**Introduction to the Law of the United States**

**University of Baltimore School of law**

**Fall 2020**

**Instructor:** Donna Starr-Deelen

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**Office Hours**: Monday 1-2pm and by appointment

**Class Day and Time**: The course will be online Saturday at 9am to 10:50am. There will be one break, after 45 minutes.

**Course Description**: The purpose of the course is to serve as an orientation into the legal system of the United States.

**Course Materials**:

Eldon Reiley and Connie de la Vaga, *The American Legal System for Foreign Lawyers*

**Publisher:** Aspen Publishers (December 29, 2011)

**ISBN-10:** 1454807253

**ISBN-13:** 978-1454807254

**Student Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students will be competent about the following concepts:

* The history of the US Constitution, with an introduction to its structure
* Individual rights established by the US Constitution will be introduced
* Principles such as federalism, the separation of powers, and the electoral college will be discussed
* The American judicial system will be discussed
* The methods of legal reasoning inherent in the common law system will be examined and compared with legal reasoning in civil law systems.

**Grades:**

The final grade will be determined as follows:

* **Class Participation and Attendance:** 20%

Students will be required to participate in class discussions and to answer discussion questions. The discussion questions will be based on the casebook and will be posted to the TWEN page. Students should answer one question in writing in one paragraph; these discussion questions will be due one week after they are posted to TWEN.

* **Writing Exercise**: 20%

There will be one writing exercise on the Law of the US class discussions and reading materials. Students will be allowed to choose a question and will be given 2 weeks in which to submit an essay in response.

* **Midterm Exam**: 20%

This will be a take-home midterm exam given to the class on October 5, 2020. Students will have one week in which to write and submit the midterm exam.

* **Final Examination**: 40%

**Course Expectations:**

According to the American Bar Association Standards for law schools, students should expect approximately one hour of classroom instruction and 2 hours of out-of-class work per week for each credit earned in class, or an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities, such as simulations, externships, clinical supervision, co-curricular activities, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. This course is 2 credits.

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments and to participate in a consistent manner in class discussions. The goal is to demonstrate your ability to read and digest the issues and discuss them with the class in a manner that facilitates learning by all students. The American law school experience uses the Socratic method and the case system, which we will discuss during the first class.

**Attendance:**

This class is an online class, so students are expected to complete every assignment and task listed in the syllabus. Students should keep their cameras on during class time to facilitate participation. If anyone needs to turn off their cameras, email me in advance so I know why you are unable to comply with the “camera on” policy of this course.

**Course Web Site:**

This course has a TWEN page that links to the syllabus, announcements, class assignments, and other class materials. Students are responsible for self-enrolling in the TWEN page and for checking it regularly.

**Zoom and Panopto:**

Please note that faculty are required to record zoom classes for the purposes of accommodating a disability, for students who cannot attend or so students who wish to review may have access to the full class content. All recordings are for the sole use of the class and may not be reproduced by students for any other purpose. Faculty cannot reproduce students’ voices or images from the class for any other purpose without additional student consent. All such recordings are protected by a UB login process based on where they are posted. Students may mute their microphone or turn off their camera if they do not consent to be recorded, but this may mean they need to find additional ways to participate in the class discussion. In addition, **students who turn off their camera and do not remain present for the class session may be subject to the Honor Code for misrepresenting attendance**.

**Class Cancellation:**

If the instructor must cancel a class, notices will be sent to students via email.

**Course Evaluations**:

It is a requirement of this course that students complete a course evaluation. The evaluation will be available later in the semester and is entirely anonymous. Faculty members will not have access to the feedback provided on course evaluations until after all grades are submitted.

**Academic Integrity**:

Students are obligated to refrain from acts that they know, or, under the circumstances have reason to know, will impair the academic integrity of the university and/or School of Law. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, misuse of library materials and technology, misrepresentation of academic matters, including attendance, inappropriate discussion of exams, and impeding the Honor Code process. The School of Law Honor Code and information about the process is available at <http://law.ubalt.edu/academics/policiesandprocedures/honor.code/>

**Title IX Sexual Misconduct and Nondiscrimination Policy:**

The University of Baltimore’s sexual misconduct and nondiscrimination policy is compliant with Federal laws prohibiting discrimination. Title IX requires that faculty, student employees and staff members report to the university any know, learned or rumored incidents of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking on the basis of sex, dating/intimate partner violence or sexual exploitation and/or related experiences or incidents. Policies and procedures related to Title IX and UB’s nondiscrimination policies can be found at:

<http://www.ubalt.edu/titleix>

**Disability Policy:**

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires an accommodation for academic programs, exams, or access to the university’s facilities, please contact Keri Hickey, Director of Student Support in the Office of Academic Affairs, at [khickey@ubalt.edu](mailto:khickey@ubalt.edu).

**Assignments:**

These will be posted on the class TWEN page. The first assignment for the first class is found in the casebook *The American Legal System for Foreign Lawyers*, mentioned above. Students should read pages 51 to 77 and be prepared to discuss the American system of legal education. Be ready to discuss how it differs from the legal education you received previously. Can you articulate any advantages to your system of legal education? What do you perceive are the advantages of the US system of legal education?