

**INTRODUCTION TO U.S. LAW
and
INTRODUCTION TO U.S. LEGAL PRACTICE
SYLLABUS**

Section 1, Professor Burke: VH 204

Section 2, Professor Chung: VH 210

Section 3, Professor Liebert: VH 214

Section 4, Professor Lebovits: VH 220

August 12 – 23, 2024

Monday through Friday

9:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m., 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes: The purpose of these courses is to prepare you for your LLM year at NYU School of Law by providing you with a foundation in U.S. law and practical legal skills. The Intro courses include a broad overview of the U.S. legal system, close study of an evolving line of cases, and the basics of U.S. legal research, writing, and analysis. The courses highlight the methods and background you will need to succeed, especially during your first semester. You will also get practice taking law school exams and evaluating exam answers.

Early Assignment & Class Requirements: Please do the first assignment **before class on Monday, August 12**. If possible, read the line of cases in the course reader before the first class as well. Throughout the two-week courses, you must attend class every day, be prepared to discuss the readings, and submit assigned written work to the course site.

We will use only the *Introduction to U.S. Law* course site for course materials, assignment links, and links to recordings. We will not use the *Introduction to U.S. Legal Practice* course site. Each day is divided into two sessions: *Intro. to U.S. Law* (Session 1) and *Intro. to U.S. Legal Practice* (Session 2).

Required Reading, available for purchase at NYU Bookstore and online:

- Coughlin, Rocklin, and Patrick, *A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis*, 4th ed. (Carolina Academic Press, 2024). An e-book is [available for purchase here](#).
- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, 21st ed. (The Harvard Law Review Association, 2020). An electronic version is [available for purchase here](#).
- Course reader containing the cases studied in the second week, posted on the course site.
- Additional readings posted on course site, including the U.S. Constitution, the Stolen Paintings Case, the Stolen Paintings Client Transcript, and the *McKenzie Monitor* article, “Overlooked No More.”

Examination: You must take and pass the final two-hour examination on Friday morning, August 23, 2024. At the end of the first week, you will take a midterm quiz to help you assess your learning. You will receive a score on your midterm quiz, but the score will not count towards your final pass/fail grade.

Exam Review: An additional mandatory class meeting on Wednesday, September 4 (Legislative Monday) at 1:10 p.m. – 2:25 p.m. is devoted to a review of the exam. Examples of excellent exam answers will be posted to the course site.

Recommended Reading:

- Karen M. Ross, *Essential Legal English in Context: Understanding the Vocabulary of U.S. Law and Government* (NYU Press, 2019). NYU Prof. Karen Ross explains the terminology of the U.S. legal system, clarifying legal English words that often are confusing or unfamiliar for foreign-trained lawyers.
- Jay M. Feinman, *Law 101: Everything You Need to Know About American Law*, 6th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2023). An overview of the U.S. legal system that covers the main subjects taught in the first year of law school.
- Barry Friedman and John C.P. Goldberg, *Open Book: The Inside Track to Law School Success*, 2nd ed. (Aspen, 2016). NYU Prof. Barry Friedman and Harvard Prof. John Goldberg explain how to prepare for class and write law school exams; the book includes 18 actual law school exams, model answers, and student answers.
- John Humbach, *Whose Monet? An Introduction to the American Legal System*, 2nd ed. (Aspen, 2016). An introduction to civil procedure that focuses on a dispute over ownership of a painting.
- Terry L. Jordan, *The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It*, 8th ed. (Oak Hill Publishing Co., 2012). A small booklet that includes the full text of the U.S. Constitution.

NY Bar Eligibility Requirements: Students who need the LLM for NY bar eligibility may count the credits earned for *Introduction to U.S. Law* and *Introduction to U.S. Legal Practice* toward eligibility requirements. *Introduction to U.S. Law* fulfills the requirement to take two credits in American Legal Studies; *Introduction to U.S. Legal Practice* provides one of the two credits required in Legal Research, Writing and Analysis (the other credit can be earned by taking *Graduate Lawyering I*).

Assessments: On Friday, August 16, you will take a multiple-choice midterm quiz in class. You will receive your results as soon as you complete the quiz, and we will review the quiz answers in class.

On Friday, August 23, you will take a final essay examination. The following week, you will receive your final exam score of either “3 = exceeds expectations,” “2 = meets expectations,” or “1 = below expectations.” Most students receive “2 = meets expectations.” Approximately 15% of students receive “3 = exceeds expectations” and 15% receive “1 = below expectations.” Examples of excellent exams will be posted on the course site.

Administrative Assistant and Teaching Assistants: Caitlin Dean is the administrative assistant for the Graduate Lawyering Program. They can be reached at (212) 998-6555, caitlin.dean@nyu.edu. Contact information for Teaching Assistants is posted on the course site.

Graduate Lawyering I: One- and two-credit sections of *Graduate Lawyering I* are offered in the fall semester. *Graduate Lawyering I* is a graded course and partially fulfills NY Bar eligibility requirements. We encourage all LLM students to take *Graduate Lawyering I* in their first semester at NYU Law. Students receiving a score of “1 = below expectations” on the final Intro exam are encouraged to take the two-credit *Graduate Lawyering I: Intensive* course. Students receiving a score of “3 = exceeds

expectations” may take spring-semester Graduate Lawyering courses without having taken *Graduate Lawyering I* in the fall semester. For all other students, *Graduate Lawyering I* is a prerequisite for spring-semester Graduate Lawyering courses.

