HUM 3250 - Fall 2011
Introduction to Legal Studies
NC 3209 - Thursday 5:00 p.m.
University of Colorado Denver
Instructor: Natalie L. Decker, Esq.
Natalie.Decker@ucdenver.edu
Office: MC01 (Master of Humanities/Master of Social Science Office)

Course Materials:
These materials are available on the internet, as well as through Lexis/Nexis and/or Westlaw. Students should use sources which provide the original text, not abridged versions or summaries. Supplemental materials, including Colorado Revised Statutes, will be assigned from time to time.

U.S. Constitution  http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

Colorado Constitution - located through the Colorado Courts’ website, self help tab

Colorado Revised Statutes
http://www.michie.com/colorado/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&cp=


Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct

Colorado Code of Judicial Conduct

Mayflower Compact  http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mayflower.asp

Democracy In America by Alexis de Tocqueville
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_index.html

Blackstone’s Commentaries  http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/blackstone.asp

Joseph Story’s Commentaries  http://www.constitution.org/js/js_000.htm

Federalist Papers  http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fedi.htm

Anti-Federalist Papers  http://www.constitution.org/afp.htm

Colorado Courts website:  www.courts.state.co.us
Course Description
This is a required course for the Legal Studies Minor. As a survey of the U.S. legal system, it will introduce students to various aspects of the legal system and our government. Topics include the organization and powers of federal and state lawmaking institutions, court procedures, and the analysis of statutory provisions and judicial opinions. We will also explore American legal education and preparation for law school.

Office Information- I will hold office hours immediately after class and by appointment.

Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 - 100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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Your grade in this course will be based on your performance on the following assignments:

1. A 36-50 page **group research paper** on a topic assigned by instructor. The final paper is DUE 12/1/11. The paper is worth 20% of the final grade. **Further instructions regarding the papers and grading process will be distributed in class and should be followed carefully.**

2. A **mid-term** examination, worth 20% of the final grade.

3. **Presentations**, based on papers, to the class, worth 20% of the final grade. Each group must prepare a *typed* outline of the presentation and provide it to the instructor in advance. **Class attendance is mandatory for the two days of presentations.** Further instructions regarding the presentations will be distributed in class.

4. **Class participation and preparedness** – worth 20% of the final grade (points will be assessed each week we are in class, other than the first night, exam nights, presentation nights, etc). An attendance sheet will be passed around each class period. You are responsible for signing *yourself* in. You should note that the portion of your grade that is assessed in this category comes from not only being present, but also participating in class discussions, reading the assignments and being prepared to discuss them. **participating in class activities and completion of assignments (if you are present but do not complete an assignment, you will not receive any of the points for that session)**, and refraining from disrespectful and disruptive activities. In the classroom, you must silence cell phones, and refrain from text messaging and non-class related activities. Adherence to the Student Conduct Code is expected. Class attendance is mandatory on days that assignments are due, exams are being given, and presentation days. **Please note that there are no make-up points available in this area-- you are either in class participating and completing activities/assignments or you are not.**

5. **“Legal Watch” Assignments**- Each student should spend four hours twice (for a total of eight hours) during the semester watching legal proceedings (i.e., courtroom, legislature, city council, etc.). The **first assignment should be observation of proceedings in court**; the second should be non-judicial proceedings. Students should write a 2-4 page paper describing the proceedings (so two different papers- one for court proceedings, one for non-judicial proceedings), the student’s impression of the proceedings, and how it relates to the topics we have discussed in class. The paper should tell where the proceedings took place, when, and provide sufficient detail
to demonstrate that three hours were in fact observed. **Students may NOT watch proceedings on television to satisfy this assignment; these proceedings must be observed in person.** This is worth 20% of the final grade (10% for each assignment).

*NOTE:* Assignments will only be returned directly to each student in class or mailed to students if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is supplied by the student. **GRADES WILL NOT BE EMAILED.**

**Class Policies**

Class discussions that give voice to a variety of perspectives will greatly enhance this learning experience. Therefore, prompt and regular attendance is essential, as is preparation. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to obtain missed assignments, notes, etc. from a classmate when you are absent, as classes may not be recorded without express permission from the instructor. **Instructor will not email assignments, handouts, etc.** Also, it is your responsibility to accept any penalties incurred due to your absence. Please also note that respect for each other and the contributions made to class discussions is expected of each student.

**Incomplete grades are not given to students simply because they are receiving lower grades than they would like.** To be eligible for an incomplete grade, students must have completed 75% of the course assignments with passing grades and have exceptional and verifiable circumstances outside their control that preclude completion of the course.

