

Introduction to Legal Studies

Spring 2007

Paper Topic One

Papers are due at the start of class on Tuesday, March 6th

In this first of the unit of the course we have been exploring the ways in which power – defined as “the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events; authority or control”¹ – influences the meaning, understanding of and obedience to law. For this paper, please develop a thesis that responds to **ONE of the two** following questions, using the readings for this section of the course as the basis of support for your thesis:

1) How does power contribute to the construction of law, both on the books and in action?

OR

2) How is power implicated in people’s decisions to obey or disobey the law?

In support of your thesis, your paper must make use of at least four readings (a minimum, not a maximum). Your paper will receive a good grade if, and only if, you demonstrate that you can make an argument that is backed up by the readings for this class. Writing a baseless opinion piece will not be considered satisfactory.

Find ways to bring in the variety of ways power is implicated in the questions. A great paper will discuss multiple concepts and multiple readings yet demonstrate an understanding of the connection between those readings.

Rules & Expectations

- Papers must be three to four pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point type, with one-inch margins on all sides and *stapled*.
- You must underline your thesis on the paper you turn in.
- Assignment must be turned in on paper and in class rather than by email or other electronic means. Any exception to this rule requires prior permission from Professor Hilbink regarding means and format of submission. Any paper turned in electronically will not be considered submitted until Professor Hilbink can open and print it.
- All materials used to support your arguments must be cited (whether quoted or paraphrased), using a consistent method of citation as set out in one of the major citation manuals (MLA, Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style, APA

¹ Source: *Oxford American Dictionary* online

Guide). **You must indicate which citation style you've used on the last page of your paper.**

- Failure to cite to sources (whether quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise) constitutes plagiarism and will be treated as such. See the syllabus for a statement of the plagiarism policy. The University policy may be found at: http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm
- Only materials assigned as part of the course may be used in writing your papers. Any paper using outside materials will be docked ten points. Your world, for this paper, is the world of our course and the materials used therein.
- I highly encourage you to come see me or your T.A. to discuss your paper at every stage of the process (outlining, drafting, finalizing). The sooner you begin the paper writing process the better off you will be. This requires your initiative.
- If you are concerned about the basics of writing you should seek help from the staff of the writing center (located in the Learning Commons). They are there to assist you and can offer a great deal of advice that will benefit you in this course and beyond. Check out their website at: <http://writingprogram.hfa.umass.edu/writingcenter/writingcenter.asp>
- Extensions will be granted only in cases of documented hospitalization or family illness or other documented emergency. If your car breaks down, get a receipt from the tow truck or garage.
- Late papers will be considered late as soon as class begins on March 6th. Any paper turned in after that moment will be graded down three points and will lose another three points for every 24 hours they are late after that.

Grading Scheme

| | Poor | Fair | Good | Great |
|--|------|------|------|-------|
| Do you clearly state a thesis that is responsive to the question in the paper prompt? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Does your introductory paragraph provide the reader with a clear understanding of your thesis and the main points you will present to support your thesis? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Does your essay stay on point, making use of topic sentences to connect your specific arguments back to the thesis? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Do you demonstrate a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the course readings and class discussions? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Do you use specific examples from the course materials to support your thesis and supporting points? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Do you analyze the evidence you present, explaining to the reader how such evidence pertains to your thesis? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Is your essay clearly written and easy to follow? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Does your essay conform to rules of grammar, punctuation, and syntax? (0-2 errors=Great; 3-4=Good; 5-6=Fair; 7+=Poor) | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Does your essay contain any spelling errors? (0-1=Great; 2=Good; 3=Fair; 4+=Poor) | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Do you properly introduce and cite materials used in your essay? | .5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 |
| Total Points | /20 | | | |

Deductions:

- Paper is late by ___ days (-2 points per day) _____
- Paper is not stapled, double-spaced, 12-point font (-1 point per) _____
- Thesis statement is not underlined (-1 point) _____
- Citation style is not indicated on the last page of paper (-1 point) _____
- Paper is over four page limit (-2 points per page) _____

Final Points

Final Grade
