

**SUBSTANTIVE LAW OVERVIEW/INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL ANALYSIS
IT 800/805 –Fall 2008
SYLLABUS (Tentative)**

Leslie Ann Reis
7reis@jmls.edu
(312) 987-1425
Office Hours: Thursdays, 4-6 pm

Raizel Liebler
8Liebler@jmls.edu

This class combines the materials from IT 800 and IT 805. It will introduce non-legally trained students to the workings of the legal system, legal methods (including research and legal writing techniques) and the process of legal education. In addition, it will familiarize students with the basic substantive areas of law.

The format is rather informal and will include open discussion of current cases and issues, in-class problem solving, and library/computer lab practice sessions. Students will receive training in legal writing techniques, exam taking, library use and computer research methods. The class schedule is subject to change. Topics and course materials may be adjusted according to current events and students' experience with and interests in particular legal issues. Grades will be based on class participation, several writing assignments, a brief oral presentation and an exam.

Major subject areas covered in this class include:

- History of the U.S. Legal System
- Source of Laws & Regulatory Mechanisms
- Legal Research Techniques & Resources
- Legal Writing
- Surviving Law and Policy Classes
- Constitutional Law
- Litigation Basics & Civil Procedure
- Torts
- Contracts
- Property
- Criminal Law & Procedure
- How the Basic Areas of Law Relate to Your Specialty
- The Art of Oral Presentation

ATTENDANCE - Students must attend at least 75% of class meetings in order to receive credit for this course. Alternate arrangements can be made for good reason by contacting Professor Reis or CITPL Program Coordinator.

ASSIGNMENTS - There will be several in-class and out of class writing assignments, a brief oral presentation and an exam.

Readings: assignments for this class will come from a variety of sources including online materials, handouts and the textbooks listed below. Assignments will be posted approximately one week before each class on the class Web site at <http://www.msintroclass.com>.

GRADES - Students will receive two separate grades. The grade for IT 800 (worth 2 credit hours) will be based 70% on class participation (including the oral presentation) and 30% on the exam. The grade for IT 805 (worth 1 credit hour) will be based on the writing assignments:

Writing assignment #1 = 5%
Writing assignment #2 = 5%
Writing assignment #3 (draft) = 15%
Writing assignment #4 = 30%
Writing assignment #5 = 35%

In addition to the graded assignments, there will be some in-class exercises that will be worth 10% if all are completed.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jay M. Feinman, *Law 101: Everything You Need to Know About the American Legal System* (2d Ed., Oxford Publishing 2006)

Toni M. Fine, *American Legal Systems: A Resource and Reference Guide* (Anderson Publishing 1997)

Amy E. Sloan, *Basic Legal Research* (3rd ed. 2006)

SUGGESTED TEXTS

Black's Law Dictionary

Lloyd Bonfield, *American Law and the American Legal System in a Nutshell* (Thompson/West 2006)

Helene Shapo & Marshall Shapo, *Law School Without Fear* (2d ed. Foundation Press 2002).

Mark Wojcik *Illinois Legal Research* (Carolina Ac. Press, 2003)

Richard Wydick, *Plain English for Lawyers* (Carolina Ac. Press, 2005)

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change):

Class #1 (August 26, 2008) - INTRODUCTION

Class #2 (September 2, 2008) - HISTORY & STRUCTURE OF THE U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM

Class #3 (September 9, 2008) - INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL WRITING, SOURCES OF LAWS (Paper 1 Due)

Class #4 (September 16, 2008) - LEGAL RESEARCH

Class #5 (September 23, 2008) - CONSTITUTIONAL LAW (Paper 2 Due)

No class September 30th

Class #6 (October 7, 2008) - LEGAL REASONING & STATUTORY ANALYSIS

Class #7 (October 14, 2008) - TORT LAW (Paper 3 Due)

Class #8 (October 21, 2008) - CONTRACT LAW

Class #9 (October 28, 2008) - PROPERTY LAW (Return of Paper 3)

