



DESALES UNIVERSITY
Division of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Social Sciences

CJ/LG 355: Law in America
Course Syllabus

Fall Session 2015

3 Credits

Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm
Dooling Hall - Room 106

Contact Information

Instructor: Seth Weber, Esquire
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Office Hours: By appointment. Appointments should be requested via e-mail to
seth.weber@desales.edu.

Required Textbook

Introduction to Law (5th Edition)(2015), by Joanne Banker Hames and Yvonne Ekern
Publisher, Pearson ISBN: 978-0-13-348456-4.

There will also be additional readings of case law and other materials as provided by the instructor.

Course Description

An introduction to all areas of law in America, including the history of law and the remedies which the legal system provides. Introduces students to legal reasoning, writing, research and critical thinking about issues in all areas of law. Discussions will include an overview of both civil and criminal procedure, including legal issues with a focus specific to law in America. Legal vocabulary and the process of legal analysis is also emphasized.

Student Learning Outcomes

For the **Criminal Justice major**, at the successful completion of this course the student will demonstrate the following Student Learning Outcomes with the exception of the item(s) in parentheses:

1. Understand and discuss the elements of a criminal offense (partially satisfied).
2. Recognize and understand the differences between civil law and criminal law.

For the **Law and Society major**, at the successful completion of this course the student will demonstrate the following Student Learning Outcomes with the exception of the item(s) in parentheses:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the American legal system, including terminology, concepts and the structure of the federal and state court systems (partially satisfied).
2. Demonstrate an ability to research and discuss case law and statutory law in resolving legal issues.
3. Understand and discuss key legal holdings by a court relating to a civil or criminal legal issue.

Upon the successful completion of **this course**, the student will demonstrate the following Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Testable awareness of the structure and function of the American legal system.
2. Understand and be able to discuss basic court procedures used in civil and criminal cases.
3. Measurably improved written and verbal communication skills assessed through the legal research assignment, writing assignments and class participation of issues of civil and criminal law in America.

Methods

The methods for this course will use and include lecture, in-class discussions, PowerPoint presentations, written research papers, class exercises including oral presentations to the class, multi-media, case law and statutes, and other educational material deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Testing and Grading

Comprehensive Exams	40% of Final Grade (20% Mid-Term and 20% Final Exam)
Written Assignments	20% of Final Grade
Quizzes	20% of Final Grade (Two quizzes, each 10% of Final Grade)
Attendance and Class Participation	20% of Final Grade
TOTAL	100%

Comprehensive Exams: 2 examinations (Mid-Term Exam, Final Exam)

There will be two comprehensive examinations during the course.

Both the Mid-Term and Final Exam will be comprehensive exams which may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answers and/or essay.

Quizzes: 2 Quizzes (one before the Mid-Term Exam and one before the Final Exam)

Each quiz shall consist of multiple choice, true/false and several short answer questions which will require a discussion of issues about specific topics in law.

Writing Assignments:

There will be four writing assignments during the course. Each written assignment will be designed to help the students identify, analyze and discuss issues relating to a variety of topics involved in law in America. Each student may be called upon to orally present to the class about their written assignments.

Technology Requirements

All class assignments and announcements, in addition to posting of all grades, will be posted using the DeSales Blackboard site. You should know how to access the DeSales Blackboard site and check the site regularly. For basic hardware/software requirements, please visit www.desales.edu/techrequirements.

Communication Methods

All students are expected to check their assigned DeSales email (DSU email) address on a regular basis. All students should use their DeSales email address in order to send and receive email notifications relating to the course. These notifications may include course assignments and other matters relating to the scheduling of the course, and notifications from DeSales University generally. If you decide to forward to another email address, you are still responsible for all information and notifications sent to your DeSales email.

Course Evaluation

All students are expected to complete the CourseEval on line when the questionnaire is sent to his/her DeSales email address by DSU Instructional Technology staff. Each student is requested to evaluate both the course and the instructor. The CourseEval survey is confidential and anonymous, that is, the student's name is not part of the CourseEval results. This information is used for assessment purposes and to update and enhance course material.

Note: Failure to submit a written receipt to the professor that you have completed the CourseEval within the required time period will result in a **one grade level deduction** from your class participation score.

Course Grade

93-100%	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	60-66%	D
80-82%	B-	Below 60%	F
77-79%	C+		

Note: There will be no rounding up of grade points or extra credit at the end of the semester.

Class Attendance, Missed Assignments and Examinations

Attendance shall be taken for each class. Class attendance is required, and class participation is encouraged. They will count for 20% of your Final Grade. Please be in the classroom on time for every class. Late arrivals distract the professor and your fellow students. Promptness is a sign of interest, courtesy and respect.

