Hello. In advance of our first meeting, please review the syllabus and then read:

- Yeazell casebook, pages xxv-xxvi (through 2nd full ¶), 1-4, 275-277
- The rest of this handout, Introduction to American Court Systems

I look forward to meeting you!
INTRODUCTION TO
AMERICAN COURT SYSTEMS
STRUCTURE OF FEDERAL AND TYPICAL STATE COURT SYSTEMS*

U.S. SUPREME COURT

U.S. COURTS OF APPEALS (13)

U.S. DISTRICT COURTS (94)

U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURTS

STATE SUPREME (HIGH) COURT

STATE INTERM. APP. COURTS

STATE TRIAL COURTS

STATE SPECIALTY COURTS

Claims based on federal law (except exclusive)

Most claims based on state law (except diversity)

Some (exclusive) claims based on federal law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleading Phase</th>
<th>Discovery Phase</th>
<th>Pretrial</th>
<th>Trial</th>
<th>Post-trial</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P files complaint, D answers or moves to dismiss</td>
<td>Parties investigate facts, take discovery, file and argue motions</td>
<td>Pretrial conference, possible motions for summary judgment or on evidentiary issues</td>
<td>Opening statements, P's evidence, D's evidence, closing statements, instructions to jury, jury deliberates and renders verdict</td>
<td>Judgment entered for winning party, post-trial motions heard</td>
<td>Losing party may appeal errors of law to a higher court</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 2-1: TIME LINE OF A TYPICAL CIVIL ACTION