**CRIM. 406-001 Family Law and the Justice System Course Syllabus**

 **SPRING 2019**

**Instructor: Lillian Brooks, JD**

**Contact:** lbrooks7@gmu.edu

**Class: 4:30-7:10 Thursdays- Location: INNOVATION HALL 132**

**Office Hours: There are no office hours, the professor is available by appointment or before and after class**

Textbook required for this course is:

Family Law (6th edition) by William Statsky, Delmar Cengage Learning. \*Earlier editions are acceptable for this class.

Note also: this text is generally used for paralegal training but contains important information for this course. Skip all references to paralegal training and practice in the text.

**Course Objectives:**

* Students will understand theories of marriage and family
* Students will learn criminal and civil actions involving family
* Students will understand the legal rights of parents and children
* Students will understand legal issues and procedures of divorce, annulment and child support and custody

**Course Expectations:**

All students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments and research articles as assigned to be fully prepared for class. The class format is interactive and class participation and attendance is expected and calculated as 15% of the student’s final grade. Attendance is taken at every class. Students should email me in advance if they are unable to attend class due to illness or an emergency. Students are expected to remain in class for the entire time unless there is an emergency.

 Students are responsible for all information covered in class which is addition to the reading in the text and research. The professor’s power points for the lectures will be distributed on blackboard because much of the information to be covered is complex or not contained in the text. The exams in this class follow the information contained in the text ad class discussions. There will be 4 quizzes during the semester in lieu of a midterm and a final exam.

**Final Grades:**

Class participation: 15%

Individual /Group paper and Oral Presentation – 30%

Quizzes (4) – 20% (5% each)

Case Assignments – 15%

Final Exam – 20%

Extra credit – Students may bring in articles on relevant topics of this course (in addition to assignments indicated) to share with the class for additional credit. There is a limit of three articles for extra credit.

Generally, the following scale is used to grade a student’s work in the class:  **A (100-90) B+(89-85), B (84-80), C+(79-75), C (74-70), D (69-65) below 64 is an F**

**The Research Project:**

Students can work individually or be part of a team of no more than two (2) or three (3) members to produce a research paper after selecting a topic for the research paper and class oral presentation. Student teams should divide the work and compile the research information and prepare a power point and/or videos for their oral presentation. The individual presentations are graded on the paper and presentation and teams are graded collectively on the research paper but individually on the oral presentation. Therefore, it is important for teams that each person’s contribution in the research be well presented to the class. The bibliography for the research paper **is included with the paper which is due the same day as the oral presentation.** Team/individual meetings with the professor will be arranged prior to the individual/team presentations to take any questions that arise. The due date for the individual/team research and oral project will be determined in class. Students are responsible for being prepared with their project on his/her due date.

Students may choose a topic of interest related to this course after approval by the professor. Suggested topics for research are will be distributed in class and on blackboard.

**The research paper should be between 10-12 pages, not including the bibliography and title page. (15% of grade) for individual projects and 15-20 pages for teams.**

**The oral presentation should be at least 15 minutes in length (15% of grade)**

**Case Review Assignments:**

In lieu of a midterm - You are responsible for case review assignments as indicated on the syllabus on various family law issues deliberated by the U.S. Supreme Court and are landmark decisions. As part of the final grade, students are responsible to research the case indicated, write a short summary of the facts of the case, the decision of the court on the issue and whether you agree with the decision of the court and why. (For testing purposes, you will not be responsible to memorize the names of these cases, only the court’s decision)

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to follow the George Mason University Honor Code which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying and stealing are all prohibited.

Your work must be in your own words or the source of a quote must be carefully documented. Your work and the work of individual team members must be documented to determine individual contributions to the group project.

Violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

See honorcode.gmu.edu for more information.

**Special Accommodations: Please see me privately at the beginning of the first class with documentation regarding any special accommodations you will need due to a disability which has been approved by the Office of Disability Services.**

Likewise, documentation for special consideration for athletic or religious purposes should be brought to the attention of the professor at the first class or as soon as possible.

In addition, unexpected serious personal emergencies and health problems may arise during the semester that prevents a student from completing the course requirements. Students should inform the professor as soon as possible in these situations.

**Civility**

Please be respectful of others in the class. Give your fellow classmates a chance to participate without personal criticisms. Be attentive to presentations. Comments/concerns/questions regarding the course requirements and exams should be made to the professor personally or by email. **TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND Laptops** should only be used for taking notes – do not search the internet or communicate with others outside the class. Food and drinks are permissible, but you are responsible for discarding your trash.

Schedule and Assignments

January 24 INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW OF SYLLABUS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS, INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY LAW AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

 **Assignment for next class: Read text Pages 2-6, 10-14, 103--114,126-130**

 **Case Assignment: Lane vs. Lane (2006)**

January 31

 FAMILY LAW TERMINOLOGY, PRE-MARITAL AND POST-MARITAL CONTRACTS

**Assignment for next class: Chapter 5: page 147, bottom of page 151-162, pages 194-198.**

 **Case Assignment**: **Obergefell vs. Hodges, Ohio (2015)**

February 7 TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE AND ALTERNATIVES

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 6 pages 205-236**

 February 14 ANNULMENTS

 QUIZ # 1 (January 24- February 7)

 **Assignment for the next class: Chapter 7, pages 241-268**

February 21 DISSOLVING A MARRIAGE: DIVORCE PART I

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 7, pages 268-286**

 **Case Assignment: Orr vs. Orr (1979)**

February 28 DISSOLVING A MARRIAGE/DIVORCE PART II

**Assignment for next class: Chapter 8, pages 293-295, pages 300-331, pages 334-339,**

**pages 345-345**

March 7 SPOUSAL SUPPORT AND DIVISION OF PROPERTY

 QUIZ # 2 (lessons February 14 – February 28)

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 9**

**March 14 SPRING BREAK**

March 21 CHILD CUSTODY

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 10 (all)**

March 28 CHILD SUPPORT

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 13 pages 516-534, Chapter 16 pages 594-608**

 **Case Assignments: In Re Baby M (1988) and A.G.R vs. D.R.H & S.H (2009)**

April 4 PATERNITY AND NON-MARITAL CHILDREN

 SCIENCE OF MOTHERHOOD

 QUIZ #3 (Lessons March 21 and March 28)

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 12, PAGES 541-553**

 **Case Assignment: Castle vs. Gonzales (2005**)

April 11 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/LEGAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 14, pages 541-553**

April 18 LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

 QUIZ # 4 (Lessons April 4 and April 11)

 **Assignment for next class – Chapter 15, pages 558-587**

April 25 TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

 **Assignment for next class: Chapter 17, pages 617-632**

May 2 TORTS AND FAMILY LAW

**Assignment for next class: study for final exam, review marriage and divorce and the final three lessons)**

May 9 FINAL EXAM (Feb 7, 21, 28 and April 18 – present)