

**PLSC 301 - American Legal System**  
**Instructor: Kathy Peterson, Attorney at Law**  
**Winter Term, 2016**  
**January 6 - April 28, 2016**

**PLSC 301 - Sec 07/CRN 24055 - Mon and Wed: 9:30-10:45 a.m. 306 Pray-Harrold**  
**E-Mail: [kpeters6@emich.edu](mailto:kpeters6@emich.edu) Office: 601H Pray-Harrold/487-3113**  
**Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.**

**Required Text:** Calvi, James V. and Susan Coleman. American Law and Legal Systems (Current edition) Pearson Prentice-Hall

**Course Description:** This course will feature a survey of the various substantive components of the American legal system and its function in a democratic society. This course provides an overview of the subjects that are taught in law schools to first year law students. It also provides a basic overview of the American legal system as it affects citizens in a democratic society. Special emphasis will focus on the substantive areas of civil law, including: Property law, Family law, Tort law, Civil Procedure, and Contracts. Legal reasoning and a history of the American legal system, including its common law origin, will be featured. A brief overview of the United States Constitution will also be provided.

**Grade Requirements:** Your final grade will be based upon a total of 200 points:

<b>2 exams (worth 60 points each)</b>	<b>= 120 points</b>
<b>Paper** (due March 30, 2016)</b>	<b>= 80 points</b>

<b>Grading Scale:</b>	<b>94-100% (188-200 points) = A</b>	<b>74-76% (148-153 points) = C</b>
	<b>90-93% (180-187 points) = A-</b>	<b>70-73% (140-147 points) = C-</b>
	<b>87-89% (174-179 points) = B+</b>	<b>67-69% (134-139 points) = D+</b>
	<b>84-86% (168-173 points) = B</b>	<b>64-66% (128-133 points) = D</b>
	<b>80-83% (160-167 points) = B-</b>	<b>60-63% (120-127 points) = D-</b>
	<b>77-79% (154-159 points) = C+</b>	<b>&lt;/= 59%(&lt;/= 119 points) = F</b>

**\*\*Your paper will be focused on a topic of your choice - a question that has a legal answer to it. You will choose a question that you have always wanted to know the answer to, and research how this question is addressed by the American legal system. This paper will be worth a total of 80 points. You will receive 5 points for turning in your question for research by Wednesday March 2, 2016. Your paper topic can be one sentence long, but must be typed. Another 5 points will be given for at least five primary resources that you cite and reference in your paper. The remaining 70 points will be awarded based upon the quality and content of your paper and the fact of turning in your paper by the date which it is due. This paper should be a minimum of 7 pages in length. No electronic submissions of work product are accepted.**

**You will lose 2 points for every day that your paper is late after March 30, 2016.**

## **Rules of Classroom Etiquette:**

**Please do not text during class. Please.**

**No photographs of the Instructor's work product are permitted.**

**Civility toward other students and the Instructor is required. Civility means gracious consideration of others.**

**Academic integrity is also a requirement of this class. All students must comply with Eastern Michigan University's policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, found at: [www.emich.edu/sjs/violations.html](http://www.emich.edu/sjs/violations.html).**

**If you miss a class, you must get notes from another student in your class. I do not give copies of my work product to any student.**

## Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

<b>Week #1 - 1/6</b> Introduction to PLSC 301 Review of Syllabus Legal Reasoning What is the Law?	Calvi, Chap. 1
<b>Week #2 - 1/11, 1/13</b> History and the Law Common Law The United States Constitution: Supreme Law of the Land The Rule of Law and Due Process of Law Criminal Procedure	Calvi, Chap. 2  Calvi, Chap. 6 U.S. Constitution Calvi, Chap. 7
<b>Week #3 - 1/18, 1/20</b> Monday 1/18 - No classes - Martin Luther King Jr. Day Property Law	Calvi, Chap. 12
<b>Week #4 - 1/25, 1/27</b> Property Law Family Law	Calvi, Chap. 12 Calvi, Chap. 13
<b>Week #5 - 2/1, 2/3</b> Family Law	Calvi Chap. 13
<b>Week #6 - 2/8, 2/10</b> Family Law	Calvi, Chap. 13
<b>Week #7 - 2/15, 2/17</b> Family Law 2/17 - Exam #1	Calvi, Chap. 13
<b>2/21 - 2/28 - Winter Recess - No Classes</b>	
<b>Week #8 - 2/29, 3/2</b> Tort Law 3/2 - Paper Topic Due	Calvi, Chap. 10
<b>Week #9 - 3/7, 3/9</b> Tort Law	Calvi, Chap. 10

**Week #10 - 3/14, 3/16**

**Tort Law**

**Week #11 - 3/21, 3/23**

**Civil Procedure and Rules of Evidence**

**Calvi, Chap. 4**

**Week #12 - 3/28, 3/30**

**Civil Procedure and Rules of Evidence**

**Contract Law**

**3/30 - Papers Due**

**Calvi, Chap. 4**

**Calvi, Chap. 11**

**Week #13 - 4/4, 4/6**

**Contract Law**

**Calvi, Chap. 11**

**Week #14 - 4/11, 4/13**

**Contract Law**

**Calvi, Chap. 11**

**Week #15 - 4/19**

**Contract Law**

**4/19 - Revised Papers Due**

**Calvi, Chap. 11**

**4/21 - 4/27**

**Final Exams**

**Exam #2 for PLSC 301/Sec. 07 = Monday 4/25 - 7:30 - 9:00 a.m.**