

**FAMILY AND THE LAW
SOCIOLOGY 310
SPRING SEMESTER 2006**

Professor: Frances G. Sonne, Esquire

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(Please make sure to identify yourself as a student in the subject line)

Office Hours By Appointment

Text: William P. Statsky, Family Law (5th Edition), West Publishing Company, 2002

Overview: Many contemporary scholars identify several principal areas as fundamental to the field of family law. First, law addresses issues centered on the formation and dissolution of family relationships, namely, marriage, divorce, and more recently, procreation. Second, family law examines the law that governs the rights and obligations that flow from family relationships, such as the parent/child relationship. These areas of inquiry will serve as the focus of this course in family law.

Students will have an opportunity to learn how law is formed, interpreted and practiced, and to examine how law emerges from the social fibers of our society. Students are expected to read and understand the assigned readings, using analytical skills of legal reasoning. However, students are not expected to have had any previous legal education.

Course Requirements:

1. 1. Examinations: There will be one mid-term examination and a final examination, based upon all reading assignments, lectures and class discussions. The mid-term is scheduled for February 28, 2006. The college will schedule the final exam.
2. 2. Quizzes: There will be 10 short quizzes, graded as 10 points each, for a total of 100 points. Some will be in class; some take home, some open book, some closed book. They will be announced in the class prior to the quiz date.
3. 3. Course Project: Team assignments will be distributed in the first class and the project to be completed by the last class. The fact pattern contained in the project will also be used throughout the course for discussion of potential issues, argument of positions on the issues and application of the law. The fact pattern is susceptible to alteration as additional information develops throughout the course and if positions of the parties change (and because parties don't always tell the whole story or disclose pertinent facts).

4. **4. Class Participation:** This is not strictly a lecture course. It is, therefore, important for students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for the day. Please note on the Schedule of Classes and Assignments the readings assigned. Every case may not be discussed in class but you must be prepared to discuss each one. Even though the class will meet only once per week, the course credits given dictate the amount of material to be covered. You should view the one class per week as two actual classes on one evening, therefore, prepare as if the class were meeting twice per week. Remember the college rule of thumb – preparation time for the class should be double the amount of class time. **BRING YOUR TEXTBOOKS TO CLASS!**

Starting with the Class on February 7th, please bring calculators to class!!

GRADING:

| | Percentage of Total Grade |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mid-term Examination | 25 |
| Final Examination | 25 |
| Course Project | 25 |
| Quizzes | 15 |
| Class Participation | 10 |

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS - 2006

| | |
|------------|---|
| January 17 | INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS Read Chapters 1, 2 and 3 for background For next class - Read pages 114 – 149 in Chapter 5 Handouts on Common Law Marriage |
| January 24 | FORMING THE FAMILY: THE LAW OF MARRIAGE Assignment for next class: Chapter 6 and 7 Quiz 1 |
| January 31 | ANNULMENT AND THE LAW OF DIVORCE: GROUNDS AND PROCEDURES Quiz 2 Assignment for next class: Chapters 8 |
| February 7 | THE LAW OF DIVORCE: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PROPERTY? WHAT IS SPOUSAL SUPPORT AND ALIMONY? Quiz 3 |

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| | <p>Guest – John Roberts, Esquire – Master in Divorce in Lehigh County Assignment for next class: Chapter 4 Handout – <u>Simeone vs. Simeone</u></p> |
| February 14 | <p>PREMARITAL, POSTMARITAL AND COHABITATION AGREEMENTS Quiz 4 Assignment for next class: Chapters 9</p> |
| February 21 | <p>CUSTODY OF CHILDREN Quiz 5 Assignment for next class: Handouts <u>Gruber vs. Gruber</u> <u>Plowman vs. Plowman</u> <u>Troxel vs. Granville</u> Lehigh County Local Relocation Rules</p> |
| February 28 | <p>Mid-term Examination</p> |
| March 5 –13 | <p>Spring recess – ENJOY! BE SAFE!</p> |
| March 14 | <p>CUSTODY OF CHILDREN: GRANDPARENTS’ RIGHTS AND RELOCATION Quiz 6 Assignment for next class: Chapter 10 and Handouts <u>Colonna vs. Colonna</u> <u>Melzer vs. Witsberger</u> <u>Blue vs. Blue</u></p> |
| March 21 | <p>CHILD SUPPORT: WHO SUPPORTS THE CHILDREN AND WHY Quiz 7 Guests – Jill Allen and Jean Van Fleet (Support Establishment Officer and Support Enforcement Officers, respectively, in the Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section) Assignment for next class: Chapters 12 and 14</p> |
| March 28 | <p>LEGAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN; DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT Quiz 8</p> |

Assignment for next class: Chapters 13 and 15

April 4

THE LAW OF ADOPTION AND TERMINATION OF
PARENTAL RIGHTS; PATERNITY

Quiz 9

On Reserve in the Library: Nancy Beth Cruzan, by her
Parents and Co-Guardians vs. Director, Missouri
Department of Health

April 11

MAKING MEDICAL DECISIONS FOR FAMILY
MEMBERS

Quiz 10

Assignment for next class: Chapter 16
Handout

April 18

THE NEW SCIENCE OF MOTHERHOOD

April 25

REVIEW

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE MAY BE ADDITIONAL HANDOUTS AS
NECESSARY

THERE WILL ALSO BE ADDITIONAL GUESTS WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCED
IN ADVANCE

DATE OF FINAL EXAMINATION SET BY THE COLLEGE