

Cinema and the Law: *Are Lawyers Still our Heroes?*

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Hamline University School of Law

Saturday, July 25, 2009 and Sunday, July 26, 2009; 8:00 am - 3:15 pm each day

One academic credit; CLE credits for Minnesota, applied for.

Course Description:

This course will explore the dynamic relationship of law and the cinema, focusing on how movies both classic and current portray law, lawyers, judges and legal proceedings. The class will watch diverse film excerpts, considering in detail how these popular culture portrayals reflect on the legal system, the courts, its participants, and particularly on the attorneys professional role in society.

Texts: (both required of law students)

Law and Popular Culture, A Course Book, Michael Asimow and Shannon Mader, Peter Lang Publishing (2007). (Not needed for CLE credit)

Reel Justice, The Courtroom Goes to the Movies, Paul Bergman & Michael Asimow, Andrews, McMeel Publishing (2nd edition, 2006). (Recommended for CLE credit)

Preparation for the course:

In order to help class discussion, all course participants (students and lawyers) *must* watch at least four of the following movies before you attend the course. The course book, Reel Justice, will be helpful to you in giving you background information about the movies you watch. During the course, the presentation will feature clips from about 50 movies. Prior to the first day of class, you are required to watch four movies from the list below. Please watch two made before 1990 and two made after 1990. All movies listed below are available at local video rental stores or internet rental sites.

12 Angry Men (1957)

And Justice for All (1979)

Anatomy of a Murder (1959)

A Time to Kill (1996)

Erin Brockovich (2000)

Legally Blonde (2001)

Michael Clayton (2007)

My Cousin Vinny (1992)

Runaway Jury (2003)

Suspect (1987)

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)

Verdict, The (1982)

Law students must read Law and Popular Culture, chapters 1 - 4 (pages 3 - 63); chapter 6 (pages 83 - 97); chapters 8 - 9 (pages 111 - 147); chapters 11 - 14 (pages 165 - 237). Each chapter lists an assigned movie. You are not required to view the assigned movie listed in the chapter. You are only required to view four movies as explained above.

Grades (law students):

Students will be required to have been in attendance for both days. Attendance will be taken at the start of each day; at the start of each afternoon session; and at the conclusion of each day. Lack of attendance will result in the lowering of a letter grade for each attendance missed.

Your grade will be based on a paper which will be due no later than 11:59 pm CDT, August 12, 2009. Papers **must** be submitted electronically. Papers will be anonymously graded. Do not include your name on your paper. The paper should reflect your personal interest and be based on a particular work or works of films, **not television**. The paper **must** draw on the theoretical materials presented in the textbook readings, class discussion, as well as outside research such as law review articles. The paper **shall** be no less than 15 double spaced pages nor more than 20 double-space pages, including **mandatory** footnotes, and bibliography. Students **must** use Times New Roman, 12 point type.

Below are sample topics, including topics used by students in the 2008 class:

- A Genre Study of American Legal Films: Observations on the Development of the Genre from 1940 to 1970.
- American Jury System as Depicted in Cinema Law and the Cinema.
- Atticus Finch: Great Hero, or Pure Fiction?
- Attorneys as Ambulance Chasers: Silver Screen Fiction or Fact?
- Black and White, not the Film -- the Participants; are Blacks and Whites Portrayed Fairly in Films.
- Business as Usual: Bad Deals and Dishonest Lawyers Common Place in Movies.
- Civil Disobedience: Lawyers who Disrupt on Film, Have they Made the Practice of Law a Joke?
- Collateral Damage: The Impact of Legal Movies on How the Public Perceives the Judicial System.
- Courting Public Opinion: Have Movies Made a Positive Case that the Justice System is Fair?
- Defense Attorneys who Represent the Guilty: Are They Ogres or Heroes in Popular Culture.
- Devil and the Law: Religion Faces its Match on Film.
- Disorder in the Court: The Three Stooges Had it Wrong; Lawyers and the Courts are Better than ever.
- Elle Woods... A New Legal Icon? A Look at Modern Representations of Female Lawyers in Cinema
- Ethics in movies? Pass the popcorn!
- Evil Empire: Big Law Firms in the Movies.
- Family and the Practice of Law: Do Films Accurately Reflect the Family Lives of Female Attorneys?
- Final Judgment: Judging the Judges of the Silver Screen.

