

**POL338.01W (CID# 4767)**  
**VICTIMS' RIGHTS POLITICS AND POLICIES**  
**3 credit hour      TT 2:00-3:15      AB1 302**  
**Dr. Mitzi Mahoney**

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 8:30am-9:30am, 12:30pm-2:00pm, 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:** Three exams will be given. They will include identification, short answer, and essay questions.

**RESEARCH PROJECT:** Students are required to complete a research project. See project guideline sheet for details.

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	15%
Exam II	25%
Exam III	25%
Research Project II	35%

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. Make up exams will consist of essay questions.

**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/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/) and at [www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html](http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html).

## VICTIMS' RIGHTS RESEARCH PROJECT

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. Details are found on Blackboard.

The Policy Process Project: The research paper entails analyzing policymaking on a specific victims' rights issue. In this research project you will select a victims' rights policy that has been formulated, adopted, and implemented. You will analyze the formulation and adoption process, describe the policy provisions, analyze the implementation process, and evaluate the impact of the policy. Details are found on Blackboard.

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.).

Best Practices Project: This research entails exploring how victim service providers formulate policy. Victim service providers exchange information within their professional community regarding "best practices" or the optimal policy for meeting a particular victim need. In this paper you would explore how this information exchange occurs. You would analyze how professional associations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, think tanks, research institutes, and others communicate to improve victim service policy provision.