SYLLABUS

CLASS: FAMILY LAW, (PLS 307), Lincoln Campus

INSTRUCTOR: Edward æEdø Hoffman
            Email: edward.hoffman@doane.edu or ed@cadalaw.com
            Wk Phone: (402) 477-2233


COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will provide a survey of topics related to Family Law issues including both practice and theory. Students will (1) be able to identify basic terminology in this area, (2) review and understand documents utilized in this area, and (3) practice identification and analysis of professional and personal legal issues within the context of domestic disputes.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR: This course uses a “three before me” policy in regards to student to faculty communications. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these three sources for an answer before asking me to reply to your individual questions:

1. Course syllabus
2. Announcements in Blackboard
3. The “Water Cooler” discussion board

This policy will help you in potentially identifying answers before I can get back to you and it also helps your instructor from answering similar questions or concerns multiple times.

If you cannot find an answer to your question, please first post your question to the “Water Cooler” discussion board. Here your question can be answered to the benefit of all students by either your fellow students who know the answer to your question or the instructor. You are encouraged to politely answer questions from other students in the discussion forum when you know the answer to a question in order to help provide timely assistance.

If you have questions of a personal nature such as relating to a personal emergency, questioning a grade on an assignment, or something else that needs to be communicated privately, you are welcome to contact me via email or phone. My preference is that you will try to email me first. I will usually respond to email and phone messages from 8am to 5pm on weekdays, please allow at least 24 hours for me to respond.

If you have questions about the technology being used in the course, please contact the UTO Help Desk for assistance (Contact information is listed below).

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be expected to have a mastery of the concepts covered in the course to include, but not be limited to: the legal formalities of family law and its impediments, including marriage, annulments, divorce property rights and distribution, child custody and
visitation, alimony, separation agreements, adoptions, and parent and child law. Students learn:

- About the progression of this area of law;
- Premarital agreements and their potential impact on a marriage;
- Marriage and annulment;
- The divorce process including discovery of financial information;
- Child custody and support; and
- Spousal support and property division.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** This class follows the Doane College Academic Honesty Policy. All materials submitted for this class are expected to be original by the student and should not have been submitted for credit to any other course. Academic integrity is expected for all interactions and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, original work on assignments, accountability and completion of requirements, maintenance of confidentiality for individuals, and accurate citation of and references to original work. Specific information about Academic Honesty and Plagiarism may be found in the Doane Student Handbook. When applicable, assignments must be typed and adhere to the APA 6th Edition guidelines. This includes crediting authors when paraphrasing, summarizing, or directly quoting the work of other individuals. Resources for APA formatting are available on Blackboard. Mechanics of writing are considered in the grading of assignments. Therefore, it is expected that you will proofread all work for accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation before submitting assignments and projects. Depth of thought, application, and analysis demonstrated in the assignment will be considered in the grading process. All work is expected to be of highest quality. Work may be turned back to the student for review and revision.

**GRADING:** Your grade will be based on satisfactory completion of exams as well as your scores on your papers/written assignments (discussed below). Your exams will make up fifty percent (50%) of your overall grade and your papers fifty percent (50%) of your overall grade. Extra credit will be given to students that submit articles to the Professor (scanned/emailed preferably) which discuss timely legal issues. No more than 10 percentage points of extra credit will be allowed.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**A. Online Course:**
This is an online course and therefore there will only be one face-to-face class session which is scheduled for Wednesday January 13, 2015. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies.

**B. Computer Requirements:**
This course requires that you have access to a computer that can access the internet. You will need to have access to, and be able to use, the following software packages:

- A web browser (Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox).
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (Free).
- Adobe Flash Player (Free).
- Microsoft Word.

You are responsible for having a reliable computer, printer and internet connection throughout the course.
C. Email and Internet:
You must have an active Done College e-mail account and access to the Internet. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your Doane College e-mail account. Please plan on checking your DC email account regularly for course related messages.

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades. The Blackboard Course Site can be accessed at http://bb2.doane.edu

D. Campus Network or Blackboard Outage:
When access to Blackboard is not available for an extended period of time (greater than one entire evening – 6pm till 11pm) you can reasonably expect that the due date for assignments will be changed to the next day (assignment still due by midnight).

E. Attendance/Participation:
Preparation for class means reading the assigned readings & reviewing all information required for that week. Attendance in an online course means logging into the Blackboard and on a regular basis participation in all of the activities that are posted in the course.

F. Studying and Preparation Time:
The course requires you to spend time preparing and completing assignments. A three-credit course requires 135 hours of student work. Therefore expect to spend approximately 9 hours a week preparing for and actively participating in this course. (15 week course) Adjust this for 8 week term.

G. Late or Missed Assignments:
All assignments must be finished and turned in to complete the course. All assignments turned in after the due date will have points reduced for each day they are late, no exceptions. Pursuant to Doane policy, if you have not handed in seventy-five percent (75%) of your assignments by the end of the term, you will not be eligible to receive an Incomplete and you will receive an “F” in the course.