Schedule: The Intro courses meet every day: Session 1, 9:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. and Session 2, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. We will provide regular short breaks during the class meetings. An additional mandatory class session will be held on Wednesday, September 4 (Legislative Monday), 1:10 p.m. – 2:25 p.m., to review the final exam.

Week 1:

Readings to complete before class on August 12:

- The U.S. Constitution (posted on course site)
- *A Lawyer Writes*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4

Monday, August 12

Session 1:

- “No Vehicles in the Park” In-class Exercise (PowerPoint presentation)

Session 2:

- How to Read and Brief a Case (PowerPoint presentation)
- Brief and review the Stolen Painting Case

Homework for Tuesday, August 13:

Read:

- How to Read a Legal Opinion (posted on course site)
- How to Write a Case Brief (posted on course site)
- The Stolen Painting Case (posted on course site)

Prepare a written brief of the Stolen Painting Case. **Upload** your brief to the assignment link on the *Intro. To U.S. Law* course site. **Bring 4 copies of your case brief to class** or have an electronic copy ready to share with four classmates.

Tuesday, August 13

Session 1:

- Small group and class discussion of the Stolen Painting Case briefs
- Small group and class discussion of hypotheticals based on the Stolen Painting Case
- Overview of the U.S. Constitution (PowerPoint presentation)

Session 2:

- Overview of the U.S. Constitution (PowerPoint presentation)

Homework for Wednesday, August 14:

Read:

- *A Lawyer Writes*, Chapters 6, 8, and 10
- *A Lawyer Writes*, Introduction to Chapter 7 (pp. 105-06)
- Stolen Painting Client Transcript and the *McKenzie Monitor* article

Prepare a list of the facts in the transcript and article that you believe to be legally relevant in light of our precedent, the Stolen Painting Case. **Upload** your list to the assignment link on the *Intro. To U.S. Law* course site. **Bring 4 copies of your list of facts to class** or have an electronic copy ready to share with four classmates.

Wednesday, August 14

Session 1:

- Small group and class discussion of legally relevant facts in the Stolen Painting Client Transcript and the *McKenzie Monitor* article
- Overview of the U.S. Legal System (PowerPoint presentation)
- The Litigation Process (PowerPoint presentation)

Session 2:

- Introduction to Legal Research: Lexis

Homework for Thursday, August 15:

Write a legal argument supporting either the original owner's or the good-faith purchaser's position in the Stolen Painting Client Transcript, using the Stolen Painting Case as precedent. **Upload** your argument to the assignment link on the *Intro. To U.S. Law* course site. **Bring 4 copies of your argument to class** or have an electronic copy ready to share with four classmates.

Thursday, August 15

Session 1:

- The Litigation Process (PowerPoint presentation)

Session 2:

- Small group and class discussion of arguments for original owner and for good-faith purchaser based on the Stolen Painting Case

Homework for Friday, August 16:

Study material covered during the week. Midterm quiz will be closed book.

Read *A Lawyer Writes*, Appendix A, "Effective Memo: Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress" and **review** Chapter 6.

Friday, August 16

Session 1:

9:00 – 10:00

- Multiple-choice midterm quiz

10:15 – 12:10

- Midterm review
- Introduction to objective memo-writing and exam-writing
- Background of line of cases for Week Two

Session 2:

- In-class research assignment related to the line of cases

Homework for Monday, August 19:

Read and write case briefs for *your section's line of cases* and be prepared for class discussion. **Bring four copies of your case brief to class each day** or have electronic copies ready to share with four classmates.

Complete the research assignment started in class Friday and **upload it** to the assignment link on the *Intro. to U.S. Law* course site by 9:00 a.m. Monday.

Week 2:

Monday, August 19

Session 1:

- Discussion of line of cases

Session 2:

- Continued discussion of cases

Homework for Tuesday, August 20:

Brief cases assigned by professor and be prepared for class discussion. **Bring four copies of your case briefs to class** or have electronic copies ready to share.

Tuesday, August 20

Session 1:

- Discussion of line of cases

Session 2:

- Continued discussion of cases

Homework for Wednesday, August 21:

Study line of cases; **prepare** for practice exam.

Read *A Lawyer Writes*, Section 7.3 (pp. 141-54).

Wednesday, August 21

Session 1:

9:00-11:00

- In-class practice exam
- **Upload** your completed exam answer to the assignment link on the *Intro. to U.S. Law* course site

11:15-12:10

- How to cite, quote, paraphrase, and avoid plagiarism (PowerPoint presentation)
- Introduction to *The Bluebook* (PowerPoint presentation)

Session 2:

- Teaching Assistants' Exam Workshop

Homework for Thursday, August 22:

Review course materials and class notes, and bring questions for Thursday's Question and Answer session.

Thursday, August 22

Session 1:

- Course Evaluation
- Review of Practice Essay Exam
- Discussion of fall and spring Graduate Lawyering course offerings (PowerPoint presentation)
- Small-group work on outlining

Session 2:

- Wrap-up Question and Answer session

Homework for Friday, August 23:

Prepare for examination.

Friday, August 23

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- Final Exam

Wednesday, September 4

**1:10 – 2:25 p.m. (additional session)

- Exam-Review Session