

**Introduction to American Law**  
PLSC260  
Fall Semester, 2015  
3 credits

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Course Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 – 3:15 pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the roles that law and the legal system play in American life. Topics include: the constitution, civil rights, property, employment, consumer protections, criminal punishment, and judicial activism/restraint. Grade Mode: A-F, I, W.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*An Introduction to American Law* by Gerald Paul McAlinn, Dan Rosen, & John P. Stern (2010). For ISBN and price information, please see the listing at the Bookstore at [www.andrews.edu/bookstore](http://www.andrews.edu/bookstore).

**COURSE CREDITS**

This course is offered for 3 credits; therefore it is expected that you will spend 9 hours per week during the 15-week duration on academic work for this class. Academic work includes in class time (2 – 75 minutes sessions) and at least 6 hours outside of class time per week spent on reading assignments, written assignments, and group projects.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Analysis
  - a. Analyze case law using the IRAC method (Issue, Rule, Analysis, and Conclusion) which is one way to structure legal analysis. The student will be able to identify the issue, state the legal rule (the law), analyze the facts in light of the law, and draw a conclusion.
    - i. Method of Assessment: Students will submit multiple case briefs throughout the course of the semester for review and feedback.
2. Application & Synthesis
  - a. Demonstrate the ability to apply rules of law to hypothetical fact patterns.
    - i. Method of Assessment: Exams will include hypothetical fact patterns in which the student will have to apply the IRAC method of analysis. This process will illustrate the students' ability to synthesize information and create a coherent legal argument.
3. Comprehension
  - a. Discuss and explain to the class assigned case law.
    - i. Method of Assessment: Active participation in class when called on to deliver verbal analysis.
4. Knowledge
  - a. Memorize, name, recognize, list, or describe legal vocabulary related to various areas of law such as the structure of the Constitution, the jury system, the legal profession, constitutional law, civil procedure, contracts, tort and product liability, criminal law and procedure, business law, marriage and family, and administrative law.
    - i. Method of Assessment: Exams and quizzes.

**METHODS OF ASSESSMENT**

Grades for this course will be comprised of quizzes, (if a quiz is given, it will be at the beginning of class time so please be prompt) two take-home exams, case briefs, and class attendance/participation. Quizzes may not be made up due to being tardy or absent unless the tardy or absence is excused (see Attendance & Absences below).

Method of Assessment	Percentage
Quizzes	10%
Exams	40%
Case Briefs	30%
Class Participation	20%

### CASE BRIEF FORMAT

Case briefs should be in the following format:

- 8 ½ x 11 page(s)
- 1" margin on all sides
- 12 point Times New Roman Font
- Single spaced
- IRAC Method clearly identified
- Each brief should include the following statement along with student signature.
  - *I have not used internet sources, student collaboration, or commercial briefs (canned briefs) to outline (brief) this case. Signature \_\_\_\_\_*

### EXAMS

There are two take-home exams in this course, one mid-term and one final exam. Prior to picking up take-home exams, students will be required to sign an exam honesty statement as follows:

*By affixing my signature below, I acknowledge I am aware of the Andrews University policy concerning academic honesty, plagiarism, and cheating. This policy is defined in the current Academic Bulletin. I further attest that the work I am submitting with this exam is solely my own and was developed during the exam. I have used no notes, materials, or other aids except those permitted by the instructor. Signature \_\_\_\_\_*

### CLASS PARTICIPATION & THE PASS SYSTEM

In addition to the Attendance & Absences expectations below, students are graded on class participation. It is expected that students will be prepared for class. There are times when proper class preparation may not occur due to various circumstances. You are allotted one "pass" throughout the semester. The pass system is designed for you to benefit from class discussion without being called on. To utilize a pass you must write on a piece of paper "PASS" and include your name and leave it on the podium at the front of the classroom PRIOR to the beginning of class. No questions will be asked and it will not affect your final grade, however, if you do not utilize your pass and you are called on to lead a discussion and are unprepared the professor reserves the right to lower your grade by one letter grade. You may NOT utilize a pass on the days you are required to deliver your brief(s).

### COURSE EVALUATION

At the end of this course you will be asked to evaluate the content of this course (in addition to the Andrews University Course Evaluation).

### ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

**Class Attendance.** Regular attendance at all classes, laboratories, and other academic appointments are required of each student. Faculty members are expected to keep regular attendance records. The syllabus notifies students of the attendance requirements.

**Teacher Tardiness.** Teachers have the responsibility of getting to class on time. If a teacher is detained and will be late, the teacher must send a message to the class with directions. If after 10 minutes no message has been received, students may leave without penalty. If teacher tardiness persists, students have the right to notify the department chair, or if the teacher is the department chair, to notify the dean.

**Class Absences.** Whenever the number of absences exceeds 20% (10% for graduate classes) of the total course appointments, the teacher may give a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence. Registered students are considered class members until they file a Change of Registration from in the Office of Academic Records.

**Excused Absences.** Excuses for absences due to illness are granted by the teacher. Proof of illness is required. Residence-hall students are required to see a nurse on the first full day of any illness, which interferes with class attendance. Non-residence hall students should show written verification of illness obtained from their own physician. Excuses for absences not due to illness are issued directly from the dean's office. Excused absences do not remove the student's responsibility to complete all requirements of a course. Class work is made up by permission of the teacher.

Please refer to the Andrews University 2015-2016 Academic Bulletin at the link below:

[http://bulletin.andrews.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1327#Student\\_Responsibilities](http://bulletin.andrews.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1327#Student_Responsibilities)

### **CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

University learning thrives on the rigor of individual investigation, the authentic exchange of ideas, and a corporate commitment to integrity and mutual respect. University learning requires all members of the academic community to behave honestly. Andrews University anchors its practices in the teachings of the Bible as well as in widely established and honorable academic traditions. As the apostle Paul calls us to authenticity in our Christian walk, so the educational institution demands of its participant's true and accurate self-representation. In Ephesians, Paul invites believers "to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:23-24, NRSV). As scholars and as Christ servants, we build His living body through our honesty in all things, both small and great. To that end, Andrews University's faculty and students pledge to learn and grow together, committing to the following Standards and affirming honesty as a core component of an Andrews University education.

Please refer to the Andrews University Code of Academic Integrity at the link below:

[https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic\\_integrity.html](https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html)

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

To prepare students for the professional world, certain behaviors/activities are not allowed in the classroom.

- Cell Phones, Personal Laptops, and Recording devices: Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. Picture-taking during class is not allowed. Recording devices are allowed only if pre-approved by instructor, and if approved, under no circumstance are recordings—visual or verbal—to be posted on a public website.

Laptops should not be used for surfing the web or watching movies during class. It is disrespectful and unprofessional to use these devices inappropriately during class.

- Late Assignments are unacceptable unless prearranged with instructor.
- Tardiness
- Eating in class: Please do not bring food or beverages to class. Water is permitted.

Presentation is important. Your attention to detail, demeanor, and attire factor into how you are perceived as a professional. Active participation in class discussions and critiques is an essential part of learning. Without participating and expressing opinions and thoughts, it is impossible to clarify your goals and develop a personal style.

### **AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT**

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

### **EMERGENCY PROTOCOL**

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.