

This is an intensive short course that meets on a special schedule.

CULTIVATING CONSCIENCE

Course Number: 24 SPCL 723 001

Call Number: 000104

Semester: Spring 2011

Professor: Lynn Stout, Chesley Distinguished Visiting Professor

Credits: 1 Classroom

Primary Basis for the Grade: Tentatively short paper; High pass, pass, low pass, fail

Prerequisites: None

Enrollment: Open

Meets the Seminar Requirement? No

Meets the Writing Requirement? No

Meets Client Counseling Requirement? No

Readings: Stout, *Cultivating Conscience*, Princeton University Press, 2010.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Economic Theory has had an enormous influence on legal thinking and the legal curriculum. Economic theory, however, traditionally assumes people are always rational and always selfish. In recent years a new school of social science has emerged to challenge these assumptions. "Behavioral economics" investigates how real people behave in real situations. Behavioral economists have demonstrated under laboratory conditions that people in fact often act irrationally and also often act unselfishly.

In her new book, *Cultivating Conscience: How Good Laws Make Good People*, she discusses these ideas and asks about the best ways to get people to behave appropriately. The book argues that by focusing on bad behavior, we neglect the crucial role our consciences play in shaping human behavior. The class will explore these and other ideas, drawing from the disciplines of social psychology, behavioral economics, and evolutionary biology. Professor Stout, an acclaimed law and economics scholar, will discuss how the legal system can use social cues that promote conscientious behavior to craft better laws and provide encouragement to more unselfish, ethical behavior in many areas, including politics and business.

MEETING TIMES:

This class will meet Sunday, February 26, 2011, to Thursday, March 3 as follows:

- Sunday, February 27 from 9:00 am to noon
- Sunday, February 27 from 1:15 pm to 4:15 pm
- Monday, February 28 through Thursday, March 3 from 12:15 pm to 1:20 pm
- One follow up meeting to be scheduled of approximately 1.5 hours to be held after papers are turned in.

Please note that because this is a short course that meets over a short period of time, you may only miss one segment of the class. Two segments take place on 2-27 and one each day 2-28 to 3-3. If you miss one segment, you will have to write a longer paper. Credit will not be given for a student who misses more than one segment. Do not sign up for this class if you know you will miss any of these class meetings.

The class will meet in room **118**.

Last updated: 11-15-10 no