

Loyola Law School's Curriculum Under Scrutiny for Advocacy-Oriented Courses



Loyola Law School, a prominent Catholic institution in California, has come under scrutiny for its upcoming fall 2023 semester courses that prioritize activist objectives over nuanced legal education. Notably, some of these courses, including one focusing on "Reproductive Justice," are accused of presenting a single activist perspective without allowing room for critical examination.

The course titled "Reproductive Justice" aims to provide a framework for understanding reproductive oppression and the subordination of individuals through their bodies, sexualities, and reproductive capacities. However, critics argue that the course oversimplifies complex philosophical debates and issues surrounding reproduction, potentially stifling meaningful discourse and exploration of different perspectives.

Similarly, the course "Police and Prison Abolition" raises concerns as it overtly advocates for the abolition of prisons and the reimagining of law enforcement. The course description states that abolitionists aim to replace police and prisons with alternative solutions such as relationship-building, community programming, and social infrastructure. Critics assert that by starting from a predetermined perspective and sidelining the discussion of established criminal justice principles, the course limits students' exposure to a well-rounded understanding of the issues.

In the course titled "LGBTQ+ Advocacy and Inclusive Lawyering," the emphasis on enacting "systemic change" has raised eyebrows. The curriculum centers on methods of advocating for change through various legal avenues, without adequately addressing the broader debate on whether such changes are necessary or justifiable. Moreover, the incorporation of activist training into grading, such as requiring an advocacy presentation on LGBTQ+ legal issues, has sparked concerns about potential bias and lack of diversity in the evaluation process.

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A class centered on "Reparations, Theory and Law" further accentuates the trend of advocacy-driven courses. Rather than objectively evaluating the concept of reparations as a form of justice or racial remedy, the course focuses on differentiating reparations from other remedies and exploring historical and contemporary reparations proposals. The course assumes the legitimacy of reparations as a legal objective, bypassing critical discussions about such measures' ethical and practical implications.

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What's concerning is that these courses appear to suppress dissenting viewpoints and stifle open dialogue. Critics argue that the curriculum's emphasis on singular activist paradigms could discourage students from expressing reservations or engaging in rigorous debates about the subjects at hand. This raises questions about academic freedom and the pursuit of a well-rounded legal education that should encourage critical thinking and robust exploration of diverse perspectives.

In light of these concerns, some observers speculate that these courses may inadvertently discourage open inquiry and reinforce a particular ideological framework. As legal education is traditionally known for fostering an environment where students can engage with a wide range of viewpoints, the perceived lack of nuance and diversity in these courses is drawing attention from both within and outside the academic community.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.