

Comparative Law and Justice
Sociology 333-01
Rhode Island College, Fall 2025
Gaige 202

Prerequisite: Any 100- or 200-level course in any social science

Instructor Information

Dr. Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

marthur@ric.edu (preferred) or 401.456.8681 (be sure to leave a callback number & when to call). I respond to emails and calls Mondays through Friday afternoons, and occasionally on Sundays.

Student Meetings: Drop-in availability most Mondays 4:30-5:30 or immediately after class. You can also book an appointment at <https://calendly.com/mmlarthur> (in person in Gaige 351 or by phone or Zoom) or let me know if you need an alternate time I have not made available to book.

Graduate Assistant

Prescilla Da Fonseca (pdafonseca_5072@email.ric.edu), a graduate student in the MA in Justice Studies Program, is available to provide extended support for your work in this course, especially related to reading and writing. She will have drop-in hours TBA in the Sociology Department

This course is scheduled in a **hybrid modality**. We will meet in person most weeks on Tuesdays from 4-5:50, with other components of the course completed outside of in-person meetings. You will be asked to meet with me outside of scheduled class time; these meetings may occur via Zoom or in-person depending on availability. You will need to have reliable Internet access on a computer or tablet and to check your email regularly.

Course Description

Globalization is a buzzword in today's society, but it is a buzzword with real consequences. We live in a world in which connections across national borders have become increasingly important to all aspects of life, from corporate outsourcing to immigration politics, from internet communications to transnational crime. This course takes globalization as a starting point for considering the comparative organization of legal and justice systems around the world. As an interdisciplinary course, it draws from anthropology, sociology, political science, and legal studies to paint a picture of the very different ways that countries make laws, govern their populations, respond to crime, and conceive of human rights. The course will provide students with a foundation in comparative analysis that enables them to understand the complexities of global legal and justice problems and to use cross-national data to better understand the legal and justice systems they will experience in their personal and professional lives.

Materials

Arthur. 2020. *Law and Justice Around the World*. University of California Press. ISBN 9780520300019, available on ereserves with unlimited access for logged-in RIC users at:

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ric-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6020712>

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard.

****TO PROTECT THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING COVID/FLU SYMPTOMS OR HAVE BEEN EXPOSED. ****

THIS SYLLABUS IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Requirements

This course is graded out of 110 points; the cutoff for an A grade is roughly 95. However, students will not be able to pass without at least minimally-acceptable submissions for all major assignments, given that this is a senior seminar.

- 1) *Class Participation*: Participation includes engaging respectfully in large- and small-group discussion and coming to class having completed assigned reading, viewing, and listening and prepared to discuss it. Should these requirements present personal difficulties for you, please contact me *right away*, as we can discuss alternative means of demonstrating participation and engagement. **10 points.**
- 2) *In-Class Activities*: Most, and maybe all, in-person class sessions will involve one or more in-class activities, such as written reading responses and group exercises. These will be collected and will generally be graded on a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or 0 basis and generally will not be announced in advance. **20 points.**
- 3) *Online Assignments & Video Quizzes*: The asynchronous portions of this course will include viewing assigned videos. Most of these videos will include several quiz questions to be answered while viewing the video. Other online activities will also occasionally be assigned, including in weeks when class does not meet in person. **30 points.**
- 4) *Midterm Exam*: in advance of the midterm exam week, students will receive a set of essay prompts and will have time to prepare a written essay. They will then schedule an individual in-person meeting with me at which they will turn in the essay and then discuss, without referring to the essay, the content they have covered in the essay. These meetings may occur during or outside of scheduled class time. **25 points.**
- 5) *Final Exam*: at the scheduled time during the final exam period, students will complete a written final exam. The format will be discussed in class in advance of the exam period. **25 points.**

Note: federal guidelines expect students to complete three hours of work (including both in-class and out-of-class time) for every credit hour earned (to see this definition, search for “credit hour” at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart-A/section-600.2>).

Information about resources at RIC is available at the end of this syllabus. If you would like more information about the resources available at RIC or help navigating them, you can ask me at any time this semester. You do not need to tell me why you are asking to get help, whether for a friend, another student, or yourself.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet learning outcomes:

- Students will develop an understanding of global variation in law and justice practices.
- Students will be able to apply terms and concepts to explain and categorize legal systems and their features.
- Students will be able to compare elements of their local and national legal and justice systems to other systems around the world.

