REEL JUSTICE:
LAW, JUSTICE AND LAWYERS IN AMERICAN FILMS SINCE THE 40’S

Course description and requirements: This colloquium explores how American filmmakers have treated the issues of law, justice and lawyers in the period from the 1940’s the present. The class will view one film per week, digest articles about the film, and engage in class discussions. Each student will be responsible for leading one class discussion during the quarter. That presentation will account for 20% of the total grade. The articles are on electronic reserves in Geisel and may be downloaded.

Each student will submit an essay (12-15 pages) drawn from a list of topics outlined in this syllabus. The essay is due in the ninth week and will be worth 80% of the total grade. There will not be a final examination.

WEEK I: No Film
Readings: Machura, Law and Film: An Introduction
Friedman, Popular Legal Culture
Chase, Lawyers & Popular Culture

WEEK II:
Film: The Ox Bow Incident
Readings: Bluestone, The Ox Bow Incident
Crain, The Ox Bow Incident Revisited
Felix, Law and Film: The Ox Bow Incident

WEEK III:
Film 12 Angry Men
Readings: Asimow, 12 Angry Men: A Revisionist View
Landsman, Mad About 12 Angry Men
Abramson, Anger at Angry Jurors
WEEK IV:
Film: Anatomy of a Murder
Readings:
- Hoff, Law and Film: Anatomy of a Murder
- Sullivan, When Client and Lawyer Meet in Movies
- Rosenberg, Hollywood on Trials
- Corcos, Justice in Modern Courtroom Drama

WEEK V:
Film: To Kill a Mockingbird
Readings:
- Dare, Lawyers, Ethics and To Kill a Mockingbird
- Freedman, Atticus Finch—Right and Wrong
- Osborn, Jr., Atticus Finch: The End of Honor

WEEK VI:
Film: And Justice for All
Readings:
- Greenfield, Cinematic Lawyers and Justice
- Silby, Patterns of Courtroom Justice

WEEK VII:
Film: Cape Fear I (1961)
Readings:
- Berets, Changing Images of Justice
- Thain, Cape Fear: Two Versions and Two Visions

WEEK VIII:
Film: Cape Fear II (1991)
Readings:
Thain, Cape Fear: Two Versions and Two Visions

WEEK IX:
Film: The Accused
Readings:
- Papke, Women Lawyers in Film
- Shapiro, Women Lawyers in Celluloid
- Caplow, Still in the Dark: Images of Women Lawyers

WEEK X:
Film: The Sweet Hereafter
Readings:
- Sarat, Exploring the Hidden Domains of Civil Justice
- Olchowy, The Sweet Hereafter: Legal Storytelling
- McAdams, Blame and the Sweet Hereafter

ESSAY TOPICS

You may select one of the topics outlined below or select one of your own in consultation with me. Whichever you choose, the essay must be typed, double-spaced and employ appropriate footnotes that identify quotations or sources. Utilizing someone else’s ideas,
quotations or conclusions without attribution is plagiarism, a serious offense that can mean a failing grade. The essay should be between 12-15 pages in length.

Your essay will be judged on both the quality of the ideas and arguments presented and their expression in clear, expository prose. This means you must observe the conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammar, diction, and syntax. If you are uncertain about these issues, read Patricia O’Connor, *Woe Is I*, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, or Shrunk & White, *The Elements of Style*.

1. Capital Punishment: The following films should be considered: I Want to Live (1958); The Hoodlum Priest (1961); Dead Man Walking (1995); Monster’s Ball (2001); The Life of David Gale (2003).


3. Lawyers: In addition to the films viewed in the class, consider the following: The Verdict (1982); True Believer (1989), A Civil Action (1998).

4. Law firms: Consider the following: The Lady from Shanghai (1947); The Firm (1993); Devil’s Advocate (1997); Michael Clayton (2007).

5. Women: Consider the following: Adam’s Rib (1949); Suspect (1987); Class Action (1991); Erin Brockovich (2000).

6. Comedies: Consider the following: Disorder in the Court (Three Stooges 1936); At the Circus (Marx Brothers, 1939); My Cousin Vinney (1992); Intolerable Cruelty (2003).