Nebraska Wesleyan University

SOC 3130 Law and Society

Catalog

2025-2026

Course Description

This course offers an integrated overview of the complex interplay of the shifting realms of law and society. We depart from an analysis of the law as a set of social institutions, a construction of particular historical, cultural, economic and political conditions. We then interrogate the ways that social structures, including race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality, as well capitalism, modernity and patriarchy influence the construction of law and legal doctrines. In turn, we explore how the resulting definitions of normativity and deviance, social control and liberty, as well as rights and freedoms serve to feed difference, inequality and injustice in society. But while law is often viewed as the realm of status quo and oppression, it is also often mobilized by laypersons, social movements, cause lawyers and public litigants to affect social change. Therefore, in this course, we investigate the complex relationship between law, social control and social change, delving into some of the most transformative moments of American law, and society, simultaneously.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing.

Course Hours

4 hours

Departments

1. Sociology