "Understanding gender inequality in the legal profession."
    - <https://erepo.uef.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/28507/16672121471697339236.pdf?sequence=-1>
  - Rivera, Lauren A., and András Tilcsik. "Class advantage, commitment penalty: The gendered effect of social class signals in an elite labor market." *American Sociological Review* 81, no. 6 (2016): 1097-1131.
    - <https://journals-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/full/10.1177/0003122416668154>
- **Discussion theme:** Implicit Bias IAT Exercise/Essay Check in

## 9. March 14: Class, Race & Ethnicity

### EMPIRICAL ASSIGNMENT DUE

- Garth, Bryant and Sterling, Joyce S., (2018). "Diversity, Hierarchy, and Fit in Legal Careers: Insights from Fifteen Years of Qualitative Interviews" *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics*
  - <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/geojlege31&i=128&a=dX Rvc m9udG8uZWR1>
- Kay, Fiona M. (2019). "Social Capital, Relational Inequality Theory and Earnings of Racial Minority Lawyers." *Research in the Sociology of Work* 32:63-90.
  - <https://www-emerald-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S0277-283320180000032007/full/pdf?title=social-capital-relational-inequality-theory-and-earnings-of-racial-minority-lawyers>
- Hadiya Roderique. (2017). "Black on Bay Street". *The Globe and Mail*.
  - <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/hadiya-roderique-black-on-bay-street/article36823806/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&>

### Recommended:

- Melaku, Tsedale M. (2019). You don't look like a lawyer: Black women and systemic gendered racism. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 2.
- [https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/13764/reading\\_race\\_look\\_like\\_a\\_lawyer\\_cle\\_materials.pdf](https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/13764/reading_race_look_like_a_lawyer_cle_materials.pdf)
- **Discussion theme:** Race/Class/Gender Inequalities

### 10. March 21: The practice of law

- Dinovitzer, Ronit, Hugh Gunz, and Sally Gunz. "The Changing Landscape of Corporate Legal Practice: An Empirical Study of Lawyers in Large Corporate Law Firms." *Can. B. Rev.* 93 (2015): 343.
  - <https://login.library.utoronto.ca/index.php?url=https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/canbarev93&i=343>
- Nelson, Robert L., and Laura Beth Nielsen. 2000. "Cops, Counsel, and Entrepreneurs: Constructing the Role of Inside Counsel in Large Corporations." *Law & Society Review* 34: 457-494.
  - <https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/3115090?sid=primo>
- Austin Sarat and William Felstiner "Law and Strategy in the Divorce Lawyer's Office" *Law & Society Review* Vol. 20, No. 1 (1986), pp. 93-134
  - <https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/3053414>
- **Discussion Theme:** Essay Check in/Drop in hours

### 11. March 28: Week Eleven: The Limits of Law and The Future of Lawyering

- **TBA**
- Armour, John and Sako, Mari, Lawtech: Levelling the Playing Field in Legal Services? (April 21, 2021). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3831481> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3831481>
- Gillian K. Hadfield; More Markets, More Justice. *Daedalus* 2019; 148 (1): 37–48. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/daed\\_a\\_00533](https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_00533)
- **Discussion Theme:** Final Essay Check in/Drop in hours/
- The future of lawyering <https://donotpay.com/> (AKA "The World's First Robot Lawyer.")

### 12. Apr 4: FINAL PAPERS DUE & Empirical Assignment Presentations

Presentations, discussion, Q&A