

SUBSTANTIVE LAW OVERVIEW/INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL ANALYSIS
IT 800/805 –Fall 2009
SYLLABUS (Tentative)

Professor Leslie Ann Reis

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4-6 pm
and by appointment

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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 IT, IP and Privacy
- 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 the CITPL Program Coordinator.

ASSIGNMENTS – In addition to the reading assignments, there will be several in-class and out of class writing assignments, a brief oral presentation and an exam.

Reading assignments for this class will come from a variety of sources including online materials, handouts and the textbooks listed below. Tasks relating to the readings may be assigned. Assignments may be updated throughout the semester. Updated 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 75% on class participation (including the oral presentation) and 25% on the exam.

The grade for IT 805 (worth 1 credit hour) will be based on the writing assignments:

- Writing assignment #1 = 5% (ISSUE SPOTTING)
- Writing assignment #2 = 10% (CASE/PLEADING ANALYSIS)
- Writing assignment #3 = 10% (SCAVENGER HUNT)
- Writing assignment #4 = 35% (POSITION PAPER)
- Writing assignment #5 = 40%

In addition to the graded assignments, there will be some in-class exercises.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Katherine A. Currier, *et al*, *The Study of Law* (2d Ed., Wolters Kluwer 2009). [Currier]
- Kunz, Schmedemann, *et. al*. *The Process of Legal Research* (7th Ed). [Kunz]
- Additional required readings will be posted on the course Web site

SUGGESTED TEXTS:

- *Black's Law Dictionary*
- Toni M. Fine, *American Legal Systems: A Resource and Reference Guide*
- Bryan A. Garner, *The Redbook, A Manual on Legal Style*, (2d Ed.)

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change) :

Class #1 (August 27, 2009) - INTRODUCTION

Class #2 (September 3, 2009) - SOURCES OF LAWS, INTRODUCTION TO “LEGAL” RESEARCH & LIBRARY TOUR

Class #3 (September 10, 2009) - HISTORY & STRUCTURE OF THE U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM, DISPUTE RESOLUTION & CIVIL LITIGATION

Class #4 (September 17, 2009) - CONSTITUTIONAL LAW & LEGAL RESEARCH

Class #5 (September 24, 2009) - ONLINE LEGAL RESEARCH TRAINING

(October 1, 2009) – NO CLASS

Class #6 (October 8, 2009) - TORTS

Class #7 (October 15, 2009) - CONTRACTS

Class #8 (October 22, 2009) - PROPERTY LAW, LEGAL REASONING & STATUTORY ANALYSIS

Class #9 (October 29, 2009) - CRIMINAL LAW & PROCEDURE

Class #10 (November 5, 2009) - ADVANCED COMPUTER RESEARCH

Class #11 (November 12, 2009) - LEGAL BUILDING BLOCKS

Class #12 (November 19, 2009) – THE ART OF ORAL PRESENTATION

Class #13 (December 3, 2009) - EXAM TIPS & WRAP-UP

FINAL EXAMINATION (TBA)

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 27, 2009) - INTRODUCTION

Read: Posted Articles

- **Writing #1 Assigned In Class** - short issue spotting essay based on a news item
Due: submitted to both instructors via email on or before 11:59pm Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2009

Class #2 (September 3, 2009) - SOURCES OF LAWS & INTRODUCTION TO “LEGAL” RESEARCH & LIBRARY TOUR

Read: Currier, pp 1-62
Kunz, ??

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

Tasks:

News Forum - As you become more familiar with legal concepts, you'll start seeing legal issues in nearly every news story you hear or read. When you come across a news story that you feel is relevant to this class, please post a link to it on the “News Forum” on the course Web site. This is an ongoing task. Your forum postings will be counted as part of your participation grade.

Glossary - There are many "terms of art" used in this class. If you encounter a term that you are unfamiliar with, look it up and enter a brief definition in the glossary on the course Web site (your fellow classmates will thank you). This is an ongoing task. Any entries made to the glossary will count toward your participation grade.

Class #3 (September 10, 2009) - HISTORY & STRUCTURE OF THE U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM, DISPUTE RESOLUTION & CIVIL LITIGATION

Read: Currier, pp63-121

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

Case Handouts: TBA

Task: As you read through the materials, think about the Civil Litigation questions that are raised in your mind. When you are done with the readings, please draft at least two questions based on the readings assigned for class #3 that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Civil Litigation” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, September 9, 2009.

Guest Speaker: TBA

- **Writing #2 Assigned In Class**

Due: Submit via email to both instructors prior to 5pm on September 17, 2009.

Class #4 (September 17, 2009) - CONSTITUTIONAL LAW & LEGAL RESEARCH

Read: Currier, pp 125 – 183 (Summary)
Kunz, pp ????

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-](http://www.hg.org/cgi-bin/redir.cgi?url=http://consumer.findlaw.com/congen/index.html)

[bin/redir.cgi?url=http://consumer.findlaw.com/congen/index.html](http://consumer.findlaw.com/congen/index.html)

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

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

Task: Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Constitutional Law” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, September 16, 2009.

Guest Speaker:

- **Writing #3 Assigned In Class** – scavenger hunt

Due: Submit via email to both instructors prior to 5pm, October 8, 2009

Class #5 (September 24, 2009) - - Westlaw or Lexis Training

Read: TBA

Class #6 (October 8, 2009) - TORT LAW

Read: Currier, pp 187 – 248 (Summary)

Task: Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Tort Law” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009.

Guest Speaker:

Class #7 (October 15, 2009) - CONTRACT LAW

Read: Currier, pp 255 - 297 (Summary)

Task: Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Contract Law” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009.

Guest Speaker:

- **Writing #4 Assigned In Class**

Due: Submitted to both instructors prior to 5pm, November 5, 2009

Note - if you would like the instructors to review a draft of this assignment, please submit your draft via email prior to the beginning of class #9 (October 29, 2009)

Class #8 (October 22, 2009) - PROPERTY LAW, LEGAL REASONING & STATUTORY ANALYSIS

Read: Currier, pp 305 – 328.

Note - the textbook gives a very brief overview of estate planning. Read this section for your own information, however, we will not discuss it in detail in class.

Kunz, ???

Task: Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Property Law” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009.

Guest Speaker:

Class #9 (October 29, 2009) - CRIMINAL LAW & PROCEDURE

Read: Currier, pp 445 - 510

Task: Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speaker. Post your questions to the “Criminal Law” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2009.

Guest Speakers:

Class #10 (November 5, 2009) - ADVANCED COMPUTER RESEARCH

Read: TBA

Writing Assignment #4 Due!

Class #11 (November 12, 2009) - LEGAL BUILDING BLOCKS

Read: TBA

Task: At this point in the semester you are likely seeing the connections between the basic areas of law and what you already know about the subjects you’ll be studying as you pursue your MS degree. As you read through the materials, think about how the basic areas of law relate to intellectual property, information technology and privacy law. The guest speakers will help clarify the relationships and answer your questions about how constitutional, tort, contract, property and criminal law tie into IP, IT and privacy law. Please draft at least two questions (but not more than ten questions) that you would like answered by the guest speakers. Post your questions to the “Legal Building Blocks” forum on the course Web site prior to 9am Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2009.

Class #12 (November 19, 2009) – THE ART OF ORAL PRESENTATION

Read: TBA

Task: TBA

- **Writing #5 Assigned In Class**
Due: December 9, 2009

Class #13 (December 3, 2009) - EXAM TIPS & WRAP-UP

Read: TBA

In-Class Practice Exam

FINAL EXAMINATION – December 12, 2009

Writing Assignment #5 - Due prior to 11:59 pm, December 9, 2009