Course Schedule

The schedule below is tentative and may be rearranged as needs dictate. All readings, coursework, and assignments will be due on Sundays at 11:59, with a no-questions-asked extension until 3:30 pm on Tuesday.

Week #	Topic	Due Date	Assigned Readings	Assigned Videos/Podcasts	Out-of-Class Assignments	Class Meeting Date
1	Introduction to the Course	August 31	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire syllabus <input type="checkbox"/> Text: "The Study of Comparative Law & Justice"	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory survey	August 26
2	World Legal Systems & US Legal System Review	August 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "World Legal Systems" <input type="checkbox"/> Burnham, "History and Governmental Structure"	<input type="checkbox"/> Intro to Legal Systems/US Review <input type="checkbox"/> Families of Law I <input type="checkbox"/> Families of Law II <input type="checkbox"/> Change & Continuity in Legal Systems <input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: The Adventure of a Lifetime"	<input type="checkbox"/> US Legal System Review Quiz	September 2
3	States & Elections	September 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "The Organization of State Power"	<input type="checkbox"/> States & Constitutions <input type="checkbox"/> City of London <input type="checkbox"/> Authority & Governing <input type="checkbox"/> Legislatures <input type="checkbox"/> Elections	<input type="checkbox"/> Political Philosophy Exercise & Reflection	September 9
4	Crime	September 14	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Crime and the Global World"	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding Crime <input type="checkbox"/> Comparing Crime <input type="checkbox"/> Global Crime <input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: In the Doldrums" <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Smash & Grab</i>	N/A	September 16

Week #	Topic	Due Date	Assigned Readings	Assigned Videos/Podcasts	Out-of-Class Assignments	Class Meeting Date
5	Law Enforcement	September 21	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Law Enforcement" <input type="checkbox"/> Friend, "Hunting Wildlife Crime"	<input type="checkbox"/> Policing Basics <input type="checkbox"/> Models of Policing <input type="checkbox"/> International Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: Highway 10" <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm Speechless"	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflection Essay on Policing	No Class Meeting September 23
6	Dispute Resolution & Courts	September 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Resolving Disputes"	<input type="checkbox"/> Dispute Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Substantive & Procedural Law <input type="checkbox"/> Trials, Judges, Juries <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Procedure	N/A	September 30
7	Catch-up & Exam Review	October 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Urbina, "The Crimes Behind the Seafood You Eat" <input type="checkbox"/> Qian, "7 Months Inside an Online Scam Labor Camp"	<input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: A Detective Calls" <input type="checkbox"/> "Organs Across Borders" <input type="checkbox"/> Criminalization <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Education & the Legal Profession	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam Review Assignment	October 7
8	Midterm Exam Week	October 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Review notes, textbook chapters, & other readings	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Write Essay <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule and complete oral midterm exam (in person)	Individually-Scheduled Exam Meetings
9	Punishment	October 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Punishment and Social Control" <input type="checkbox"/> Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned"	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Control & Noncriminal Punishment <input type="checkbox"/> History of & Justifying Punishment <input type="checkbox"/> Prisons <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Punishment	N/A	October 21

Week #	Topic	Due Date	Assigned Readings	Assigned Videos/Podcasts	Out-of-Class Assignments	Class Meeting Date
10	Family Law	October 26	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Family Law"	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Divorce <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Divorce Iranian Style</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Regulating Sex	N/A	October 28
11	Legal Rights	November 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Legal Rights" <input type="checkbox"/> Arendt, "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man"	<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship & Statelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights I <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights II <input type="checkbox"/> "Right to Disconnect"	<input type="checkbox"/> UNDOHR Survey & Reflection	November 4
12	The Military	November 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Taub, "The Dark Time" <input type="checkbox"/> Yaffa, "Collective Punishment"	<input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: An Unexpected Meeting" <input type="checkbox"/> The Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflection Essay on the Military	No Class Meeting November 11
13	Global Justice	November 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Global Justice"	<input type="checkbox"/> Globalization <input type="checkbox"/> International Law <input type="checkbox"/> "The ICC Process" <input type="checkbox"/> Superstates	<input type="checkbox"/> "Syrian Journey" Exercise & Reflection	November 18
14	Law and Culture	November 23	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Law and Culture" <input type="checkbox"/> Beah, "The Making, and Unmaking, of a Child Soldier"	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Culture <input type="checkbox"/> The Cultural Defense <input type="checkbox"/> Conflicts of Law & Custom <input type="checkbox"/> "Finding Mr. Fox: What Does the Fox Say?"	N/A	November 25
15	Course Conclusion & Exam Review	November 30	<input type="checkbox"/> Text: "Considering Comparative Law and Justice"	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Law <input type="checkbox"/> Why Compare? <input type="checkbox"/> Gjerde, "Making Law on the High Seas"	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Exam Review Assignment	December 2
16	Finals Week	TBA	<input type="checkbox"/> Exam Scenario	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Final Exam	Exam TBA

