

Introduction to Legal Studies

Spring 2007

Discussion Questions for Tuesday, April 3rd

The Concept of Legal Pluralism

In the following two lectures we are going to explore the concept of legal pluralism from an historical perspective, and then discuss how it plays out in contemporary legal processes both within the United States and elsewhere.

1. Drawing on the article by Merry, describe “colonial law” and the relationship between the law of the colonizers and the law of indigenous peoples.
2. According to the article by Merry, what does she mean by “postcolonial law”?
3. What are the major differences and similarities between colonial and postcolonial law?
4. In the book *Sidewalk*, the author Mitchell Dunier talks about competing legalities. What does he mean by competing legalities?
5. Do we have legal pluralism in the United States? Or, to put it another way, describe further examples of competing legalities in your life.