

# **POLS 220 INTRODUCTION TO LAW**

## **Fall Quarter 2009**

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Office Hours: By appointment

Required Text: Legal Foundations, Carper, West, Berman. The instructor recommends a legal dictionary but it is not required.

### **COURSE SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVE**

The major objectives will be to introduce the nature of law and the resolution of disputes in the court system.

### **COURSE GRADING CRITERIA**

To receive a passing grade in this course, students must complete all of the assignments and exams. Students must submit the assignments on the due dates. The instructor will grade each student individually on a possible total score of 200 points, which is structured as follows:

1. **Exams (150 points):** These two tests will be a combination of true/false, short answers, multiple choice, and essays. The exams are based on all of the assigned reading material regardless of whether or not we discuss the material in class. Tests may also cover handouts, material presented in class including but not limited to, lectures, videos, and guest lecturers. There will be no makeup exams.
  - a. Midterm 1 (50 points)
  - b. Midterm 2 (50 points)
  - c. Final Exam (50 points)
2. **Case Analysis Paper (50 points):** For the topic of this paper, students must select a significant and/or controversial United States Supreme Court case. If students are having any trouble deciding on a case, then I will provide a list of suggested cases. I must approve the case selected by the student. The essay must be a minimum of five (5) pages, typewritten, double spaced, and written in accordance with a required format which I will provide in class to the students. The student's objective on this paper

is to explain the facts of the case, the positions of the parties and the reasoning of the court while communicating the student's informed opinion regarding the decision. Due date is in the course outline. We will be using turnitin.com to help avoid any issues of plagiarism.

3. **Class participation:** In addition to the above-referenced grading criteria, the instructor does take into account the degree and quality of your class participation when he determines the final grades. If, for example, your final grade is on the borderline between a B and an A, your class participation may persuade me to give you the A if you have shown that you have made attempts to consistently participate in the class. Thus, class participation can only help your grade and it is highly recommended.

## **COURSE RULES**

1. Class lectures are kept informal to facilitate discussion. Students should conduct their side conversations very quietly, they should keep those conversations to a minimum, and they should be related to the topic being discussed in class.
2. Students are expected to do their own work. Cheating of any type is prohibited and students who fail to comply with this requirement may be denied credit for the course. If appropriate, the college may also impose other sanctions. Those wishing further clarification may seek advice from the instructor or consult their Student Handbook.
3. The instructor will not accept any late work and he will not give any make-up work or make-up exams. Attendance is strongly encouraged, though neither required nor recorded. Students are encouraged to study all assigned readings before class because performance on class assignments and on exams are directly related to the student's knowledge of the text reading materials.
4. Students are encouraged to discuss concerns or class problems, if any, with the instructor. The instructor is available throughout the Quarter to discuss the student's current approximate grade and ways to improve the grade.
5. Students with special needs should contact Disabled Student Services (DSS) and notify the instructor during the first week of the course. DSS will evaluate your specific needs and issue an Accommodation Memorandum as needed. If the student does not do the above, it is assumed that the student does not have a disability requiring some form of an accommodation.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS<sup>1</sup>

### Week 1 (9/21)

Class Introduction and Overview.

Chapter 1. Introduction to Law. pp. 1-42

Chapter 3. The Court System. pp. 97-142

### Week 2 (9/28)

Chapter 3. The Court System continued. pp. 97-142

Video

### Week 3 (10/5)

**No class on 10/5**

Chapter 2. Our Constitution. pp. 47-90

### Week 4 (10/12)

Chapter 4. The Attorney-Client Relationship. pp. 147-193

**Midterm 1 10/14**

### Week 5 (10/19)

Chapter 6. Criminal Procedure Handout.

Video/Guest Lecture

### Week 6. (10/26)

Chapter 9. Family Law. pp. 417-468

### Week 7 (11/2)

Chapter 11. Renters and Landlords. pp. 522-557

### Week 8 (11/9)

Chapter 10. Owning and Operating Motor Vehicles. pp. 475-518

**No class on 11/11**

### Week 9 (11/16)

**Midterm 2 11/16**

Video/Guest Lecture

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<sup>1</sup> All test and assignment dates shown in this syllabus are tentative and subject to change upon notice given during class. The instructor may give additional assignments in class throughout the quarter. It is the student's responsibility to keep informed as to any announced assignments or schedule changes. If a student cannot attend a class, be sure to get any missed information from a classmate or contact the instructor.

Week 10 (11/23)

Chapter 14. Wills, Trusts and Probate. pp. 676-716

**Case Analysis Paper due on 11/25**

Week 11 (11/30)

Chapter 13. Home Ownership. pp.563-613

Week 12 (12/7)

**Final Exam on 12/9**