Class #10 (November 4, 2008) - LITIGATION BASICS & CIVIL PROCEDURE

Class #11 (November 11, 2008) - CRIMINAL LAW & PROCEDURE (Paper 4 Due)

Class #12 (November 18, 2008) - LEGAL BUILDING BLOCKS & PRESENTATIONS

Class #13 (November 25, 2008) - PRESENTATIONS CONT. & WRAP-UP (Return of Paper 4)

Class #14 (December 2, 2008) – FINAL EXAMINATION

December 9 -- Final Paper Due

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS (Subject to change):

Note: Students should check the class Web site at <http://www.msintroclass.com> on a regular basis for updates and changes to readings and assignments.

Class #1 (August 26, 2008) - INTRODUCTION

Handout: Articles

Handout: Orrin Kerr, How to Read a Legal Opinion:
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1160925

Class #2 (September 2, 2008) - HISTORY & STRUCTURE OF THE U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM

Read: Feinman, pp 1-7 and Fine, pp 1-27 and Sloan, Chapter 1

Browse the following site:

Understanding the Federal Courts: an Online Tutorial
<http://www.uscourts.gov/understand02/index.html>

Writing Assignment #1 Discussed.

Writing Assignment #2 assigned (to be due at class #3).

Class #3 (September 9, 2008) - INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL WRITING, SOURCES OF LAWS

Read: Fine, pp 29-46 and Sloan, Chapters 2 & 3

Browse the following sites:

U.S. House of Representatives, *How Our Laws are Made* (2003)
<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>

U.S. House of Representatives, *The Legislative Process*
<http://www.house.gov/house/Legproc.html>

U.S. Senate, *Learning About the Legislative Process*
http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/d_three_sections_with_teasers/process.htm

Case Handouts:

TBA

Suggested links to online legal research sites:

Introduction to Legal Research

http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/lawlibrary/Legal_Research/Legal_Research.htm

Wikipedia Legal Research http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_research

Law Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/law/public/law.html>

FindLaw 101 <http://www.hg.org/cgi-bin/redirect?url=http://consumer.findlaw.com/congen/index.html>

Internet Law Library: U.S. Federal Laws (by source)

<http://www.lawguru.com/ilawlib/2.htm>

Class #4 (September 16, 2008) - LEGAL RESEARCH

Read: Fine, pp 47-60 and Sloan, Chapter 10

Also, Start Reading : Feinman, pp 8 – 90 (to be discussed during class 5)

Handouts

Lexis or Westlaw Training

Class #5 (September 23, 2008) - CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Read: Feinman, pp 8 - 90

Class #6 (October 7, 2008) - LEGAL REASONING & STATUTORY ANALYSIS

Read: Fine, pp 85-100

Review: Fine, pp 47-60

Writing Assignment #4 assigned in class – to be due in Class #7.

Class #7 (October 14, 2008) - TORT LAW

Read: Feinman, pp 137-179 and Sloan, Chapter 9

Class #8 (October 21, 2008) - CONTRACT LAW

Read: Feinman, pp 181 – 214, and Sloan, Chapter 12

Writing Assignment #5 assigned in class – to be due in Class #11.

Class #9 (October 28, 2008) - PROPERTY LAW

Read: Feinman, pp 215-255.

Class #10 (November 4, 2008) - LITIGATION BASICS & CIVIL PROCEDURE

Read: Feinman, pp 91 - 136.

Class #11 (November 11, 2008) - CRIMINAL LAW & PROCEDURE

Read: Feinman, pp 257-345

Handout: Moot Court Problem and Briefs.

Class #12 (November 18, 2008) - LEGAL BUILDING BLOCKS &
PRESENTATIONS

Class #13 (November 25, 2008) - PRESENTATIONS CONT. & WRAP-UP

Class #14 (December 2, 2008) - IN-CLASS EXAMINATION