

POL338.01W
VICTIMS' RIGHTS POLITICS AND POLICIES
3 credit hours Thursday 6:00-9:00pm The University Center
Dr. Mitzi Mahoney

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 8:00-11:00am, Huntsville campus
Thursday 5:00-6:00pm The University Center, The Woodlands
By appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores the dynamics of victims' rights politics and policy making. The first section of the course examines the politicization of victims' concerns and the emergence of the victims' rights social movement. The second section of the course focuses on victims' rights policies: services and compensation, legal rights, and restorative justice for victims. We will explore the policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation stages of the policy process. The third section of the course compares victims' rights politics and policies from a comparative perspective, exploring how policies differ across communities, states, and nations.

COURSE OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The objectives for students include:

- Building a knowledge base regarding victims' rights
- Learning fundamental principles, theories, approaches in victims' rights field
- Learning how to analyze and evaluate arguments
- Developing skills useful for professionals in the victims' rights organizations

COURSE READINGS:

There are no textbooks to purchase for this class. All readings will be available through the Newton Gresham Library's Electronic Reserves or online, either posted on Blackboard or available through the Internet. I will have you download publications available on various government websites, including the websites of the U.S. Department of Justice, the State of Texas Attorney General's Office, the United Nations, Harris County, Texas, and others. We will also use material from scholarly journals, organizations' websites, and newspapers and periodicals. You will also be asked to complete portions of a Victims Assistance Online Training program.

If you would like a hard copy of NEW DIRECTIONS FROM THE FIELD, you may order one from the U.S. Department of Justice. It is free but shipping is \$5. Go to the link below to order one.

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/app/shoppingcart/ShopCart.aspx?item=DD1795580H&repro=0>

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

EXAMS: Two exams will be given – a midterm and a final. The exams are in class essay exams.

PROJECTS:

Details regarding each of the assignments including due dates, style manual, plagiarism, research tools, and sources will be posted on Blackboard. This information, though posted elsewhere, is considered part of the syllabus.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Exam I	25%
Exam II	25%
Project I	25%
Project II	25%

An average of 90-100 constitutes an A, 80-89 s a B, 70-79, a C, 60-69 a D, and any grade below 60 an F. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Make Up Exams: Make up exams will be given to students who miss an exam because of illness, a death in the family, or an official university activity. You must notify me immediately if you miss an exam. Make up exams will be given at the convenience of the faculty member.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, to be punctual, to be prepared, and to not be disruptive. There are neither rewards nor penalties levied on grades for student attendance.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.**

University policies regarding The Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, Instructor Evaluation, and the Classroom Rules of Conduct will be observed. These policies can be found at www.shsu.edu/syllabus/ and at www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS PROJECTS

The Politics Project: The goal of this research project is to collect data on the policy goals and political strategies of stakeholders in the victims' rights field. This entails identifying a group, a government agency, or a policy entrepreneur active in the field of victims' rights, identifying their political goals and values, their resources, and their strategies for achieving their goals. This will involve interviewing members of the organizations, reviewing the organization's literature, public statements, websites, and analyzing secondary accounts of the organization's political activities.

The Policy Project: The goal of this project is to analyze the victims' rights policy making process. You will explore how a policy issue gets on the government's agenda, how policy is formulated, how it is implemented, and how it is evaluated. How do policymakers assess the problem, collect information, formulate policy options, select among the policy options, carry out the policy, and then determine its impact?

Comparative Policy Analysis: This research project entails comparing different approaches to a victims' rights' issue. You may compare two countries' policies, two states' policies, two regions' policies, or the U.S. and international policy (i.e., the U.N.).

Service Learning/Voluntarism Project: For this project, you will volunteer with a victims' service organization for a minimum of 20 hours. You must get the placement approved by me. You will keep a journal of your activities and write a paper assessing your experience: what you learned, your observations about how the organization functions, your critique of how well victims are being served, and what recommendations you would make on how to better serve victims.

Innovations in Victims' Rights Policy - Conference Paper (counts as two projects): The Southwest Political Science Association is meeting in Houston in March. I would like to organize a panel/roundtable of undergraduates to present research on the recent innovations in victims' services/victims' rights policies. This paper would count as two projects and would be about 20 pages in length. The common theme among the students' research topics is the most current thinking on best practices in victims' rights policy or new policies/proposals/approaches.