*All assignments and papers* shall be typed, double-spaced, on letter size white paper using 12 pt. Times New Roman font with 1” margins and left justification, with each page numbered starting on the first page of text. Do not include the cover page as a numbered page. Additionally, the last name of the student shall be included on the top right corner of each page. Please use only one side of the page. Students should also provide a copy of the semester research paper in electronic format to instructor by the date the paper is due. Papers will be graded on content, organization, presentation style (e.g., paragraph structure, grammar, spelling), and proper use of citations. **Please note that unless expressly permitted by the instructor, emailed assignments will not be accepted.** If you are going to be absent the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to get your paper delivered to the instructor **before** that class.

Late papers will be subject to a penalty of **50% of the grade received**, except where extraordinary circumstances can be demonstrated. **No assignment will be accepted more than one week after the original due date.** Due to the nature of the presentations, that assignment cannot be made up and an absence on that day will result in a zero for that assignment. **No make-up exams will be scheduled without exceptional circumstances, such as credible & verifiable evidence of serious illness or family emergency (notice should be provided to instructor in writing in advance of the exam).**

Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct are prohibited and will not be tolerated and will result in a zero for that assignment, and students involved will be immediately referred to the university committee responsible for addressing issues of academic dishonesty and misconduct. Students who are uncertain as to whether contemplated conduct constitutes a violation should raise the question in advance. Students are responsible for knowledge of and compliance with all University policies and deadlines.
In addition to announcements made and written handouts distributed in class, I may need to contact you between classes, which I will do through individual and group emails. One of the requirements for this course is that you maintain an email address, check it regularly for messages, be sure it is working, and let me know immediately if that email address changes. It is currently the policy of the university that you maintain and use an email.ucdenver.edu account for university communications. You are responsible for messages, including assignments, reading materials and schedule changes that I send via email. You may also contact me via email with questions that you have, however, please be sure that you have read the syllabus and assignment descriptions and any handouts before doing so.

The University of Colorado at Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS’s letter.

If you are a student in the military with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact your school/college Associate Dean or Advising Office immediately.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1  8/25  Course, introductions, review of syllabus and course expectations.

WEEK 2  9/1  Introduction
Mayflower Compact
Declaration of Independence
Alexis De Tocqueville - Democracy In America (selected portions)
Federalist no. 1, 10, 51
Anti-federalist- Centinel No. 1

WEEK 3 & 4  9/8 & 9/15  JUDICIAL BRANCH
Reading assignment:
Article III of US Constitution, Article VI of Colorado Constitution
Colorado Code of Judicial Conduct
de Tocqueville- Judicial Power in the US & its Influence on Political Society
Federalist No. 78-83
Anti-federalist - Brutus No.11, 12,15
Joseph Story- Vol. III, chapter 38

WEEK 5  9/22  LEGISLATIVE BRANCH- Law and Social Control, Sentencing, Elections, etc.
Reading assignment:
Articles I of U.S. Constitution, Articles V of Colorado Constitution
Federalist No. 27, 28, 52-54, 57, 62, 63, 67
Anti-federalist - Brutus No. 4, 15,16, Melancton Smith
Handouts
Joseph Story- Vol. II- chapters 7-10

WEEK 6  9/29  LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
Reading Assignment (continued from 9/22/2011):
Handouts
Article V of Colorado Constitution, Article I of US Constitution
Federalist No. 27, 28, 52-54, 57, 62, 63, 67
Anti-federalist - Brutus No. 4, 15,16, Melancton Smith

WEEK 7  10/6  LIBRARY INSTRUCTION & Assignment (meet in Auraria Library-classroom TBA)
Legal Research
Legal Writing- Case briefs

WEEK 8  10/13  EXECUTIVE BRANCH
Article II of U.S. Constitution, Article IV of Colorado Constitution
Joseph Story- Vol. III, chapters 36 & 37
Federalist No. 67
Anti-federalist - Cato No. 5
WEEK 9    10/20    LEGAL WATCH I

WEEK 10    LEGAL WATCH PAPERS DUE
10/27    Alternative Dispute Resolution
Reading assignment:
Handouts
Selected portions of Colorado Uniform Arbitration Act, 13-22-201, et seq. and Colorado
Dispute Resolution Act, 13-2-301, et seq.

WEEK 11
11/3    MID-TERM EXAMINATION

WEEK 12
11/10    LEGAL WATCH II (group time & location to be announced, individual options as well)

WEEK 13
11/17-   The Legal Profession, Preparation for law school, law school admissions and life in law school.
Reading assignment:
William Blackstone - Commentaries- portions assigned by group
Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct
LEGAL WATCH II PAPERS DUE

WEEK 14
11/24    NO CLASS... HAPPY THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15
12/1    PRESENTATIONS - RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

WEEK 16
12/8    PRESENTATIONS

NOTE: This schedule is subject to modification by instructor, as needed.