See a Movie, Eat Some Pizza, Change the World

Professor Orly Lobel Hosts the Law and Social Justice Film Series

The Law and Social Justice Film Series, hosted by Professor Orly Lobel, began screening films at the law school during the fall 2005 semester. Chosen for social and legal issues raised, films are preceded by a short lecture during which viewers eat free pizza and other snacks. Usually there are enough chairs for everyone, but the series has become so popular that some films have drawn standing-room only crowds. Whether sitting, standing or lounging on the floor, faculty, students and community members intermix in this not-for-credit forum.

Professor Lobel fosters the informality; she wanted to create a place where "students and staff get together and think and laugh and cry and become interested in the world."

Many professors use examples from movies in class. It made sense to create a film series open to everybody, Lobel says. But, she adds, the wealth of good films raising social justice issues makes choosing among them difficult. And she must not only choose a good movie, but one that will mesh with a lecturer's expertise.

USD professors and alumni have both been involved in the film series. Robert Goff, a law graduate and founder of Restore International, spoke before a showing of "Born Into Brothels." Another film, "The Gatekeeper," was written, directed and produced by USD under-graduate degree recipient John Carlos Frey. USD law professor Jean Ramirez, who teaches criminal law and evidence, spoke before "Capturing the Friedmans."

The entire USD community, including alumni, are invited to attend the series. Once released, dates and times for the winter 2006 semester will be made available in USD's law alumni newsletter "The Docket" online at http://www.sandiego.edu/usdlaw/about/publications/docket.

The School of Law has provided generous funding for the program, Lobel says. But the film series is not a big expense, she adds. It is dinner, a movie and maybe at the end of the day a wider worldview.