

PBJ 201
Spring 2007
Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00

Prof. Margaret Ryniker
444 Mahar Hall, x. 3403

Course Outline

1. **COURSE TITLE:** Public Justice 201 -- Survey of American Law, 3.s.h. This course is required for Public Justice majors and Forensic Science minors.
2. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to legal reasoning and non-criminal legal process. The primary material is judicial opinions. The course provides an introduction to the nature and operation of civil (non-criminal) law with emphasis on types of legal actions, basic legal principles, and legal reasoning.
3. **PURPOSE OF COURSE:** To expand your knowledge and understanding of the American legal process as it affects our society and provide an insight into the way courts function and cases are decided. To familiarize you with the basic skills of legal analysis, interpretation, and argument used in the law and give you an opportunity to practice these skills.
4. **REQUIRED TEXT:** Bruce E. Altschuler, Celia A. Sgroi, and Margaret R. Ryniker. *Understanding Law in a Changing Society*. 3rd Ed. (Paradigm, 2005).
5. **REQUIREMENTS:** This is primarily a reading, discussion, and problem-solving course. Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Your presence in class and your participation in class discussion are considered in determining your final grade, as is timely submission of assignments. You are expected to be prepared for each class and to participate actively in class discussion. Your classwork performance will be monitored and individually graded. **NOTE: Cell phones will be turned off during class.** There will be **NO** text messaging. Cell phones will be relinquished to the professor while students take exams.
6. **FINAL GRADE:** Your final grade will be based on the following:
 - a. Classwork: 20%
 - b. Judicial Decision Papers: 20%
 - c. Two hourly exams: 30% (15% each)
 - d. Midterm exam: 15%:
 - e. Final exam: 15%:100%

Should it be necessary, there may be only three exams. However, the exams will account for 60% of your grade under all circumstances.

• Plus/Minus Grading will be used in this course.

Exams in this course are short answer/short essay, in-class tests, which consist of true/false and multiple choice questions, definitions of legal terms, and/or short written solutions of problems testing knowledge of assigned cases and legal principles discussed in class.

Classwork includes: satisfactory and timely submission of any and all assignments, **class participation**, and class attendance. If you come to class but do not participate in class discussion (in other words, you just sit), you can expect to receive a grade of no better than C- for your classwork.

Attendance: I expect you to attend every class. If you accumulate more than three (3) unexcused absences, your final grade may be reduced. Specifically, I will not give a grade of A to anyone who has accumulated more than the maximum number of unexcused absences. Your final grade may be reduced by one-half letter grade per unexcused absence.

Excused absences must be arranged for in advance or documented in writing to be acceptable. Examples of excused absences are illness; family emergencies; obligations beyond your control, such as a job interview. You may be required to provide satisfactory documentation of such absences, depending on the circumstances.

Lateness: Late attendance is discourteous to the instructor and other students and demonstrates a lack of responsibility. Should you be so late as to miss the taking of attendance that may be deemed an unexcused absence.

7. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: All written assignments are due at class-time on the designated date. Late assignments may be reduced in grade for every day they are late. Unless otherwise instructed, you must type or word-process all written assignments. Your written assignments will be evaluated on content [which includes responsiveness to the questions posed by the assignment, extent of research, and quality of reasoning and argument], organization, and mechanics [which includes syntax, grammar, and spelling]. You are welcome and encouraged to consult the Teaching Assistant about your papers before you submit them. You may bring in a first draft for discussion, if you wish. You are also encouraged to discuss your performance on assignments that have been returned to you. If you have questions about the assignments, ask them in advance, when you still have time to do something about it. **Your first draft must be re-submitted with your final draft of each paper.**

8. PLAGIARISM: Please note that the College Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism applies to all assignments and exams in this course. You should familiarize yourself with that policy, which is reproduced in the College Catalogue. If I determine that you have cheated or plagiarized on an assignment or exam in this course, I reserve the right to assign a grade of E for that assignment or exam, or a grade of E for the course, depending on the circumstances.

“Intellectual integrity on the part of all students is basic to individual growth and development through college course work. When academic dishonesty occurs, the teaching/learning climate is seriously undermined and student growth and development are impeded. For these reasons, any form of intellectual dishonesty is a serious concern and is therefore prohibited.”

The full policy may be viewed at

http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/policy_text.html#cpji

9. DISABILITY SERVICES: If you have a disabling condition which may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services.

10. FINAL EXAMINATION:

10:20 class

Monday, May 14, 2007

10:30 am-12:30 pm

11:30 class

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

10:30 am-12:30 pm