

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Introduction to Law at Levin

POS 4911/Section 29483

Fall 2024

Class Meetings: W 4 (10:40-11:30)

Location: Holland 382

Instructor: Bernard O'Donnell

Office Hours: M 8:30-9:30 (**Zoom: 355 143 0114**)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Who gets rights? What is property and how do you transfer it? Can you contract anything? What does it mean to be harmed, and then “made whole”? What are constitutions? This course is dedicated to exploring these questions by introducing students to legal investigations at the University of Florida’s Levin College of Law.

Spend fall 2024 meeting with and listening to Levin Law faculty talk about what they teach and study. This one credit course has no exam. Instead, it invites you to explore law in the classroom, to seek it out in readings, and to blog about what you find.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who successfully complete this course will gain a better appreciation of (at least) three main areas:

- What legal topics comprise the legal system?
- What is the role of lawyers in this system?
- What is the role of law in our society?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

While there are no required texts for this course, presenters will ask you to read a short

article, statute, or opinion before each class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Please note that you are only allowed ONE unexcused absence. Any additional unexcused absences will result in a dramatic grade reduction of one full letter.

Attendance is MANDATORY. Roll will (typically) be taken each class.

Please notify me beforehand if you need to miss a class. You are expected to come to class on time (arriving before the class is scheduled to begin) and to stay until the end.

Please let me know before class if you must leave early.

COURSE POLICIES:

Special Accommodations:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center at University of Florida Dean of Students Office, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/getstarted.php>. The Dean of Students Office will review the case and, if appropriate, provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Participation:

You are expected to come to class on time, prepared, and ready to participate. Your participation will contribute to the learning of your fellow classmates. A significant percentage of your grade will be determined by your participation.

Late Assignments:

If you are unable to turn in an assignment on time, please contact me BEFOREHAND to discuss alternatives. Unfortunately, in this class late assignments will not be accepted. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Computer Use:

Please be advised that laptops and cellphones are NOT allowed in this class. Take notes on whatever you feel is interesting or useful but do so only with pen and paper. Students can use electronic devices only with special permission. **Students found to be using electronic devices during class time will be docked one whole letter grade.** This policy is for your benefit, for the benefit of your fellow learners, and for my benefit.

Classroom Climate:

Equitable participation in this class requires the use of inclusive language, methods, and materials. Students are expected to use inclusive language in written and oral work, and to respect viewpoints expressed by others. At the same time, students are encouraged to identify language, methods, and materials used in this course that do not contribute to an inclusive classroom climate.

Academic Integrity and the UF Honor Code:

All students at the University of Florida are expected to adhere fully to University of Florida Student Honor Code, view at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>. The Honor Code outlines the expectations for student conduct in regard to academic honesty. All students should review this policy. The policy places full responsibility on students to know and adhere to these standards for academic integrity. All examinations, quizzes, projects, and assignments are subject to this policy. Maintaining strict academic integrity is a priority; all instructors will fully enforce the UF Honor Code in their classes.

Incomplete Grades:

An incomplete grade is described in the Undergraduate Catalog. It is the instructor's discretion as to what extenuating circumstances warrant adequate excuse for not

completing required course work.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

This class meets once a week for 50 minutes. All students are required to attend regularly, participate enthusiastically, and read all required assignments carefully.

To help ensure this, each week I invite students to explain, in 150 words, what point in the reading (assigned by the faculty member) or lecture best explains that week's topic and why.

- These short pieces can be physically submitted during class.
- They are due before the start of class—late submissions will receive a grade of zero.

Attendance and Participation 50% Blog submissions 50%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Please be advised that the following schedule should not be construed as a guarantee that all of the topics will be covered. The instructor reserves the right to modify this schedule as he deems appropriate in his sole discretion.

Week 1 (8/28): syllabus

Week 2 (9/4): Danaya Wright (Property)

Week 3 (9/11): M Smith (Experiential Learning)

Week 4 (9/18): Ben Johnson (Article III Juris.)

Week 5 (9/25): Matthew Kim (Statutory Interp.)

Week 6 (10/2): Judy Clausen (Clinical Education)

Week 7 (10/9): flex day

Week 8 (10/16): Heather Kolinsky (Legal Writing)

Week 9 (10/23): Career Services

Week 10 (10/30): Sarah Wolking (Criminal Law)

Week 11 (11/6): Stacy Steinberg interns (Juvenile Law)

Week 12 (11/13): Student Panel

Week 13 (11/20): Chris Bailey (Admissions)

Week 14 (11/27): no class

Week 15 (12/4): flex day