

**University of Toronto, Sociology  
SOC240H1-F Sociology of Law  
Professor Ronit Dinovitzer  
Summer 2025  
Tues/Thurs, 1:10 pm – 3:00 pm  
Location: Online Synchronous (Zoom)**

**Instructor Information**

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

**Teaching Assistant(s):**

Email:  
Office hours: TBA and by appointment via Zoom

**Course Description**

This course asks students to think critically about the role of law in society, and to develop a sociological understanding of law and legal institutions. The course will include theoretical approaches to understanding the role of law and legal authority, and the constitutive ways in which law affects, shapes, and is negotiated in everyday life. In addition, attention will be paid to the legal profession, including empirical research on lawyers, legal careers, and their relationship to fields of practice, with an emphasis on the relationship between the structure of the legal profession and law as a democratic institution.

**Goals and Learning Objectives**

The goal of this course is not to focus on specific laws or cases, but instead to study law as an institution that both influences and is influenced by social relations. A main objective of the course is to connect conceptual understandings of law with empirical research on law “in action.”

**Prerequisite**

The prerequisite to take this course is SOC100H1. Students without this requirement will be removed at any time discovered and without notice.

**Textbooks and Other Materials**

There is no textbook in this course. The course relies on a collection of readings compiled by the instructor and available on Quercus.

## Evaluation Components

<u>Description</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date(s) Due</u>	<u>Weight</u>
a. Essay 1	Approx. 4 pages, TBA	May 22	30%
c. Essay 2	Approx. 4 pages, TBA	June 5	30%
d. Class Test	Online test ( <b>during</b> class time)	June 12	25%
e. Engagement	10 Discussion posts	Weekly	10%
f. Annotated summary	1 submission	June 10	5%

### Essays (30% x 2= 60%)

Each essay assignment will ask you to apply course material to a current problem or issue. The essays will be based on class lectures and readings. You will receive further details during the term.

### Engagement (10%)

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. In order to encourage you to make these connections, you will have 10 opportunities to post a link to a current event that connects to the week's readings. In addition to posting the link, you need to write a short comment about how they are related to the class topic of the week (50-70 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 1:10 pm (Toronto time), the day of each class, starting with Class #2. The posts are meant to help you prepare for each upcoming lecture (so posting on Tuesday for Tuesday's lecture).

### Hand Annotated Summary (5%)

Use Co-Pilot ([m365.cloud.microsoft/chat](https://m365.cloud.microsoft/chat)), ChatGPT or another AI to create a 350-word summary of one of the readings from Class #6-Class #11 in our course. Instructions:

- Your prompt **must** include the instruction that the summary will include one direct quote.
- Print out the prompt you used, the 350-word summary, and the citation for the article. Your document should be double spaced, 1-inch margins.
- Annotate the summary *by hand* to indicate:
  - Assess the direct quote – is it correctly quoted? Is it the quote you would have picked?
  - Did it identify what YOU think was important in that reading? Identify the passages.
  - What did the AI miss or get wrong. If it is missing or wrong, add it in by hand.
  - Take a photo and upload the annotated summary to Quercus. The photo must clearly show your handwritten annotations.

### Test (25%)

The test is an online test written during class time. The test will cover material from Class #6-Class #11. You will need to be ready to provide examples from class readings and lectures to support a point you are making.

## Course Schedule

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

### 1) May 6: Introduction

- Sutton, John. 2001. Excerpt from Chapter 1, "An Introduction to the Sociology of Law." Pp. 8-13 in *Law/Society: Origins, Interactions, and Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge. (Read from the heading "Law from a Sociological Perspective" and stop at "Law as an Institution.") <http://knowledge.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/law-society/n1.xml>

### 2) May 8: Theories #1: Marx

- Joseph, J., & McCarthy, B. (2023). California Civil Asset Forfeiture and the Policing of Minority Residents. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 48(4), 1138–1156. <https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/journals/law-and-social-inquiry/article/california-civil-asset-forfeiture-and-the-policing-of-minority-residents/72ADEE46FA5F8C6B29CC135145207A33>
- Trevino, A.J. (2008). *The Sociology of Law: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.4324/9781315135069>  
**Read only** the section called "Principal Concepts in Marx's Sociology" (pages 96- top of 99) <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315135069-10/marxian-perspective?context=ubx&refId=36785121-b6fb-470f-9a4e-43406b803bfc>

### 3) May 13: Theories #2: Durkheim

- Excerpt, read **only** 122-127: David Garland. 1991. "Sociological Perspectives on Punishment" *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 14, (1991), pp. 115-127 <http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/1147460>
- Posner, Eric. 2015. "A Terrible Shame" *Slate Magazine*. [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/view\\_from\\_chicago/2015/04/internet\\_shaming\\_the\\_legal\\_history\\_of\\_shame\\_and\\_its\\_costs\\_and\\_benefits.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/view_from_chicago/2015/04/internet_shaming_the_legal_history_of_shame_and_its_costs_and_benefits.html)

