Intro to Legal Studies

Paper One Comments
Common Problems

- Thesis-related issues
- Clarity/Use of Language
- Grammar
- Broad Statements
- Moral Arguments
- Weak Analysis
Thesis Matters

These problems impact the entire paper

• No thesis
• Thesis unrelated to the evidence
• Overly broad or general thesis
Clarity/Language

• Lack of concision
• Misuse of words
  • Particularly the misuse of “implicate”
• Use of $20 words when a $5 word will do
Grammar

• Links up to issues of clarity
• Rules of grammar are there to help us communicate with one another more clearly
• Overly complicated sentences, with too many words make it difficult of impossible for reader to understand your point
• Broad statements are hard to support and easily undermined by counterargument

• i.e. “No one follows the law because of fear of punishment.” “Americans believe...”
Moral Arguments

- Papers sometimes made normative moral arguments about the way the world should work.
- We asked you to use the readings to make an empirical argument about the way things are, according to scholars who have thought about or studied the topic.
- Don’t tell us about the morality of law, rather tell us about the role of morality in the construction of or obedience to law.
Lack of Analysis

• A common and recurring issue
• We don’t want you to simply parrot back the readings, but to make an argument and analyze the readings in order to support your thesis.
Want to discuss further?

- Note that Paper Two is worth 35% of your grade
- Read over your paper and any comments
- Look at the grade sheet and see where your paper showed strengths and weaknesses
- Read over model papers posted on course website
- After 24 hours, please go to TA office hours or send an email to your TA to make an appointment to see her
- If, after meeting with TA, you wish to contest your grade, please see Professor Hilbink
- Note: Professor Hilbink will regrade your paper from scratch, meaning your paper grade could go up or down.
Grade Distribution
Median Grade = 12
Grade Curve

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