Course Policies

Academic Integrity: All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <https://library.ric.edu/proethics/>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Using AI writing systems, including text editors like Grammarly and chatbots like ChatGPT and Claude, and turning in the results as if they are your own work.
- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or check the links in Blackboard.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricated or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with other students or seeking help from professionals or peers on assignments which prohibit such activities.
- Destroying course materials or preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Academic Integrity Committee at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance: Please make every effort to attend all scheduled class sessions. Class sessions will not be recorded and group activities cannot be made up. However, we can work out a plan for alternative assignments if you become ill, face quarantine, or otherwise will miss more than a class or two. If you need an extension, instructions for requesting one are available in Blackboard.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard; you can request an extension for eligible assignments using the link in Blackboard. Assignments **must** be saved in *.rtf, *.doc, or *.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work.

Course Technology: Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at least a couple of times per week, and to have sufficient Internet access to complete readings & assignments via Blackboard. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services right away (<https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/user-support-services> or 456-8803).

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with the Center for Disability Access in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/center-disability-access>--if you have a disability that requires or would benefit from accommodations to ensure you have equal access to success in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment: Rhode Island College and its faculty are committed to creating a safe and open learning environment for all students. The College prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. RIC encourages all members of the community to seek support from, and report to, the Office of Institutional Equity. You may contact the Office at 401-456-8218, or learn more about college policies by visiting the <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/office-institutional-equity>. If you have experienced, witnessed, and/or received information about a potential violation, you can submit an incident report at that site. Incident reports are routed to the Director of Institutional Equity / Title IX Coordinator, and will initiate outreach from the Director to the individual(s) who have experienced harm.

All faculty and staff are now mandatory reporters. This means that if we learn about something that might be sex discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, pregnancy discrimination, LGBTQ discrimination), then we must report what we know to the Title IX Office. Usually, reports will only leave a record of concern, but sometimes, a report can be escalated into an investigation without a victim's consent. Mandatory reporters are expected to share information learned in all settings, including during class activities, assignments, office hours, and outside of class. **Please be thoughtful about what you disclose to me.**

Pregnancy Modifications: Rhode Island College prohibits differential treatment or discrimination against students based on their current, potential, or past parental, family, marital status, or pregnancy or related condition. Students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions may meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss reasonable modifications. The College's Pregnancy Policy is available at <https://our.ric.edu/pregnancy> and students can meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss reasonable modifications by initiating a request at that site. College policy requires all employees, upon receipt of a disclosure of pregnancy or related condition from a student, to refer that student to the Title IX Coordinator.

Basic Wellness Needs: To learn effectively, you must have basic security: a roof over your head along with a reliable place to sleep and enough food to eat. If you're having trouble with any of those things, please contact Learning for Life (l4info@ric.edu, or phone 401-456-6320). Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center (401-456-8094). Students in distress can call 401-456-4673 (HOPE) to confidentially speak with licensed clinician 24/7 at no cost. If you are experiencing a financial emergency, the FAST Fund provides small grants, outside of the RIC financial aid system. Learn more or apply at <https://fastfundric.wixsite.com/fast>.

Writing Lab: Everyone, even excellent students, benefits from having another set of eyes on their writing, so visit the **Writing Lab** early often to help develop your ideas, organize your writing, and improve your drafts: <https://our.ric.edu/departments-directory/division-student-success/student-services/academic-success-center/writing-lab>.