

PLSC 3325
Introduction to Law
January Term 2019

Professor: Pam Corley
Office: Carr Collins Hall 207
Office Phone: 214-768-2406
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: pccorley@smu.edu

This is an introductory course to the study of law. The course is designed to provide the student with a background of the American legal system, covering such substantive areas of law as torts, civil procedure, contracts, property, and criminal law. We will obviously not have time to cover any of these subjects in depth, but the course will give students an overview of the law. In addition, we will discuss law school and legal education.

Required Texts

Introduction to Law and the Legal System, by Frank A. Schubert, 11th ed. Houghton Mifflin (2015). You should bring your book to every class.

One L by Scott Turow.

Before the first day of class:

Read pp. 89-187

Read Briefing a Case hand-out

Brief *National Federation of Independent Business v. Kathleen Sebelius* (will be turned in on the first day of class)

Read *One L* by Scott Turow

Student Learning Outcomes:

UC 2016: History, Social and Behavioral Sciences (Depth); UC 2012: Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures

Students will demonstrate an understanding of specific disciplinary or professional subject matter(s) by applying research outcomes or theory about how individuals, institutions, and/or cultures shape economic, political and social experiences.

Requirements

1. **Exams (60%).** There will be three exams worth 20% each. The exams may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Make up examinations will be given only when the student has notified me prior to the scheduled exam, and upon my acceptance of the reason for the absence. A student who misses an examination without prior notification without a satisfactory reason will receive a grade of **zero** for that examination. I will only make exceptions under the most unusual of circumstances. If a make up examination is given, I retain the right to modify substantially both the content and the format of the exam.

2. **Book Review (20%).** Students are required to write a book review on *One L* by Scott Turow. The paper should be between 8-10 pages (include pages numbers in paper) in length, double-spaced, typed with no more than one-inch margins, and standard font type. Do not just summarize the content of the book. Write about how the book portrays law school and legal education, **using extensive examples from the book (citing the specific page number)**. Also include your reaction to the book. The book review is due on 1/15, at the **beginning** of class. **I will not accept an e-mailed copy of the book review and I will not accept a book review turned in late.**

3. **Attendance/Participation (20%).** In light of the nature of the course material and the case-method approach to conducting this class, attendance and thoughtful participation are expected of each student. Each student is expected to have read assigned materials **prior** to class. Additionally, each student will sign up in advance to be responsible for specific court cases we will cover in class.

Note: All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned to silent and stowed away for the duration of each class session. Any use of these devices is distracting. Additionally, **I strongly discourage students from using laptops/tablets in this course.** There is compelling evidence that laptops do more harm than good in the classroom (e.g <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>). **If you decide to use a laptop for note-taking purposes, you must sit in the back row of the class.**

Grading

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Exams | 60% |
| <i>One L</i> Book Review | 20% |
| Attendance/Participation | 20% |

Final grades will be computed on the following basis:

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 93-100% = A | 90-92% = A- | 87-89% = B+ | 83-86% = B |
| 80-82% = B- | 77-79% = C+ | 73-76% = C | 70-72% = C- |
| 67-69% = D+ | 63-66% = D | 60-62% = D- | <60% = F |

In determining your final letter grade for the course, your final numerical grade will be rounded up to the next highest whole number if it is greater than or equal to 0.5. Individual assignments will not be rounded.

Course Schedule

Monday, January 7th

9-12
Introduction
Documentary: "All About Law School."

1-4
Institutional Sources of American Law, pp. 89-122.

Tuesday, January 8th

9-12
The Judicial System, pp. 123-153.

1-4
Civil Procedure, pp. 154-187.

Wednesday, January 9th

9-12
Exam 1

1-4
Limitations in Obtaining Relief, pp. 188-223.

Thursday, January 10th

9-12
Judicial Remedies, pp. 224-253.

1-4
Criminal Law and Procedure, pp. 254-308.

Friday, January 11th

9-12
Exam 2

1-4
Documentary: “The Trials of Law School.”

Monday, January 14th

9-12
Contracts, pp. 362-403.

1-4
Torts, pp. 404-447.

Tuesday, January 15th

9-12
Book Review Due
Property, pp. 448-451; 456-489.

1-4
Legal Education: Discussion of *One L*

Wednesday, January 16th

9-12
Exam 3

1-4
Movie: “Paper Chase”

Additional Information

Email Etiquette: When you email me, you need to follow some basic rules. First, insert the course title (Introduction to Law) or number (PLSC 3325) into the subject line of your message. Second, start with a greeting. “Hi, Professor Corley...” (Never address a professor as Mr. or Mrs.) Third, plainly identify yourself and articulate the content of your message clearly. This means you should not use text message speak. Fourth, before emailing me, you should review the syllabus. It is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining the syllabus. Finally, you should send a thank you email if you have asked a question and received an answer.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance

notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Note: The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.