Introduction to United States Legal Systems
Professor Michael J. Cedrone
Spring 2017
Wednesdays 1:20-3:20, McDonough 110

Course Description
This course surveys sources of law in the United States, paying special attention to the common law tradition, the prevalence of statutory law, and the role of the United States Constitution in ordering the United States government. The course also examines important ways that the law regulates private conduct, including the system of civil procedure and the substantive law of contracts and torts.

Required Text:

Class Policies:
1. You are required to have read all materials before class. Come to class prepared to discuss the materials you have read and to apply the law to hypothetical situations.
2. The class will be recorded by Georgetown's audio-visual department. Please do not use your laptop or smartphone to record class.
3. Class will begin and end promptly. We will take a 10 minute break during each class.

Grading
1. This course will be graded Honors/Pass/Fail.
2. There may be a brief writing assignments required during the term. They will be graded Honors/Pass/Fail.
3. The final exam will be an open book, in-class exam.
4. To pass the course, you must hand in all writing assignments and you must complete the final exam.
5. Please email me if you are unable to attend class. Repeated absence will impact your course grade and may cause you to be withdrawn from the course.
6. Grades will be calculated as follows:
   Class attendance, participation, and preparation, including writing assignments 20%
   Final Exam 80%

Syllabus

Class One: January 18
Basic Principles for Reading Statutes and Cases
Reading: Abernathy 1-21

Class Two: January 25
Statutory Construction
Reading: Abernathy 21-32
King v. Burwell

Class Three: February 1
The Constitution and the Common Law
Reading: Abernathy 33-52

Class Four: February 8
Development of the Common Law: Products Liability, part 1
Reading: Abernathy 53-69

Class Five: February 15
Development of the Common Law: Products Liability, part 2
Reading: Abernathy 69-91

February 22 NO CLASS, Faculty Retreat
Class Six: March 1
The Judicial System of the United States
Reading: Abernathy 99-126

Class Seven: March 7
The Supreme Court and Judicial Review of Statutes
Reading: Abernathy 143-165

March 15: NO CLASS, Spring Break.

Class Eight: March 22
Executive Branch Lawmaking and Officers: Judicial and Executive Control
Reading: Abernathy 229-248

Class Nine: March 29
Civil Procedure I: Stages of the Civil Litigation Process
Reading: Abernathy 623-631, 651-658

Class Ten: April 5
Civil Procedure II: The Role of the Judge and Jury
Reading: Abernathy 631-651

Class Eleven: April 12
Contract Law I: The Enforceability of Private Promises
Reading: Abernathy 661-680

Class Twelve: April 19
Contract Law II: The Commercial Context; Limits of Judicial Enforcement (Unconscionable Contracts)
Reading: Abernathy 680-693

Class Thirteen: April 26
Tort Law: Obligations Between Private Parties
Reading: Abernathy 693-716