H. Rewrites:
Students may submit their assignments ahead of their due date for review by the instructor. The instructor will provide feedback on the assignment for consideration by the student. Said feedback may occur after the initial due date but students will be given time to resubmit assignments.

I. Submitting Assignments:
All assignments, unless otherwise announced by the instructor, MUST be submitted via Blackboard. Each assignment will have a designated place to submit the assignment.

J. Drop and Add dates:
If you feel it is necessary to withdraw from the course, please contact your advisor for full details on the types of withdrawals that are available and their procedures.

K. Subject to change notice:
All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change. It is your responsibility to stay in touch
with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

**ONLINE/DISTANCE LEARNING DISCUSSION:** Welcome to the online/distance learning format for Family Law (PLS 307). You will note below there is an Assignment and Reading Schedule outlining the requirements of this course. I did, however, want to further discuss the assignments, reading schedule and overview of the course outlined below with some guiding principles and thoughts from the instructor. First, this course will provide you with an excellent overview of the Family Law system and laws within the United States. Outcomes are limited of course only by the amount of time and effort you are willing to put into this course. In the initial meeting scheduled for Wednesday January 13th, it is my intention to provide you with all of the exams which will be utilized in this course as well as discuss further the papers that are due and the format that I will expect the papers to be in. We will also discuss my grading requirements and what is necessary to successfully complete this course.

1. **Exams:** Your examination questions come directly from your textbook. Each of the exams will be comprised of a mix of True/False, Multiple Choice, and Short Answer Essay. Your exams will be due no later than the dates outlined in the below Assignment and Reading Schedule. If you would like to turn the exams in prior to that date you are certainly welcome to do so. **ALL TESTS TURNED IN AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL HAVE 10 POINTS REDUCED FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE.**

2. **Papers:** The papers are to be at least two pages in length, double spaced, one inch margins on all sides. Please include your name, the course name and the date submitted on the first page. I would like you to discuss the facts, issue(s) that was presented to the court (e.g. the issue(s) the court was asked to make a decision on), discuss the rules (both case law and statutes) used by your court in their opinions, the courts analysis of the issues presented commenting on what prior cases they felt were important and why and end with the Court’s conclusion and ruling. Finally, I would like to hear your thoughts on the case and what your opinion is on the courts decision. The papers are due on the date noted on the assignment and reading schedule below but you can certainly turn them in prior to that date. **ALL PAPERS TURNED IN AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL HAVE 10 POINTS REDUCED FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE.**

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:**

- Check your Doane College email regularly
- Log in to the course website daily
- Communicate with your instructor
- Create a study schedule so that you don’t fall behind on assignments

**STUDENT CONDUCT STATEMENT:**

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Doane College Policy Manual.

Appropriate classroom behavior is defined by the instructor. This includes the number and length of
individual messages online. Course discussion messages should remain focused on the assigned discussion topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board messages may be deleted if an instructor feels it is necessary. Students will be notified privately that their posting was inappropriate.

Student access to the course Send Email feature may be limited or removed if an instructor feels that students are sending inappropriate electronic messages to other students in the course.

**SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:**

The instructor views the course syllabus as an education contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus change necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes face-to-face, via email or in the course site Announcements. Please remember to check your Doane College email and the course site Announcements often.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONTACT INFORMATION:**

For technical assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please contact the Doane College Technology Office Help Desk:

- Phone: 402-826-8411
- Email: helpdesk@doane.edu
- Web: http://www.doane.edu

**ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT:**

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at Doane College facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Doane College staff coordinate transition from high schools and community colleges, in-service training for faculty and staff, resolution of accessibility issues, community outreach, and collaboration between all Doane College regarding disability policies, procedures, and accommodations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Chapter 1, 2 (Introduction; Premarital Agreements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Chapter 3, 4 (Marriage; Annulment) Paper on Marvin v. Marvin (pp. 29-32) Due on February 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 27</td>
<td>Chapter 5, 6 (Nonmarital Families; The Divorce Process) Paper on Pfoltzer v. Pfoltzer (pp. 141-142) Due February 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 3</td>
<td>Chapter 7, 8 (Discovery and Financial Statements; Child Custody)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>Chapter 9, 10 (Child Support; Spousal Support) (Exam Chapters 1-7) Exam and papers from January 22nd and January 29th Due on February 10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>Chapter 11, 12 (Property Division; Separation Agreements) Paper on Wade v. Wade (pp. 386-388) Due on March 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Chapter 13, 14 (Parenthood; Adoption) Paper on State of Mexico v. Lefevre (pp. 466-468) Due on March 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>(Final Exam). Final Exam and papers from February 17th &amp; February 24th Due March 2, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each student may choose to write an additional paper as an optional project, which can be used to raise an exam grade. Said optional project will be due no later than **February 24, 2016**. Potential project topics must be approved prior to the student beginning work.