

FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY

COURSE SYLLABUS

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Law plays a special and critical role in the American family. Statutes and judicial opinions establish norms in order to create predictability, maintain social order, and resolve disputes. Family law terminology, images and cases (the most notorious of which seem to occupy the news media) infuse our imagination and daily conversations.

This course will focus upon the law that affects “families,” a term which, today, is not as obvious as it may seem. We will study and discuss perspectives and origins of family law, creation of the marriage relationship, spousal rights and obligations in the on-going marriage, creation of the parent and child relationship and its on-going duties and responsibilities, and termination of the marital status and its economic consequences. The course will include theoretical and practical applications of family law. Because all of us encounter family law in one way or another we will attempt to make the course a meaningful experience that may have an impact on each student outside the classroom.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Recognize family law issues both in terms of traditional law and evolving law;
2. Discuss relevant family law issues and relate them to their own lives and Circumstances;
3. Analyze family law and apply it to specific factual circumstances; and
4. Critique contemporary family law and interpret its impact upon society.

TEXT AND REQUIREMENTS:

The textbook for the course is *Family Law in a Nutshell* (Fourth Edition) by Harry D. Krause and David D. Meyer (West Publishing Co. 2003). The instructor will supplement the text with classroom handouts. (These will be important . . . be sure to attend regularly!!!) All students will sit for four (4) written examinations. (All examinations are essays in blue books.) Students in POLS Y200 will write an 8-10 page paper on a topic related to family law. Students seeking Advanced Study credit in POLS Y401 will write a paper of 16-20 pages and include secondary research on a topic related to family law. All students must submit a term paper proposal not more than one page in length, and the instructor must approve the proposed topic. Class participants shall comply with all university rules regarding plagiarism when researching and writing their papers. No more than one-half of all research materials shall be taken from the internet. This means that at least one-half of all research materials shall be taken from books, treatises, and other tangible documents.

GRADING:

Each grade on the written examinations will count for 15% of the final grade. The grade on the term paper will count for 30% of the final grade. Classroom discussion and participation will count for 10% of the final grade.

THE IPFW WRITING CENTER:

The staff of the IPFW Writing Center is available to help you write more effective papers and gain confidence in your writing skills. The Writing Center is at Kettler 234, and online consulting is available.

GOOD READING AND WRITING SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE !!!!!!

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!! There will be occasional guest speakers, and the instructor will also present information not found in the text material.

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**FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY
FALL TERM – 2004
COURSE SCHEDULE**

Aug 23 - Introduction to class; Course survey; Lecture on Chs. 1 & 2; Assignment - Chs. 3-7

Aug 30 - Discuss Chs. 3-7; Assignment- Chs. 8 & 9

Sep 6 - NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Sep 13 – Discuss Chs. 8 & 9; Assignment- Examination #1

Sep 20 – Examination #1 (Chs. 1 – 9); Assignment- Chs. 10 – 12

Sep 27 – Discuss Chs. 10 – 12; Assignment Chs.- 13 – 15

Oct 4 – 1st session – Discuss Chs. 13 – 15 (Chapter 14 will be discussed only briefly.)
2nd session – Presentation by Whitley County Child Support Office (Ch. 14)
Assignment- Examination #2

Oct 11 – NO CLASS – FALL BREAK (Be thinking about your term papers.)

Oct 18 – Examination #2 (Chs. 10 – 15); Assignment- Ch. 16

Oct 25 – 1st session – Discuss Ch. 16
2nd session – *Children First* video and discussion
Assignment- Chs. 17 – 20
TERM PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

Nov 1 – Discuss Chs. 17 – 20; Assignment- Work on your term papers.

Nov 8 – 1st session – Domestic Violence presentation and discussion
2nd session – CASA presentation and discussion
Assignment – Examination #3

Nov 15 – Examination #3 (Chs. 16 – 20); Assignment- Chs. 21 & 22

Nov 22 – Discuss Chs. 21 & 22; Assignment- Ch. 23

Nov 29 – 1st session – Dissolution of Marriage Mediation presentation
2nd session – Discuss Ch. 23

Dec 6 - **TERM PAPERS DUE**; Review night and discussion. (Everything you always wanted to ask and know about family law) Assignment- Examination #4

Dec 13 – Examination #4 (Chs. 21 – 23) NOTE : EXAM TIME IS AT 8:00 PM

End of Course. Congratulations!!