If you are not able to attend class, or will be late for class, for whatever reason (and sometimes there are sufficient reasons), please send the professor an email in advance to notify of your lateness or pending absence from the class. It is solely the student's responsibility to make up any work that has been missed. The instructor is under no obligation to make special arrangements for students who are absent. An absence on a day which either precedes or follows a holiday is counted as a double absence. Any absence on a day when there is a pre-scheduled guest speaker shall count as a double absence. The instructor has the right to ask any student to justify excessive absences.

Failure to send the professor a prior email about an absence shall constitute an unexcused absence.

Do not miss assignments and examinations. In the spirit of fairness to all class members and to the professor, make-up examinations will only be given in cases of emergency circumstances.

Legitimate illness will be considered a valid excuse. Your classmates and the professor would appreciate that you reschedule an exam if you are legitimately ill...we do not want to get sick. Do not abuse this excuse. Students must make prior contact with the instructor by email for an approved absence if you will be missing an exam or assignment due to illness or an emergency. Failure to do so will result in an "F" grade on the exam or assignment.

Note Well: Failure to send the professor a prior email about an absence shall constitute an unexcused absence. When a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences, in the sole discretion of the professor, the student will lose one grade level in their final grade.

Classroom Rules:

1. All cellphones, smartphones and other phones should be turned Off during class and put away. They should be removed from the top of your desk.
2. All laptops must remain closed during class unless prior approval is given by the professor for the sole purpose of taking notes.
3. You should not be texting, emailing or otherwise "surfing" on the Internet during class either on a smartphone, tablet or laptop.
4. Any student who the Professor deems to be disrupting the class may be asked to leave the class for that day. In other words, please be courteous and respectful to your fellow classmates who are in class to learn.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to abide by the University's standards regarding academic integrity. You should read the section in the DeSales University Undergraduate Catalog relating to plagiarism and academic cheating. To be clear, "Plagiarism" is the use of unauthorized aids, assistance or other inappropriate online and other forms of cheating. It specifically includes, among other things, the unattributed use of another person's words or ideas, through either direct misappropriation, such as cutting and pasting without giving the reference source, or indirect misappropriation such as paraphrasing someone else's ideas or words without reference to the source, and other forms of dishonesty. Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic standards and will not be tolerated. Any violations of Academic Dishonesty shall result in a failing grade for the assignment or exam, and be subject to referral of the case to other appropriate University offices.

Disabilities

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic adjustments should contact the Coordinator of Learning and Disability Services (Dooling Hall, room 26, 610.282.1100, x1453).

Tentative Course Outline

The following is a tentative schedule of the material that we will cover during the semester. The course outline may be subject to change by the instructor. The content and timing of the material is subject to change if such alteration facilitates presentation of the subject matter. If a change is deemed appropriate, adequate notice will be provided to the class. The amount of time spent on each topic will vary according to class discussion, reading assignments and other factors.

Note: Students should read all textbook and other handout materials assigned prior to class discussions. Each student should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings in class.

DATES	TOPICS	READING/ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 (8/27)	Introductions, Review Course Syllabus, Discuss student expectations for the course. Introduction to Law	All reading assignments, unless otherwise indicated, refer to the required textbook, "Introduction to Law" by Joanne Banker Hames and Yvonne Ekern (5 th Edition)(2015) Chapter 1
Week 2 (9/1, 9/3)	The U.S. Legal System The Courts and Legal Personnel	Chapters 2 and 3
Week 3 (9/8, 9/10)	Constitutional Law	Chapter 6
Week 4 (9/15, 9/17)	Tort Law, Workers' Compensation and Environmental Law Written Assignment #1 Due	Chapter 7

Week 5 (9/22, 9/24)	Legal Research and Writing Quiz #1 (Thur 9/24)	Chapters 4 and 5
Week 6 (9/29, 10/1)	Family Law	Chapter 8
Week 7 (10/6, 10/8)	Wills, Trusts and Probate MID-TERM EXAM (Thur 10/8)	Chapter 9
Week 8 (10/15)	Law of Business Organizations and Bankruptcy Written Assignment #2 Due	Chapter 11
Week 9 (10/20, 10/22)	Contracts, Real Property and Intellectual Property	Chapter 10
Week 10 (10/27, 10/29)	Civil Procedure Before Trial Written Assignment #3 Due	Chapter 12
Week 11 (11/3, 11/5)	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Quiz #2 (Thur 11/5)	Chapter 13
Week 12 (11/10, 11/12)	Criminal Practice	Chapter 14
Week 13 (11/17, 11/19)	Criminal Procedure Before Trial Rules of Evidence	Chapters 15 and 16

Week 14 (11/24)	The Trial Written Assignment #4 Due	Chapter 17
Week 15 (12/1, 12/3)	Final Presentations	
Week 16 (12/8, 12/10)	Review of Semester	