Reading Group: SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Course Number: LITG7044
Call Number: 000128

Professors: Houh, Kalsem, and Williams
Credits: 1 Classroom
Primary Basis for the Grade: Short writing assignments; letter grade
Prerequisite: None
Enrollment: open
Meets Seminar Requirement? No
Meets Writing Requirement? No
Meets Client Counseling Requirement? No

Meeting dates and times

Students enrolled in this directed reading course are required to attend and participate in five (5) discussion sessions, each lasting two hours, to be held at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center Museum (room TBD) from 6:00-8:00pm on the following five Thursdays: Sept. 11, Sept. 18, Oct. 9, Oct. 30, and Nov. 20. Course materials will be distributed throughout the semester.

Enrolled students are also required to attend the following two (2) events hosted by UC Law’s Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice: (1) community screening of the HBO-distributed documentary Private Violence on Friday, Oct. 3 (in the evening, time TBD) at the Freedom Center’s Harriet Tubman Theater; and (2) talk titled, “Sowing the Seeds of Change,” presented on Thursday, Oct. 23, by Ms. Theresa Younger, CEO of the Ms. Foundation.

Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to attend an October 11 event at the Freedom Center on Freedom Summer (details forthcoming) and/or to watch the PBS American Experience documentary about the same, Freedom Summer.

Course Description:

Many of us, students as well as faculty, decided to go to law school because we wanted to help “change the world” and create a more just society. The law school experience, however, has been known to dull and dampen to various degrees the passion to engage in the challenges of social justice work. The goal of this one-credit directed reading course is to help fortify, or in some cases rekindle, our passion to “fight the good fight” by exploring our roles as advocates and lawyers within the larger social movements of which we are or should be a part. Through engaging interdisciplinary texts and materials, we will explore some important questions, such as: What is the relationship between law (which includes “the law,” as well as legal actors) and social movements? How has the law functioned, in some cases, to co-opt or criminalize social movements? Does the law, through its efforts to secure and protect rights of oppressed and excluded groups and individuals, support or hinder liberatory movements? How can the law be used more effectively to support and even build social movements? And, significantly, how do
race, gender, sex, ability, and class intersect in both the theory and practice of building and sustaining social movements? We will begin by studying social movement theory generally and then turn to key movements in the United States, specifically those focused around domestic violence and civil rights.

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