

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

LAW DIVISION

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LAWYERS IN FILM

LAW/ART 279

(6 Credits)

FALL 2018

Class Meeting Times:

M / W: 3:35 PM (15:35)

Instructor:

Steven C. Kessell, J.D.

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Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

“Lawyers in Film” is a six (6) credit seminar course that will look at the social, legal practice and ethical issues that arise in the portrayal of lawyers, judges, juries and other actors in the American legal system in American movies and television. After an initial review of the basic rules of law governing the conduct of lawyers, students will examine the portrayal of these actors in selected movies and/or television programs. While the focus will be on law, legal practice and legal ethics, the course will also address other questions about how law, lawyers, judges and these other actors are portrayed in American film and television, and what that portrayal says about the relationship between popular culture and the law.

LAW PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the Law Program should have the following competencies:

1. The ability to carry out professional activities in good faith on the basis of developed legal consciousness, legal thinking, and legal culture and with observation of ethical principles of the legal profession.
2. The ability to apply professional judgment and perform quality legal analysis, conduct legal research and solve legal problems.

3. The ability to speak and write in an argumentative, logical, and clear way in the legal context, have skills necessary to draft legal documents, be fluent in the English language at the level of professional communication.
4. The ability to draft normative legal acts and carry out their legal expertise in the field of professional activity.
5. The ability to interpret and apply substantive and procedural norms, provide qualified legal opinions and consultations in concrete types of legal activity.
6. The ability to demonstrate leadership qualities, active citizenship, take and develop initiatives aimed at promotion of civil society and welfare state.
7. The ability to understand the essence and significance of information in the development of modern society and law, and to master the basic methods of working with information and information technologies in the professional sphere.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

Course Learning Outcome	Law Program Learning Outcomes
Develop an understanding of the roles played by the many actors who contribute to the ongoing dialogue that creates and shapes the law.	7
Develop an understanding of how our perceptions of these roles are shaped and influenced by the manner in which they are portrayed in visual media such as motion pictures and television.	7
Demonstrate ethical knowledge as it pertains to legal issues viewed in film and television presentations.	1
Gain proficiency in film analysis, studying elements of plot, characterization and cinematography.	7
Develop an understanding of basic principles of legal theory.	2, 3, 5
Develop an ability to express (verbally and in written work) these understandings by using examples from films and other examples analyzed using the language and techniques of basic film criticism.	2, 3, 5

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

1. Class will meet twice a week.

Students are expected to be on time for every class. Any student arriving more than 15 minutes late to any class will be marked as “absent” for that class period.

2. Class attendance is required.

Any student accruing more than **three (3) unexcused class absences** or **more than six (6) total absences (excused or unexcused)** during the semester will receive a deduction of 0.5 points from their final grade score for each class missed in excess of the maximum number of permitted absences. Missing more than 50% of all scheduled classes (excused or unexcused) will result in a final grade of “F” for the course.

3. Students will come to each class prepared and ready to discuss the assigned materials.

Class participation are very important to your comprehension of the course material, as well as to your grade. Because this is a seminar course, class participation is important. My expectation is that any student enrolled in the course will be sufficiently interested in the material to be consistently motivated to prepare for and participate in class discussions.

Class participation includes participation in class that shows the student’s preparation for class through either the use of and/or reference to the course materials that the student was assigned to read or prepare.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of participation – good and unsatisfactory.

“Good participation” means coming to class on a regular basis and arriving on time; doing the assigned reading carefully; being ready to answer questions if I call on you; and occasionally volunteering questions or comments. To be a good participant, you do not always need to have the “right” answer, but you do need to give in-class problem-solving your best shot and to demonstrate that you’ve read and thought about the assignment. It is the quality, not the quantity of your participation that counts!

“Unsatisfactory participation” means being unprepared when called on; routinely coming to class late; carrying on conversations or surfing the Web when others (including myself) are speaking; and/or missing more than the allowed number of classes (See No. 2 above).

