

Law, Politics & Social Change in 20th Century America
Professor Thomas Hilbink
Fall 2006

Final Paper

Due Monday, December 18th at 12:00 p.m. (noon) to 110 Gordon Hall

In this course we have looked at the ways in which people have made use of *both law and lawlessness* to achieve political and social goals in America after 1945. Considering the totality of the materials assigned for this course, please make an argument *backed with specific evidence from the readings* in response to the following question:

Which has made more of an impact on American society and politics in the years since 1945: law or lawlessness?

Be sure to think in both broad and nuanced ways about the concepts of law and lawlessness, being careful to recognize differences within the categories themselves (i.e. possible differences between non-violent civil disobedience and violent mob action). Also, remember that law cannot act on its own. It requires human actors who use it to achieve their goals.

While you may use readings and examples from the first half of the course (Little Rock and before), you *must* demonstrate a comprehension of the materials discussed *after* Little Rock. The strongest papers will be those that use at least three different topics from the course (i.e. the War on Poverty; Civil Rights Movement; Criminal Culture).

Guidelines

- The paper should be five to seven typed pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point font, one inch margins) and stapled. Page totals do *not* include your works cited page or citation footnotes.
- All materials used to support your arguments must be correctly cited. Citations must conform to those set out in one of the major citation formats (i.e. Chicago, Turabian, APA, MLA). I don't care which one *so long as you are consistent*.
- Only materials assigned as part of the course may be used in writing your papers. You are not allowed, expected, or rewarded for using outside information or materials. Your world, for this paper, is the world of our course and the materials used therein.
- Extensions will granted only in cases of *documented* hospitalization or family illness. Papers turned in after the deadline will be graded down two points for every 24-hour period after the deadline. Papers turned in at 12:01 on the 16th

will lose two points, after 12 noon on the 17th they will lose another two points, etc.

What we're looking for

A good paper will make a clearly stated argument and will be well organized. It will use the readings to support the thesis. An excellent paper is one that demonstrates a close and complex reading of the course materials and lectures and relates them to the issues and concerns discussed in the class thus far. There is not one "correct" interpretation of the documents (just as there is no one "correct" interpretation of any historical event). Thus your ability to make your point and support it with scholarly evidence should be the focus of your efforts.

	Strong	Fair	Weak
Have you outlined the paper? (attach copy of outline)	3	2	1
Does thesis respond to the question posed?	3	2	1
Is the thesis clearly stated?	3	2	1
Have you used topic sentences and clear transitions that connect each paragraph to the thesis and guide the reader through the paper?	3	2	1
Does the paper demonstrate a clear understanding and discussion of the concepts of law discussed within the course?	3	2	1
In supporting your thesis, does your paper thoroughly address at least three different subjects covered in the course?	4	2	1
Do you engage in analysis of the materials you present so as to advance your thesis?	3	2	1
Do you use specific examples and evidence from the course materials - properly cited - that support your thesis?	3	2	1
Do you avoid generalizations in your discussion?	3	2	1
Does your essay contain one or more spelling errors or misused words? (0-1=strong; 2-3=fair; 4+=weak)	3	2	1
Does your essay conform to basic rules of grammar and punctuation? Are there more than two grammar errors? (0-2=strong; 3-4=fair; 4+=weak)	3	2	1
Do you properly format case names, place names, and individual names?	3	2	1
Are quotations properly introduced and cited?	3	2	1
Subtotal	/40		
Bonus: Worked with a counselor at the writing center (documentation required)	2		
Bonus: Came to office hours before 5 p.m. on 12/15 to discuss draft of paper	2		
Penalty: Paper is not stapled	-1		
Penalty: Paper is late (-2 points per 24 hour period after due date)			
Penalty: Paper is over the page limit (-2 points per page beyond seven pages)			
Grand Total	/40		