

PSC 270: Introduction to Law and the Legal System

About Your Instructor

Brian K. Flatley is the instructor for this course. You may reach him at bkflatley@peace.edu

Brian Flatley is a Magistrate of District Court in Wake County, North Carolina, where he has served for the past fifteen years. He is currently assigned as a small claims judge. He has previously worked as an attorney in Elkin, North Carolina and Raleigh. Mr. Flatley received his bachelor's degree in English from Boston College, and his law degree from Wake Forest University.

Course Description

Fundamentally, this course provides students with an overview of the American law and legal system. It is imperative as both college students and citizens, to better understand how law, the Constitution, and the legal system operate within our country. As such, this course examines various general aspects of American law and the legal system (definitions, structures, processes, rights, sources, its impact upon society), as well as specifics such as contracts, torts, and criminal and civil law. This course is required for Political Science, Pre-Law, and Criminal Justice majors but would be valuable for any WPU student interested in furthering their knowledge of law within the United States.

Students will become more knowledgeable about how the legal system works, and how the law impacts daily business decisions. This course will not make the successful student into an attorney, but may help future businesspeople become smarter consumers of legal services.

What follows is a summary of the assignments and requirements. I reserve the right to alter, add or delete from these requirements; if unique learning opportunities present themselves for immediate use.

Requirements: Students will be responsible for the following:

- Reading weekly as assigned.

- Reviewing and considering summation/lecture notes.
- Responding to weekly discussion questions, requiring opinions and remarks on fact scenarios.
- Two two-hour timed proctored exams; one at the mid-way point and one the last week of the course.
- Students should expect to spend ten to fifteen hours per week on this course.

Course Information

Textbooks:

Hames and Ekern, **Introduction to Law**, Fifth Edition, Pearson.
ISBN 978-0-13-348456-4

Sandel, **Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?** Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

ISBN 978-0-37-418065-2

Reading Assignments:

Week One: Sandel, **Justice**, Chapters 1,2,3,5,7 and 9.

Week Two: Hames, **Introduction to Law**, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Week Three: Chapters 4 and 7

Week Four: Chapters 8 and 10

Week Five: Chapter 11

Week Six: Chapters 13 and 14.

Grading:

Your marks for this course will be calculated as follows:

- Discussion Questions: 30%
- Term Paper 20%
- Mid-Term Exam 25%
- Final Exam 25%

About the Term Paper:

You will submit a ten-page paper due on the Second of March, 2019. This paper should be in "college format," with a bibliography at the end of the paper after ten pages of double-spaced text. You will submit this paper as a .doc formatted attachment to an e-mail addressed to bkflatley@peace.edu no later than 9 pm on March 2nd, 2019.

The topic should be any subject that interests you in the law, especially including topics we have covered in this class. For example, has a story in the news involved principles we have discussed in this class? Sounds like a good paper topic to me! If you have any questions about your topic, or how to proceed in this assignment, please let me know.

About the Fact Scenarios:

You will find in your Weekly Assignments folders several short tableaux with factual situations involving fictitious characters. These fact scenarios will form the basis of your discussion board conversations. As your discussion boards are the "virtual classroom" for this course, the scenarios are very important, and you should read these as early as possible in the assignment week.

While discussing the scenarios in the boards, please try to steer away from generalities and ordinary observations regarding the characters. The scenarios are designed to relate to your reading assignments in your textbook and the lecture notes. If you have **not** done the reading, it will certainly show in the discussion boards. For example, simply agreeing with one of your classmates, or observing that a character has behaved badly and is in trouble, will earn you no credit. But if you can demonstrate that you have read the appropriate passages in the textbook and lecture notes, and can relate how the principles you have learned apply to the facts in the scenarios, you will prosper.

Due Dates

Your Mid-Term Exam opens on February 4th, 2019 at 12:01 am, and is due on February 10th, 2019 at midnight, and will cover materials through the end of Chapter 7. Your Term Paper is due on March 3rd at 9:00 pm. Your Final Exam opens on February 25th, 2019 at 12:01 am, and is due on March 2nd, 2019 at midnight, and will cover materials from the remainder of the readings. When taking your Mid-Term and Final Exams, you would be well advised to take the exam well before the due date. If you take your exam close to the deadline and encounter technical difficulties, you might not be able to take the exam, with

a result of no credit. Please keep in mind that the proctoring service "cuts off" at midnight, so give yourself time to complete each exam by then.