- From Legally Blonde to The Accused: Are Female Attorneys Depicted Fairly and Accurately in Film?
- From *Mutual Film Corporation* to *Joseph Burstyn, Inc.*, how the United States Supreme Court changed the way we watch movies.
- Girls Just Wanna Have Fun. Can Female Lawyers be Heroic on the Big Screen?
- Grishman's Law: Are His Movies Guilty of Bad Lawyering?
- Hung Jury: Are There Still 12 Angry Men, or Do Juries Just Want to Finish and Play a Round of Golf? Do Films Portray Juries Fairly?
- Jurors: Do they really have all that sex and suspense with lawyers and litigants?
- Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury: Do Reel Juries differ from Real Juries.
- Law School to the Courtroom: Do Films Understand Lawyers?
- Lawyers on the Dark Side of Law.
- Legally Blonde Influence: How the Cinema Portrays Female Attorneys and Inspires Women to Pursue Legal Careers.
- Lessons from Anatomy of a Murder.
- On the Rocks: Alcohol Abusing Attorneys and their Image in the Movies.
- Popcorn, Pimps and Prosecutors: Do Ethics Matter to the State in Film.
- Portrayals of Prosecutors in Film.
- Search for Atticus Finch.
- Storytelling: Movies getting law wrong.
- The Law - According to Revenge Movies.
- Top Movie Lawyers. Why we like them, and do they really exist.
- Trial and Errors: Comedy's Quest for Truth in Films.
- Uncivil action. Lawyers crossing the line for box office success.
- Where have you gone Professor Kingsfield? Have movies convinced good students not to become lawyers?
- Women in Legal Films: The Search for a Successful Female Attorney.

Class Schedule: (topics, times and order of topics subject to modification)

**Both days: 8:00 AM - 11:15 AM - Morning;
11:15 AM - 12:00 Noon - Lunch;
12:00 Noon - 3:15 PM - Afternoon.**

Day One: Saturday, July 25, 2009.

8:00 - 8:20	<i>Introduction.</i> Instructor and student introductions. Explanation of course.
8:20 - 9:00	<i>History of government censorship in film.</i>
9:00 - 9:30	<i>The Trial. Popularity of the Courtroom Genre.</i>
9:30 - 9:50	<i>Morning Break</i>
9:50 - 11:15	<i>Opening and Closing Argument.</i>
11:15 - 12:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>

12:00 - 12:55 ***Law School, Law Students.***

12:55 - 1:35 ***Humor for the Sake of Humor.***

1:35 - 1:55 ***Afternoon Break***

1:55 - 3:05 ***Ethics.***

3:05 - 3:15 ***Review of Day One. Class Questions. Information for Day Two.***

Day Two: Sunday, July 26, 2009.

8:00 - 9:00 ***Juries.***

9:00 - 10:00 ***Witnesses and Courtroom Skills.***

10:00 - 10:20 ***Morning Break***

*10:20 - 11:15 ****Women in the Law. (new to 2009 program!)***

11:15 - 12:00 ***Lunch Break***

12:00 - 12:35 ***Judges.***

12:35 - 1:30 ***Civil Rights and Wrongs.***

1:30 - 1:50 ***Afternoon Break.***

1:50 - 3:05 ***Are Lawyers Still Our Heroes? Lawyers who make us proud of our profession.***

3:05 - 3:15 ***Review of Day Two. Class Questions. Review of Final Paper. Evaluations.***

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