4. Written assignments must be submitted by the set deadline and by the means specified.

Late submissions are **NOT** allowed. This rule applies to any student who was aware or should have been aware of an assignment and the deadline no matter whether he was sick or had any other excuse on the date of the deadline. **No exceptions!!**

5. The use of cell phones (talking, texting, etc.) and / or any other electronic devices during class for any purpose not related to the furtherance of the class objectives is strictly prohibited.

Students violating this policy will be given one (1) warning. Each subsequent violation of this policy will result in one (1) point being taken off your final grade score.

6. Students are expected to follow the AUCA ACADEMIC HONESTY code.

All types of plagiarism are strictly prohibited. If a student fails to observe this requirement, I may assign an “F” for the work or an “F” for the whole course, depending on the type of assignment and relevant circumstances.

Students are expected to read and follow the section on the Student Academic Dishonesty of the AUCA Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct.

7. This syllabus is subject to change.

Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and the updated version of the syllabus placed on “e-course”. It is each student’s responsibility to stay informed of any changes made.

8. Students must self-enroll for this class on “e-course”.

The E-Course enrollment key for this class is “**lawyers2018**”.

GRADING

GRADING POLICY

“Lawyers in Film” is a seminar course.

The final course grade will be determined based on the following components:

Class Participation	30%
Written Assignments	50%
<u>Final Reflection Paper</u>	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

There will be no other quizzes or exams, including a final exam.

There will be no “make-up” or “extra credit” work or assignments.

This is **NOT** a movie-watching course.

While we may watch parts of each assigned movie during class, you will need to set aside sufficient time in your schedule to watch the assigned movies. You should expect to watch, and

take notes about each film at least twice. All assigned films should be available for viewing on such commercial service sites such as “YouTube”, VUDU, etc.

I have created a gmail account for use in connection with this course. I will upload the first 3 or 4 assigned movies to Google Drive and regularly update it throughout the semester. The gmail account is “**lawyersinfilm@gmail**”, the password is “**law00279**”.

Alternately, you may provide me with a flash drive or other similar storage medium onto which the films may be copied. Each film requires an average of 1 GB available storage space to be copied. **Any copies provided are for educational purposes only and are not intended for any other use outside the course.**

For each assigned film, you will be required to complete and turn in a short (1 – 2 pages) “film review/reflection” paper. The paper must be completed and handed in before the day’s class in which the film will be discussed. Your responses to these questions will be used to guide class discussions. **The completion and timely submission of these review/reflection papers will comprise fifty percent (50%) of your final grade for the course.** NOTE: If it appears that students are not turning in completed assignments, or are turning in half-heartedly written papers, I reserve the right to switch to in-class quizzes.

The course readings may also require more preparation time than you might initially expect. Again, please allow sufficient time in your schedule to complete and digest the readings.

All movies and required reading assignments are to be viewed and read **before** the class in which they will be discussed.

Because this is a seminar course, class participation is important. My expectation is that any student enrolled in this course will be sufficiently interested in the material and consistently motivated to prepare for and participate in class discussions.

GRADING SCALE

A	94-100%	C	68-73.9%
A-	90-93.9%	C-	64-67.9%
B+	86-89.9%	D+	60-63.9%
B	80-85.9%	D	54-59.9%
B-	77-79.9%	D-	50-53.9%
C+	74-76.9%	F	Below 50%

COURSE READING MATERIALS

Required Texts:

American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct

Regulation on the Commission on Ethics of the Bar of the Kyrgyz Republic
(Russian)

Class Handouts / Readings as noted on the Syllabus and / or posted to “E-Course” (<https://e-course.auca.kg>)

Recommended Supplemental Texts:

Law and Pop Culture - A Course Book (2d.), Michael Asimow & Shannon Mader (2013)

Reel Justice: The Courtroom Goes to the Movies, Paul Bergman & Michael Asimov (2006)

Film and the Law (2d.), Steve Greenfield, Guy Osborn & Peter Robson (2010)

UNDERSTANDING THE COURSE SYLLABUS

Below is an outline of the course content. Each class session identifies the general topic to be discussed during that meeting, as well as the required readings and homework that relate to that topic.

