

Introduction to Law: Short Course Description

Brief Course Description

Introduction to Law introduces students to legal concepts, principles and procedures. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the structure of the U.S. legal system including the role of the judicial, legislative, and executive branches; the philosophical underpinnings of law; the history of law in the United States; the role of attorneys, law enforcement and other legal professionals; categories of law; litigation principles; and alternative dispute resolution. The course involves substantial reading and writing. Students also participate in trial simulations, debates, and have opportunities to work with legal professionals.

Textbooks

Primary:

- *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law*, (8th ed.), Lee P. Arbetman and Edward L. O'Brien, McGraw Hill/Glencoe, 2009
- *Foundations in Law Course*, Education Development Center (EDC)

<http://lawandjustice.edc.org>

Secondary:

- *Introduction to Law*, (5th ed.), Beth Walston-Dunham, Cengage Learning, 2008

Supplemental Instructional Materials:

- *Criminal Justice Today*, (9th ed.), Frank Schmalleger, Pearson, 2007
- *Courtroom & Classroom*: Current Legal Issues for Students (monthly magazine publication)

Units and Assignments

Unit Contents	Writing Assignments	Key Assignments
Unit I – Introduction to Law and the American Legal System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Philosophy of Law Paper I: Law and its Role in Society• Kitty Genovese Story – Rights and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Images of Law Gallery Walk and Reflection• Analyzing the Difference between Norms and Rules• Reading/ Viewing and Discussion novels/plays Depicting “Law-less” Societies or Situations• How and why laws are created: A case study related to School Safety Laws and Policies

Unit Contents	Writing Assignments	Key Assignments
Unit II – Historical Basis and Current Structure of the American Legal System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Law – Modern Law –Future Law: The History of the American Legal System • Comparing Historical Documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Law: Tracing the Evolution of Law and Justice; Research/ • Presentation • Close Reading of the Bill of • Rights and related Learning Log • A Historical Perspective: Sample Laws and the Evolution of Democracy • Branches of Government, Check and Balances, and the American Legal Landscape
Unit III – The Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Legal Reasoning: Writing Legal Briefs • Extended Learning Activity: Written review or summary based on trial-related film or footage. • Great Trials/ Supreme Court Cases in U.S. History – Research/Paper • and Oral Presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Trials/ Supreme Court Cases in U.S. History – Research/Paper • and Oral Presentation
Unit IV – Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing School Rules; Applying Understanding of the Rule of Law – A Persuasive Letter • Drafting a New Law Exercise and Pro and Con Essay • Legislative Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing Laws and Policies • Close reading of the Statue in the California Education Code governing School Truancy • Codes of Law Analysis • Graphic Representation/s or Multi-Media Presentation: How a Bill Becomes Law • Legislative Hearing

Unit Contents	Writing Assignments	Key Assignments
<i>Unit V</i> – The Legal Professional (mini-unit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal/Public Service Career I-Search Paper 	
<i>Unit VI</i> – Criminal Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why People Commit Crimes • Crime Statistics Research/ • Review/Analyze, Written Summary; and Reflection Essay 	
<i>Unit VII</i> – Criminal Procedure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the Fourth Amendment in the School Context • Peelian Principles and Models for Policing; Essay on Ways to Improve Policing within the community • Criminal Justice Process • Criminal Justice Case and the Decision-Making Process
<i>Unit VIII</i> – Sentencing and Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Legal Issues in the film (or book) Dead Man Walking • Death Penalty: Pro and Con Essay; Taking a Stand 	
<i>Semester Exam</i> – includes both short answer and essay questions; includes content from Units I-VIII		
<i>Unit IX</i> – Juvenile Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay and Oral Presentation: Effective Strategies to Reduce Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime • Questions for Critical Analysis (Example from Unit on Juvenile Justice); • Short written responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay and Oral Presentation: Effective Strategies to Reduce Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime • Juvenile Justice case scenarios

Unit Contents	Writing Assignments	Key Assignments
<i>Unit X</i> – Consumer and Business Law		
<i>Unit XI</i> – Family Law		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Law Project • Family Law Learning Activity
<i>Unit XII</i> – Tort Law: Lawsuits and Liability: the Civil Justice System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Reasoning: Writing Opening Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing and Contrasting Civil and Criminal Systems • Civil Law: Analysis of Civil Cases • Civil Lawsuit Simulation • Civil Law and Legal Thinking
<i>Unit XIII</i> – Individual Rights and Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Speech – Interpret Quotation and Write Opinion Essay • Voting Rights Persuasive Essay • Equal Rights Amendment – • Analyzing Language; • Essay: Summarizing and Analyzing Pros and Cons; Stating and Supporting Opinions • Equal Rights Essay or Blog • Civil Rights Movement: Telling the Story: Two Journalism approaches to legal story-telling • Extended Learning Option: Social or Political Movement Research and Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay – Balancing Individual Rights and Community Well-Being • The Right to Vote: Analysis of a Voting Rights Timeline; reflection on the struggle for equality and justice. • Extended Learning: Learning Stretch WebQuest: and Essay on Positive Rights vs. Negative Rights • Case Study: Claudette Colvin and Civil Rights
<i>Unit XIV</i> – International Law and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Writing: Human Rights Challenge: An Analysis of and Advocacy regarding Child Labor Laws • OR Child Marriage Laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Learning: Restorative Justice in Schools

Unit Contents	Writing Assignments	Key Assignments
<p>Unit XV – Special Topics in Law: Law and Advocacy, Law and Terrorism, Immigration Law</p> <p>A) Law and Advocacy B) Law and Terrorism C) Immigration Law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrant Rights in the Social Context Scenarios and Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and Oral Presentation on Advocacy and Advocacy Organizations
<p>Unit XVI – The Law and Ethics</p>		
<p>End of Course – Student Portfolio Presentations, Reflective Learning Paper, Review for Final, Final Exam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Philosophy of Law 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining Legal Concepts and Terms - - Essays of Extended Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Law Poster Talk: Everyone Teaches, Everyone Learns Legal Debate College and Career Portfolio The Language of Law: Legal Terminology Glossary – with an emphasis on legal concepts Law/Public Service-Related Practicum and Practicum Report/ Reflection on Learning