### 4) May 15: Theories #3: Legal Consciousness

- Silbey, Susan and Patricia Ewick. 2000. "The Rule of Law – Sacred and Profane." *Society* 37(6):49-56. <http://link.springer.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/article/10.1007%2Fs12115-000-1023-0>
- Silbey, Susan and Ayn Cavicchi. 2005. "The Common Place of Law: Transforming Matters of Concern into the Objects of Everyday Life." Pp. 556-565 in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, edited by B. Latour and P. Weibel. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [http://web.mit.edu/ssilbey/www/pdf/making\\_things\\_public.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/ssilbey/www/pdf/making_things_public.pdf)

### 5) May 20: Theories #4: Feminism and the Law

- Elizabeth A. Sheehy 1999. "Legal responses to violence against women in Canada." *Canadian Woman Studies* 19:62-73. <http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/8081/7261>

## 6) May 22: Legal Education

**\*Essay 1 Due at the Beginning of Class\***

- Espeland, W., & Sauder, M. (2009). Rating the Rankings. *Contexts*, 8(2), 16-21. <https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1525/ctx.2009.8.2.16>
- Dinovitzer, Ronit and Meghan Dawe. 2020. "Continuity and Change in a Modern Legal Profession." Pp. 65-88 in Richard Abel and Ole Hammerslev (eds.) *Lawyers in 21st Century Societies: National Reports*. Hart Publishing.  
<https://www-bloomsburycollections-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/monograph-detail?docid=b-9781509915170&pdfid=9781509915170.ch-003.pdf&tocid=b-9781509915170-chapter3>

## 7) May 27: Legal Profession

- Dinovitzer R, Garth B. The New Place of Corporate Law Firms in the Structuring of Elite Legal Careers. *Law & Social Inquiry*. 2020;45(2):339-371.  
<https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/journals/law-and-social-inquiry/article/new-place-of-corporate-law-firms-in-the-structuring-of-elite-legal-careers/B76954D485F48563E6CCFFC453228906>
- Dobby, Christine. 2020. "Why are there still so few Black lawyers on Bay Street?" *Globe & Mail* July 17, 2020.  
[https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO\\_INST/9q2131/BM\\_eNrjZDAPz6hUSCxCxKVSjJSAWSxSWZOTkKxflKaaniCk45icnZCjmJ5ZWpRcUK-XkKTomVCsElRampJfY8DKxpiTnFqbxQmptBw801xNlDt6Aov7A0tbgkPjezODk1jycxLzW\\_tDjeYMTY0MLI0sTYyJgEpQBfdTOR](https://librarysearch.library.utoronto.ca/permalink/01UTORONTO_INST/9q2131/BM_eNrjZDAPz6hUSCxCxKVSjJSAWSxSWZOTkKxflKaaniCk45icnZCjmJ5ZWpRcUK-XkKTomVCsElRampJfY8DKxpiTnFqbxQmptBw801xNlDt6Aov7A0tbgkPjezODk1jycxLzW_tDjeYMTY0MLI0sTYyJgEpQBfdTOR)

## 8) May 29: Police

Peter J. Carrington and Jennifer L. Schulenberg. 2008. "Structuring Police Discretion: The Effect on Referrals to Youth Court." *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 19: 349.  
<https://journals-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/0887403407307240>

Harcourt, B. E. (2002, Apr 01). Policing disorder: "Can we reduce serious crime by punishing petty offenses?". *Boston Review*, 27, 16. Retrieved from  
<http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fmagazines%2Fpolicing-disorder-can-we-reduce-serious-crime%2Fdocview%2F1347838895%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14771>

Doolittle, R. (2017, Feb 04). "Unfounded" The Globe and Mail

- <http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspapers%2Funfounded%2Fdocview%2F1864909321%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14771>
- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/investigations/unfounded-sexual-assault-canada-main/article33891309/>

### 9) June 3: Court Actors

- Blumberg, Abraham. 1967. The Practice of Law as Confidence Game: Organizational Cooptation of a Profession." *Law & Society Review* 1:15-40.  
<http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/3052933>
- Frohmann, Lisa. 1991. "Discrediting Victims' Allegations of Sexual Assault: Prosecutorial Accounts of Case Rejections." *Social Problems* 38:213-226.  
<http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/800530>

### 10) June 5: Law, Recognition, and Inequality

*\*Essay 2 Due at the Beginning of Class\**

- Levi, Ron and Todd Foglesong. 2020. "How to research policing? Talk to people who have been arrested. 4 insights from 150 arrested individuals on the role and reform of the police."  
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/09/28/how-to-research-policing-talk-to-people-who-have-been-arrested-4-insights-from-150-arrested-individuals-on-role-and-reform-of-the-police/>
- Europe's Roma Already Faced Discrimination. The Pandemic Made It Worse. <https://www-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/2421245638?accountid=14771&parentSessionId=Px2zlszMEWM%2FtWj735PQuM%2FYISybeW1QRcxuq9bkpiE%3D&pq-origsite=primo>

### 11) June 10: Law & the economy

- Talesh SA. The Privatization of Public Legal Rights: How Manufacturers Construct the Meaning of Consumer Law. *Law & Society Review*. 2009;43(3):527-562.  
<https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/40538715?sid=primo>
- Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner. 2009. Why do drug dealers still live with their moms? Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything. *Linked on Quercus*

### 12) June 12: No class, take home test *during* class time

## Course Rules and Procedures

### 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 (can only be used once during the semester)
- 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) 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.

## Turnitin

'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/>