Shauhin Talesh, Law

Multi- and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Law (C275/Law 5655)

Winter 2018

Multi- and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Law is a reading and discussion seminar. We will read a book or several articles each week, and students will come to class ready (and willing) to discuss it.

We will engage with law from a substantial number of distinct disciplinary perspectives (anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, rhetoric, sociology, political science) which we will use in an attempt to construct our own "interdisciplinary" knowledge of law. Considered as a field of study rather than of practice, law has long been connected to other realms of scholarship and perspective. "Disciplinarity" – the separation of fields of scholarship into distinctive forms of expertise that could be imparted as professional training – was really the creation of the modern university graduate school, first invented in nineteenth century Germany, carried to the United States in the 1860s. In the form of the modern law school first established at Harvard by C.C. Langdell in the 1870s, law was one of the first realms of scholarship to become "disciplined" in this fashion. Others – history, political science, sociology, economics – soon followed. "Interdisciplinarity" stands for the attempt to reconnect what was pulled apart in the creation of the disciplines. Interdisciplinarity is often considered an attempt to cultivate a perspective on a realm of study that stands outside the realm of study being examined. It is often an attempt to use the methods of one discipline to understand the substance of another discipline. In this course, we will encounter interdisciplinary, disciplinary, and/or multidisciplinary approaches toward the study of law.