Required readings and homework, if any, are to be completed **before** the beginning of each class meeting (not after!). Each session’s lecture and discussion will be based on these materials. In order to understand the day’s topic and be better prepared for discussion of the same, you will need to have read the assigned materials and completed the homework assignments.

This is **YOUR** class. What you learn and take from it will depend as much, if not more, on what you put into it than on what the instructor provides!

COURSE CONTENT

WEEK #	CLASS DATE	TOPIC
PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO LAW AND POPULAR CULTURE		
INTRODUCTION TO “LAWYERS IN FILM”		
1	9/5	- Introduction to Course and Organizational Matters Film Short: <i>The Boy Who Knew Too Much</i> (1987) - Assignment: Enroll in E-Course: - Enrollment Key: lawyers2018 Read: - Storytelling and Film: Fairy Tales, Myth and Happy Endings

		- Let's Ditch the Dangerous Idea that Life is a Story
2	9/10	- Film and Storytelling Film: <i>The Princess Bride</i> (1987) - Assignment: Watch: Finish watching <i>The Princess Bride</i>
	9/12	- Introduction to Narrative Theory - Classic Narrative Theory - Realistic Narrative Theory - Fragmented Narrative Theory - Assignment: Read: - Film Narrative - Classical Narrative Structure - Exposition, Climax, Resolution - Terms Used by Narratology and Film Theory
3	9/17	- Narrative Theory (con't) - Examples of Narrative Films: - Classic Narrative Theory: <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> (1981) - Realistic Narrative Theory: <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> (1998) - Fragmented Narrative Theory: <i>Mulholland Drive</i> (2001) Film: <i>The Devil's Advocate</i> (1997) - Assignment: Watch: Finish watching <i>The Devil's Advocate</i> Complete: Film Review/Reflection Assignment 1 (Due 25 Sep) Read: - How to Read a Film - Borders and Boundaries - Locating the Law in Film - Obstacles to Reading Lawyer Film
	9/19	- Reading Films as Text - Assignment: Read: - A Study of Portrayals of Lawyers, Judges, and Court Room

	10/10	- The Adversarial System and the Courtroom Drama (con't) - Assignment: Watch: Finish watching <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> Complete: Film Review/Reflection Assignment 4 (Due 15 Oct)
7	10/15	- Lawyers as Heroes Film: <i>Bridge of Spies</i> (2015) - Assignment: Read: - The Death of an Honorable Profession - Hero or Villain? Cinematic Lawyers and the Delivery of Justice
	10/17	- Lawyers as Heroes (con't) - Assignment: Watch: Finish watching <i>Bridge of Spies</i> Complete: Film Review/Reflection Assignment 4 (Due 22 Oct)
8	10/22	- Lawyers as Villians Film: <i>The Verdict</i> (1982) - Assignment: Read: - Bad Lawyers in the Movies - Dressed for Excess: How Hollywood Affects the Professional Behavior
	10/24	- Lawyers as Villians (con't) - Assignment: Watch: Finish watching <i>The Verdict</i> Complete: Film Review/Reflection Assignment 5 (Due 30 Oct)
9	10/30	- Lawyers as Idealists Film: <i>The Lincoln Lawyer</i> (2011) - Assignment:

	11/1	- Lawyers as Idealists (con't) http://www.humanmetrics.com/personality http://www.personalitypage.com/high-level
10	11/5 11/7	- No Class (Fall Break) - No Class (Fall Break)
11	11/12 11/14	TBD
12	11/19 11/21	TBD
13	11/26 11/28	TBD
14	12/3 12/5	TBD
15	12/10 12/11	TBD