- Please use the following link to access your proctoring services to take both of your exams:
- Both the mid-term and final exams are open-book and open-notes in format.
- You will submit your term paper to me via e-mail at bkflatley@peace.edu
- Please submit your term paper in Word format no later than 9:00pm on March 2nd, 2019.
- Generally, late work is unacceptable. This is especially true of discussion board work, as submitting posts to a closed board is not very useful. I recognize that emergencies do occur. If you feel that you will be unable to complete an assignment, please get in touch with me via e-mail before the assignment is due.
- You will notice that there are two major elements of the class due on March 2nd, 2019. Accordingly, one would do well not to leave "until the last minute" any of the tasks due on that date, as it will be impossible to complete both tasks simultaneously.
- Please consult the Exam Proctoring Policies in your Student Handbook. **It is solely your responsibility to budget time to allow yourself to schedule and take your exams.** Failure to do so does not entitle a student to an extension or a make-up exam. Proctoring slots fill up quickly, so you would do well to schedule your appointment as promptly as possible.
- Due dates for Fact Scenario discussions are:
 - Week One – January 20th at 9 pm.
 - Week Two – January 27th at 9 pm.
 - Week Three – February 3rd at 9 pm.
 - Week Four – February 10th at 9 pm.
 - Week Five – February 17th at 9 pm.
 - Week Six – February 24th at 9 pm.

Questions and all written work will be graded according to the

following:

- Guidelines: Have you followed the guidelines of the assignment correctly?
- Organization/Presentation: Did you check your English? Punctuation? Grammar? Is your paper neat and are your thoughts organized?
- Content: Is your information in-depth and accurate?

Grade point equivalents will be as follows:

A: 90 to 100

B: 80 to 89

C: 70 to 79

D: 60 to 69

F Failure: 59 and below.

^[L]_[SEP] = Incomplete^[L]_[SEP]

W = Withdrawal

Please note: If you fail both of the proctored exams it will result in a course grade of "F" regardless of the grades on other assignments.

Course Policies

E-mail Policy: As you take this course, you will need to communicate with me. It is my commitment to respond to all input from students requiring a response within 24 hours on business days, and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. I may be reached at bkflatley@peace.edu

This Is An Online Course: All online courses in the School of Professional Studies are fully online and require the use of Moodle. Weekly readings, activities, and assignments will be listed in Moodle. If you have any problems accessing Moodle please contact Dr. Lori McClaren, Director of Online Learning at 919-508-2367.

Class Participation: Participation in online discussions is of the essence of this course. In order to succeed in this experience, students must pro-actively contribute to the discussion boards in a timely and engaging manner. Your discussion contributions will be more useful and interesting to your classmates and more productive for you, if you have done the reading in both the textbook and the lecture notes.

Proctoring Policy: All online courses at William Peace University

require two (2) proctored exams or activities. Any student who fails BOTH proctored exams/activities will receive an automatic failing grade in the course, regardless of any other grades received. For more information on proctoring options, please see:

<https://www.peace.edu/wp-content/uploads/proctor-request.pdf>

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is theft; it is the *deliberate or accidental* use of a source's words, interpretation, or information *without properly quoting or paraphrasing and acknowledging that use.*

In both the professional world and the academic world, plagiarism is punished. In the professional world, charges of plagiarism, when proven, carry potentially enormous financial penalties. In the academic world, universities and colleges punish plagiarism with varying degrees of severity, with the penalties ranging all the way from expulsion from the school, to automatic 'F' in the course, down to automatic 'F' on the particular project or paper.

There are only two ways to avoid plagiarism:

1. Quote and Citation: Use the source's *exact* words, place quotation marks at the beginning and end of them, and insert a citation immediately at the end of the quotation according to the standards of the discipline.

2. Paraphrase and Citation: Transform (paraphrase) the source's words and information *entirely* into your own style of writing, and insert a citation at the end of this paraphrase. If what you write still echoes the source's *words and style*, you have plagiarized. If you fail to insert a citation, you have plagiarized.

Incomplete Policy

An Incomplete is appropriate for a student that has been making steady, successful progress in a course and has an unexpected, verifiable mitigating circumstance at the end of the semester which precludes them from completing the last assignment or exam. Poor time management is not an appropriate reason to request an Incomplete. All incomplete grade requests must be approved first by the Instructor, and then by the Director of Online Programs. If the Incomplete is approved the student will have up to six additional

weeks to complete the work, as determined by the Instructor. If the student does not complete the final work, the Instructor will assign the appropriate letter grade for work completed or the grade will revert to an "F."

Honor Code

All students in this class will be held to the William Peace University Honor code. The William Peace University Honor code is as follows: *On my honor as a William Peace University student, I will not lie, cheat, or steal; nor will I condone the actions of those who do.*

Disability

Disability Services are available for students who require reasonable accommodations due to any cognitive, physical, or psychological disability, in order to provide equal access to the educational environment. Students will need to be registered with the office and provide appropriate documentation, in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, in order to receive an Academic Accommodation Plan. For more information or to register, contact Nicole Davis, Director of Counseling and Disability Services at (919) 508-2163 or Nicole.Davis@peace.edu. The Disability Services office is located on the 2nd Floor of Joyner House.