

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Department of History
HIUS169/269: Reel Justice
Spring Quarter 2010
HSS 6008, F 1-4

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**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 to 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 Shrunken & 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).
2. Military Justice: The following films should be considered: *The Caine Mutiny* (1954); *The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955); *Paths of Glory* (1957); *The Execution of Private Slovik* (1974); *A Few Good Men* (1992).
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 Vinny* (1992); *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003).