

LAW PRACTICE: SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

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Class 1: “Social Justice” and Systemic Advocacy

Introducing the Course: Definition, Coverage, and Goals

Although introductory, this course is designed to help you better appreciate the variety and complexity of “social justice” issues (and areas of practice) as you plan upper-level studies and career paths. Because this survey course is designed to serve as the foundation for further studies specifically in the Social Justice Concentration, the social justice faculty (Faculty) has standardized the framework and scope for our classes and discussions. The course syllabus and class format therefore are designed to satisfy the following standardized parameters:

Standardized Social Justice Definition:

As defined by the Faculty, “social justice ... span[s] myriad practice areas, from civil rights and public interest, to administrative law and commercial interests, to tax and trade policy ... social justice work is done in social, economic, and legal contexts, guiding critical analysis and transformative action across many sectors of society.”

Standardized Course Coverage:

The social justice faculty also itemized the scope of course coverage more conceptually along the following seven bullet points:

- 1) Premises of social justice and equal justice in the law (including questioning formal law as a means to systemic justice);
- 2) Analysis of social structure;
- 3) Systemic power, subordination, and privilege;
- 4) Identity and society (including the debate between particularity and universality, as well as what constitutes “identity”);
- 5) Globalization and international law;
- 6) Theoretical perspectives (e.g. CRT, LatCrit, Feminist legal theory, ClassCrist, Queer theory,); and
- 7) The architecture of advocacy (e.g. practice and theory of effective social justice advocacy.

These seven points overlap in practice, and thus throughout this course, as reflected in the accompanying Syllabus.

Standardized Course Goals:

As the required “introductory” course for the Social Justice Concentration and a 1L elective, the core goal set for us is to “survey” areas of law in which social justice (as defined above) is relevant. As discussed by the social justice faculty, the point of this course, therefore, is: “... not to have students dive into every single concept in depth, but rather to give them exposures to frameworks, theories, and ideas that are necessarily implicated when we talk about justice. Students can choose to engage the ideas in more depth through additional class, but the point is not that they have to. Rather, the point is that we don’t graduate students who will do social justice work who have never engaged a vocabulary for power, identity, critical theory, etc. The point is also that having planted a seed of some of these ideas, when they do the work later, they will come back to what they first learned, and build on it in practice.”