Law in Everyday Life
POL-1250-01 Summer 2014
Science Hall East 5000

Prof. Wollenberg
wollenbergy@wpunj.edu

Course description:

Law affects our rights, our security and our social, economic, political and emotional well-being. A basic legal principle states that ignorance of the law is no excuse. Students – and all citizens – need a basic understanding of the legal system and the laws likely to affect their lives. This course covers our basic court systems, as well as various areas of the law, including criminal law, contracts, housing rights, and civil rights.

Student Learning Outcomes for Area One: Personal Well-being:

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

SLO 1a: Describe how individuals achieve physical, emotional, ethical, social and/or financial well-being:

-- Describe the different kinds of courts and alternative dispute resolution methods in the US as well as what to expect when engaging in legal proceedings.
-- Analyze situations and use critical thinking skills to make decisions which will reduce the likelihood of legal conflicts and/or minimize one’s exposure to negative outcomes should a legal conflict occur.
-- Know when their rights have been violated or when others’ illegal conduct has harmed them.

SLO 1b: Identify barriers to physical, emotional, social and/or financial well-being:

-- Identify the common legal pitfalls which land people in legal disputes.

SLO 1c: Develop, implement, and evaluate a personal plan that will enable the individual to progress towards achieving physical, emotional, ethical, academic and/or financial goals:

-- Critically read legal documents, such as basic contracts, leases and court papers.
-- Effectively write contracts that are clear to both parties and protect their interests.
-- Create a plan of action when engaging in activities (i.e. contracting for services, lending a friend money, deciding on whether to pursue legal action to
protect one’s rights or to recover money because someone else’s conduct caused an injury) which will protect one’s emotional well-being and financial interests.

SLO 1d: Explain how an individual’s well-being interacts with the physical, social, cultural and/or economic environment:

--- Use computer and emerging digital technologies effectively to locate, evaluate and compare alternative legal choices, such as what court or alternative dispute method to use to resolve legal disputes, how to find a lawyer, and where to find general information about the law.
--- Describe how individuals can effectively use the legal system and how they utilize legal resources to promote physical, social, emotional and ethical well-being.
--- Explain how legal disputes impact different environments: physical health, mental health, social relationships, and financial well-being.
--- Consider the ethical ramifications of pursuing different legal strategies.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Required text


Additional required readings can be found on Blackboard.

Class attendance and participation

I expect you to come to class regularly and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. To get the most out of this class, it is very important to complete the assigned readings BEFORE class. Attendance counts for 10 percent of your grade. Arriving more than a few minutes late on a regular basis will reduce your grade. Three late arrivals will equal one absence.

Writing assignments

There are three required assignments. Details about the assignments will be posted on Blackboard, where you will also submit your assignments. Late papers will lose one full point per calendar day. Each assignment is worth 10 percent of your overall grade.
Exams

We will have a midterm and a final exam. The dates are noted on the course schedule. **Makeup exams are given only to those students whose absence is documented by a physician’s note.**

Academic honesty

It is unethical and unacceptable to hand in an essay or paper that has been copied from someone else’s work. Your papers and essays, in class or take home, must be your own work, written in your own words. Copying or downloading words from a book, article, website or another student’s paper is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. You will receive a zero for any such paper or exam, without the opportunity to make it up. The university’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at [www.wpunj.edu/cte/wpu-academic-integrity-policy.dot](http://www.wpunj.edu/cte/wpu-academic-integrity-policy.dot).

Disability accommodation

I take seriously the need to provide an environment where all students can participate equally and to accommodate students with disabilities. If you need accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible.

Grades

Your final course grades will be calculated on the following basis:

Writing assignments:  30%
Midterm exam:  30%
Final exam:  30%
Attendance:  10%

Course schedule:

Mon. July 7  Introduction
Tues. July 8 and  What is law?
Wed. July 9  chapter 1
Thurs. July 10 and  The constitution
Fri. July 11  chapter 2

**Assignment #1 due Monday, July 14**

Mon. July 14  Our legal system
  chapter 3
Tues. July 15 and  **Constitutional Law***
Wed. July 16  chapter 6

Thurs. July 17  **Catch-up and review***

Fri. July 18  ***Midterm exam ***

**Assignment #2 due Monday, July 21 ***

Mon. July 21 and  **Torts***
Tues. July 22  chapter 7

Wed. July 23  **Family law***
chapter 8

Thurs. July 24  **Contracts***
chapter 10 p. 265-278, chapter 11, p. 310-312.

Fri. July 25  **Civil litigation***

**Assignment #3 due Monday, July 28***

Mon. July 28  **Criminal law***
chapter 14

Tues. July 29  **Criminal procedure***
chapter 15

Wed. July 30  **Criminal trials***
chapter 17

Thurs. July 31  **Catch-up and review***

Fri. Aug. 1  ***Final exam****