

**Course Number:** PSC 280 – 01

Spring 2017

**Course Title:** Law & the Legal System

**Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

**Instructor information:** Bill Eagles [billeagles@billeagles.com](mailto:billeagles@billeagles.com) Office: Curry 313  
Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

**Course catalog description:** Introduction to legal method and principles and the legal profession. Students acquire knowledge of substantive areas of law and recognition of legal issues and resolution through the legal process.

**Course overview:** Introduction to Law is designed to give students an overview of the law, the legal profession, and the legal system. This course will provide students with an overview of legal concepts, procedures, terminology and current issues in law including constitutional law, criminal law, contracts, family law, torts, and property law, and provide a basis for upper division law classes.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of the course, students should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Identify and distinguish between the sources and bodies of law.
- Describe the basics of civil and criminal procedure.
- Define the basic components of a reported case and related terminology.
- Analyze hypothetical problems in the context of tort law, family law, property law, contract law, and criminal law.

## **REQUIRED READING**

1. Calvi, James V. and Susan Coleman. 2017. *American Law and Legal Systems*. Boston: Longman Publications (8<sup>th</sup> ed.).
2. Humbach, John W., 2007. *Whose Monet?* New York: Aspen Publishers
3. Selected readings as announced as the semester progresses.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Class Assignments, Participation, and court observation – 25%

Papers – 25%

Mid-Term Exam – 25%

Final exam – 25%

Grading Scale:

A+ = 98-100, A = 94-97, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83, C+ = 77-79, C = 74-76,

C- = 70-73, D+ = 67-69, D = 64-66, D- = 60-63, F = 0-59

## **COURT OBSERVATION**

Each student shall observe court proceedings for two(2) hours. The observation shall include at least two different courts. State courts that may be observed are district civil, district criminal, district traffic, superior civil, and superior criminal. Federal courts that may be observed are federal district court, either civil or criminal session, and bankruptcy court. A report of these observations must be turned in during class on February 23rd or emailed to me at the above email address only by 5:00 pm on February 23rd. Late reports will not be accepted. The reports need not be formal and shall be brief. The reports should demonstrate that the observation was done. Court observations will be considered with the class assignments and participation portion of your grade.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students who miss more than five (5) class meetings will receive a 5 point reduction in their final grade for the course. For each absence over five (5) class periods, your final course grade will be reduced an additional point. I do not grant excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to use allowed absences wisely. Students not present when the roll is called or who leave class prior to dismissal, unless otherwise discussed with the instructor, will be considered absent.

## **PAPERS**

Two papers will be required for this course, each of 3 ½ to 5 pages. I will distribute a handout for the first paper during class during the first two weeks. It will be due well before the mid-term. The second paper will be assigned immediately after the mid-term and will be due well before the final exam. Papers are due by email to me at the above email address only before 5 pm on the day due. Late papers (by less than 24 hours) will be penalized ten points. No papers more than 24 hours late will be accepted. At least one of the papers should have feedback as to writing quality. Such feedback is not part of the grade, but how clearly one's material is presented in standard English necessarily affects what is communicated and can affect one's grade.

## **EXAMINATIONS**

One mid-term exam will be held during the semester, along with a cumulative final exam. Exams may consist of essay questions and/or short answer questions. Success on these examinations will require a thorough understanding of the reading assignments and class discussions and lectures. I do not anticipate giving any make-up exams, but will revisit that position if circumstances present themselves that, in my sole discretion, call for it.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students are expected to abide by the University's academic integrity regulations. If you are not familiar with the University's policy, please see <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/>.

**SPECIAL NEEDS** Students with special needs should contact the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with special requirements.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Minor adjustments to the reading schedule may be made depending on how quickly material is covered. Students are responsible for keeping up with any schedule adjustments that are announced in class. I have no present intention to change exam dates.

### Schedule of topics:

- Week 1(1/17-19): Sources & kinds of Law, Calvi Ch.1  
Introduction to the Case, Humbach pp. 9-25
- Week 2(1/24-26): History of Law & Legal Profession, Calvi Ch. 2  
Sue? Humbach pp. 27-30
- Week 3(1/31-2/2): Court Organization & Judicial Selection, Calvi Ch. 3  
Where to sue? Humbach 31-53
- Week 4(2/7-9): Civil Procedure, Calvi Ch. 4  
Humbach, pp. 63-81; 131-150
- Week 5(2/14-16): Evidence, Calvi Ch. 5 [First Paper due February 16]  
Trial, Humbach pp. 171- 184
- Week 6(2/21-23): Criminal Procedure, Calvi Ch. 7 [Court Observation Reports Due Feb. 23]
- Week 7(2/28-3/2): Appeal, Humbach pp. 189 -203 [Mid-term Mar.2]

### MID-TERM EXAM

- Week 8(3/7-9): Constitutional Law, Calvi Ch. 6

### BREAK

- Week 9(3/21-23): Contracts, Calvi Ch. 11
- Week 10(3/28-30): Torts, Calvi Ch. 10
- Week 11(4/4-6): Criminal Law, Calvi Ch. 7
- Week 12(4/11-13): Property, Calvi Ch. 12[Second Paper due April 13]
- Week 13(4/18-20): Family Law, Calvi Ch. 13
- Week 14(4/25-27): Complete and Review [No Class 4/27]

FINAL EXAM as scheduled. [5/9 noon to 3:00]