

**CIVIL LAW OF PERSONS**  
Professor Monica Hof Wallace  
Fall 2014

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Room LS 405  
TTH 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

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I. Course Summary

This is a course of Louisiana family law, with particular focus on the rights and obligations between married persons and their children. This course will present a detailed study of Book I of the Civil Code on Persons and the associated revised statute sections. During the course, comparisons will be made to family laws from other jurisdictions. This course will contain four experiential components, which will allow the students to learn client interviewing skills, petition drafting, oral advocacy, and courtroom etiquette. Students will gain an understanding of Louisiana's laws on marriage, divorce, spousal support, child custody, child support, filiation, and other related matters.

II. Books

- A. 2014 Louisiana Civil Code
- B. Katherine Shaw Spaht and John Randall Trahan, *Family Law in Louisiana* (Vandeplas Publishing 2009 ed.).

III. Course Outline, Assignments, and Blackboard

I will cover certain chapters in the textbook and will supplement the reading with Problem Sets to deepen your understanding of the material and to practice for this and the bar exam. I will provide you with a Schedule of Assignments for the semester that we will make every effort to follow.

This class will be conducted through Problem Sets and Classroom Experiences. Each Problem Set will contain an assignment, which will include readings from the casebook, Civil Code articles, Civil Code ancillaries, and Code of Civil Procedure articles. I will provide you with a Code of Civil Procedure Supplement so you will not have to purchase that Code. The Problem Sets will contain hypothetical situations that you must be prepared to discuss in class. You will be responsible for preparing the assigned readings, as well as solving the problems in each Problem Set.

I will post the Problem Sets as we get to them on Blackboard. I will also post my Powerpoint slides at least 24 hours before each class. Please print the slides and bring them with you to class. Please be sure that you can access Blackboard, because I will also use the site for announcements.

During this class, each of you will participate in four Experiences. These Experiences will be conducted in coordination with family law practitioners and judges. Each experience will have a specific assignment sheet, which will be provided to you throughout the semester.

#### IV. Use of electronics

Laptops and other electronic devices will not be permitted in class. Please know that I have instituted this rule because I am certain your classroom experience and learning comprehension will improve. I have taught both with and without laptops in the classroom and there is a marked difference in the classroom experience when no student has a laptop. I will use technology as a teaching tool, but it provides too great a distraction for the students, both for those using it, and for other students sitting around those using it. By participating in our discussions and handwriting your notes, your synthesizing skills will improve and you will gain a greater understanding of the material.

However, if it is necessary for you to receive a call or text during class (i.e., illness in family), please let me know prior to class and you will be permitted to use your phone.

#### V. Class Attendance and Preparation

Please be prompt for class. If you must enter the classroom late, please do so quietly and with minimal disruption. According to the University Handbook, you are required to attend 80% of all classes. I will keep a record of attendance, and if you do not meet the University requirements, you will be unable to take the final exam in the course and will receive an “unauthorized withdrawal” in the class. It is your responsibility to sign the roster each day during the class time. If you are more than ten minutes late for class, you are permitted to attend the class, but you are not permitted to sign the roster for that day.

You are expected to attend each class prepared. I will combine lecture, interactive dialogue, and experiential learning throughout the semester. To be prepared, I expect you to: (1) read the assigned Civil Code articles, Code of Civil Procedure articles, and revised statutes (2) read the assigned cases and notes in the text and (3) work through the Problems Sets. If you are **unprepared** for more than two classes during the semester, your final grade will be adjusted downward by a one-half letter grade for each class thereafter during which you were unprepared. If you are **prepared** and participate meaningfully in class on a regular basis (I consider quality, not quantity), you may receive, at my discretion, an upward adjustment of a one-half letter grade at the end of the semester.

If you have special needs (alternative testing, etc.), please contact the Director of Disability Services, in the Academic Resource Center in Marquette Hall, room 112, 504-865-2990.

#### VI. Evaluation

Your grade will be based on your performance in three of the four Classroom Experiences, one graded take-home assignment, and an examination at the end of the semester. The examination will be a three-hour, closed-book examination. The Problem Sets will be excellent study guides and I will provide you with practice exams at the end of the semester to assist in your preparation. I will also conduct a review session prior to the exam.

The relative weight of each Classroom Experience and the final examination will be as follows:

Experience 2: Drafting petition and rule	20%
Experience 3: Child Support worksheet	10%
Experience 4: Courtroom visit	10%
Take-home written assignment	10%
Final examination	50%

Your final examination grade can be adjusted upward or downward depending on your level of participation (see above).

#### VII. Office Hours

My office is in Room 411 in the Gauthier wing. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. I will schedule appointments as necessary and will be in my office most of the day, so please feel free to come by.

Please email me any specific questions, and I will respond promptly. In the event that I am not in my office or do not respond to your email, please call me on my cell phone.