

# RJ 7210: ADVERSITY, TRAUMA, AND VICTIMIZATION

Professor Cara Cookson, J.D.

## First Assignment

Please look up the following on Westlaw or Lexis and review:

Statute: 13 V.S.A. § 5301

Case: *Linda R.S. v. Richard D.*, 410 U.S. 614 (1972)

Please read/view the following internet-based materials:

Parul Seghal:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/the-forced-heroism-of-the-survivor.html>

Samantha Ross:

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-22575/im-a-victim-of-rape-not-a-survivor.html>

Lauren Book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJ4eHW9EWUk>

Carolyn Murnick:

<https://www.thecut.com/2019/02/what-we-dont-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-serial-killers.html>

Elliott Roger:

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/santa-barbara-killer-claimed-victim-twisted-life-memoir/story?id=23861753>

## Journals

Please come to class each day with a journal that you will enjoy using for reflection exercises, both in and out of class. For some people, a journal will be a paper notebook, and for others, it might be a Word document on a laptop computer. If you like to write with pen and paper, you might choose one notebook that you can use for all your notes and reflections in class, or you could also choose a separate notebook just for your reflection writing. Your journals will not be turned in or shared with me or the class unless you opt to read aloud from them during group discussion. Know that I may ask you to review what you've written in class to inspire your contributions to our discussions. You will be evaluated on whether you fully participate in the journaling exercises, not on the quality or content of the writing itself.

Please reflect on the following questions in your journal in advance of our first class:

- 1) What do you hope to accomplish personally and professionally in this course?
- 2) What subjects and ideas on the topic of adversity, trauma, and victimization make you curious or interested to learn more? What subjects or ideas evoke a sense of resistance or concern?

- 3) What are the possible meanings and connotations of the words “victim” and “survivor” in American culture?
- 4) How does your personal reaction to these words compare to the words “offender” and “perpetrator”? What meanings and connotations to those words evoke?
- 5) Why does word choice matter – why should we think about what these words mean and to whom?

#### A NOTE ABOUT TRAUMA

If the national statistics bear out, it is inevitable that several of you have experienced a serious form of trauma or victimization during your lifetime. As you will learn, stress and anxiety from re-triggering—being reminded of past traumatic events—is a common, protective biological response. Your body is telling you to seek safety. My main goal as your professor is to facilitate a classroom environment where: 1) students feel safe and honored; 2) students can learn and support one another’s learning; 3) students can take initiative to meet their own needs; and 4) students can speak the truth, debate, and explore new perspectives within appropriate boundaries. To that end, I encourage you to set up a time to speak to me over the phone or on campus, before the start of the term or as we proceed, if you would like to share any concerns, requests, or other thoughts that will support my work with all of you. We will also spend significant time at the beginning of the session working together to forge a productive classroom environment. I encourage you to engage the support and services available through Dean Jefferson’s office if you have any sense of overwhelm or re-traumatization before, during, or after our time together.