

Introduction to Legal Studies

Spring 2007

Paper Topic Two

Papers are due at the start of class on Tuesday, March 10th

In this second unit of the course we have been exploring the ways in which legal concepts and structures – rights, trial process, the jury system – operate or are intended to operate. For this paper, please develop a thesis that responds to the following question, using the readings for this section of the course as the basis of support for your thesis:

The legal system is intended to serve as a mechanism for protecting people from the power of the government. Rights, trial procedure, and the jury system all claim to serve as a mechanism for protecting people from the power of government. Do they? How so and/or how not?

In support of your thesis, your paper must make use of at least **five** readings from the **second** unit of the course (a minimum, not a maximum).¹ 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.

Note: Should you wish to reference or quote the movie *12 Angry Men*, you should download and cite to the stage play from the course website:
(<http://www.umass.edu/legal/Hilbink/250/Papers.htm>)

Rules & Expectations

- Papers must be four to five 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

¹ You may use materials from the first unit of the course, but they may not substitute for readings from unit two for grading purposes. The goal of this paper is to see your analytical abilities in relationship to the materials from unit two.

major citation manuals (MLA, Turabian, Chicago Manual of Style, APA 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 10th. 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?	1	2	3	4
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?	1	2	3	4
Does your essay stay on point, making use of topic sentences to connect your specific arguments back to the thesis?	1	2	3	4
Do you demonstrate a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the course readings and class discussions?	1	2	3	4
Do you use specific examples from the course materials to support your thesis and supporting points?	1	2	3	4
Do you analyze the evidence you present, explaining to the reader how such evidence pertains to your thesis?	1	2	3	4
Is your essay clearly written and easy to follow?	1	2	3	4
Does your essay conform to rules of grammar, punctuation, and syntax? (0-2 errors=Great; 3-4=Good; 5-6=Fair; 7+=Poor)	1	2	3	4
Does your essay contain any spelling errors? (0-1=Great; 2=Good; 3=Fair; 4+=Poor)	1	2	3	4
Do you properly introduce and cite materials used in your essay?	1	2	3	4
Total Points	/40			

Deductions:

- Paper is late by ___ days (-3 points per day) _____
- Paper is not stapled, double-spaced, 12-point font (-2 points per) _____
- Thesis statement is not underlined (-2 points) _____
- Citation style is not indicated on the last page of paper (-2 points) _____
- Paper is over five page limit (-2 points per page) _____

Final Points

Final Grade
