

SYLLABUS  
INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM  
LAH 100  
Spring 2003, Full Semester

Mondays, 5:30-7:30 pm, Science Center 113

**I. COURSE GENERAL INFORMATION**

Professor: Professor Christine Lissitzyn, Esq.

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the American legal system. Students will learn the sources of American law, how the legal system works procedurally and the substantive content of major areas of law including civil procedure, contracts, torts, family law, business law and property law.

Prerequisites:

Students must have completed 12 credits of general education courses with a GPA of at least 2.0 and must have the permission of the department.

Recommended: English (ENGL 101) and American Government (POH 102).

Course Objectives

Students will be introduced to and will have a working knowledge of:

1. legal terminology
2. sources of American law
3. how a case proceeds through the judicial system
4. the basic principles of, and elements of a typical cause of action in, torts, contracts, property, criminal law and property law.
5. roles of the lawyer and paralegal in the legal system

Text:

Introduction to Law for Paralegals, Currier and Eimmermann, end ed.

Oran's Dictionary of the Law (recommended)

Supplemental Reading:

Handouts will be provided with instructions as to required reading and review.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Assignments, quizzes, and discussion groups will take place on-line at the site [blackboard.hartford.edu](http://blackboard.hartford.edu). **Students must have access to an internet connection or use the internet available at the College library.**

2. Students are expected to attend every class appropriately prepared. Students must notify the Professor in advance of any absence and are expected to get notes and assignments from a classmate. Students who miss more than two classes will be graded down.
3. Written assignments are to be typewritten. All written assignments must be submitted in the digital drop box at **blackboard.hartford.edu**, unless otherwise specified. Any late assignment will be graded down.
4. All students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the honor code of the Hartford College for Women. **STUDENTS MAY NOT WORK TOGETHER ON PROJECTS UNLESS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY THE PROFESSOR.** Plagiarism or other violations of the code may result in failing the course.

Instructional Methods:

Instructional Methods may include:

1. Lecture
2. Class discussion
3. Case briefing
4. Courtroom visit
5. Written assignments
6. Paralegal interview
7. Oral presentations
8. Small group work
9. Role playing
10. Quizzes and Exams
11. Written homework and in-class exercises
12. On-line discussion groups, assignments and quizzes.

Grading:

Class attendance and participation	10%
Homework and on-line quizzes	30%
Midterm exam	15
Major projects:	
Paralegal report	10
Courtroom project	15
Final Exam	20
Total	100%

**Note: Vocabulary words, cases, chapter questions, and all other homework assignments will be posted weekly on Blackboard.**

Note: Students must receive a course grade of C or better to receive credit toward a Legal Studies certificate or degree.

Academic Express:

This is an Academic Express course requiring an additional 7 hours to be added to the class. These are as follows:

Schedule to be Arranged – Attend a proceeding at the Superior Court and prepare report and oral presentation. Students who cannot perform the 7-hour requirement during normal working hours may request an alternate assignment. However, students who attend court will receive extra credit.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

There are 14 instructional classes. The final exam will be a take-home exam due Friday, May 9 at 5 pm.

**Note: Readings listed for each class (except class 1) are to be read prior to class session.**

Class 1: January 20

Introduction to the Study of Law and Legal Reasoning.

Reading: Chapters 1, 3

Class objective: Introduce the process of legal reasoning

Class 2: January 27

Finding and interpreting Court Opinions

Reading: chapter 8, p. 169-191

Class objective: learn how to  
find and interpret court opinions  
brief a case

Class 3: February 3

Classification of the Law

Reading: Chapter 4

Class objectives: civil v. criminal law;  
A prima facie case  
Substantive v. procedural law

Class 4: February 10

Paralegal Association Roundtable Presentation:

Paralegals who work in unusual jobs, 5:30-6:30,  
Butterworth Living Room

The Paralegal Profession

Reading: Chapter 2

Class objectives:  
Learn about the role of paralegals and licensing

Class 5: February 17

Paralegal Panel interviews

Class 6: February 24  
Structure of the Court System  
reading: chapter 5; chapter 6, p. 93-94  
    Trial v. appellate courts  
    Federal v. state court system  
    subject matter and personal jurisdiction

**Distribute Courtroom project**  
Reading: chapter 6, p. 109-116  
**Report due April 7**  
**Oral presentation due April 14**

Class 7: March 3  
Torts  
Reading: chapter 12, p. 351-382  
    Report on Paralegal Interview Due

Class 8: March 10  
Torts, continued  
Reading: chapter 12, p. 382-411

March 17 – no class

Class 9: March 31  
Midterm exam

Class 10: April 7  
Contract Law;  
Reading: chapter 13  
Class objectives: Understand legal principles of contract law  
    Courtroom Report due

Class 11: April 14  
Courtroom Presentations

Class 12: April 21  
Property Law  
Reading: chapter 14, p. 465-479

Class 13: April 28  
The Law of Wills  
Reading: chapter 14, p. 480-491

Class 14: May 5

Family Law

Reading: chapter 16

Take-home final exam distributed

Take-home final due in digital drop box by Friday, May 9 at 5 pm.