INTRODUCTION TO U.S. LAW
and
LEGAL PRACTICE
SYLLABUS
*Subject to slight modification
August 10 – 21, 2015

Monday through Friday
9:00 – 12:10, 1:00 – 2:00
and as indicated

Sections:

Section 1  Professor Irene Ayers
            Vanderbilt Hall (VH) 204
Section 2  Professor Mary Holland
            Vanderbilt Hall (VH) 210
Section 3  Professor Hon. Gerald Lebovits
            Vanderbilt Hall (VH) 218

Purpose: The purpose of this course is to ensure that you have the tools you need to thrive during your
LL.M. year at NYU Law School. The faculty will give you an overview of the U.S. legal system,
explore evolving lines of cases and teach you the basics of U.S. legal research, writing and analysis. By
providing you with a broad overview and a detailed look at a line of cases, we highlight the methods and
background you will need to succeed, especially during the first semester. As part of the course, we will
watch and discuss the movie, “Lost in the Fine Print,” a documentary about the U.S. civil justice system.
You will also get practice taking and evaluating law school exams.

Early Assignment & Class Requirements: Please do the first assignment before class on Monday,
August 10. See “Week 1 – Homework” on page 2 for details. You must attend class, be prepared to
discuss the readings and submit assigned written work to the course website. Please bring your laptop to
class each day.

Required Textbook: We will use a custom textbook, the NYU Graduate Lawyering Book, published by
Wolters Kluwer, as our primary text. The textbook is available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore. Page
references in the syllabus refer to the second edition. You may use the first edition from 2014, but you
will need to adjust chapter and page references. In addition to the text, each section requires you to read
specific cases that are available in a course reader in the NYU bookstore and on our course website. The
faculty will also post additional materials on the course websites.

Examination: You must take and pass the final two-hour exam on August 21, 2015. It will be “open
book,” meaning you may bring your notes and cases and consult them during the exam but you may not
consult the internet. You will type your answers on your computer and upload them to a server. You
will receive a score on your midterm test, but the score will not count towards your final pass/fail grade.
Faculty will post the top three final exams from each section on the course website.
Recommendations: We recommend that you buy a small booklet, *The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It*. The booklet will be useful for our discussion of the Constitution. Please buy or be prepared to use a library copy of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, Harvard Law Review Association*.

We also recommend three texts as supplements to the course: *Whose Money? An Introduction to the American Legal System*, by John Humbach, Wolters Kluwer; *Law 101: Everything You Need to Know about American Law*, by Jay M. Feinman, Oxford University Press; and *Open Book: Succeeding on Exams from the First Day of Law School*, by Barry Friedman and John C.P. Goldberg, Wolters Kluwer. These books are available for purchase on the internet or at the NYU Bookstore.

NY Bar Eligibility Requirements: Students who need the LLM for NY bar eligibility may count the credits earned for the introductory summer classes toward the eligibility requirements. *Introduction to US Law* fulfills the requirement to take two credits in American legal studies; *Introduction to US Legal Practice* carries one of the two credits required in legal research, writing and analysis (the other credit can be earned by taking *Graduate Lawyering I*).

Assessment: You will get the results of a multiple-choice assessment on Friday, August 14, and we will review them in class. You will also receive a designation of “exceeds expectations,” “meets expectations,” or “below expectations” on your final essay examination. The faculty expects to give roughly 70% of each class “meets expectations,” 15% “exceeds expectations” and 15% “below expectations.” The top three essays in each section will be posted to the section folder on the course website without name or exam number as samples of work that exceeded expectations.

**Graduate Lawyering I:** There are 1-credit and 2-credit sections of the course available in the fall semester and 1-credit sections available in January. *Graduate Lawyering I* is a graded course.

**Schedule:** The course meets every day from 9:00 – 12:10 and 1:00 – 2:00, with slight variations noted below with an **.

**Week 1:**

**Homework to complete before class on Monday, August 10:**
Read the U.S. Constitution
Read *Graduate Lawyering Book*, chapters 1, 2 and 4

**Monday, August 11**
Morning:
- “No Vehicles in the Park” In-class Exercise (Powerpoint presentation)
- How to Read and Brief a Case

Afternoon:
- Brief and review *Everett v. Rogers*, Appendix

**Homework for Tuesday August 11:**
Review *Graduate Lawyering*, chapters 5, 6 and 7
Prepare a written brief of *Everett v. Rogers*; bring four copies to class.
Tuesday, August 11
Morning
• Small group discussions of *Everett v. Rogers* briefs and hypotheticals based on this case
• Overview of the U.S. Constitution
• Overview of the U.S. Legal System (Powerpoint presentation)
Afternoon:
• Sources of Authority and What Legal Citations Mean

**Homework for Wednesday, August 12:**
Read *Graduate Lawyering*, chapter 3 on civil litigation and chapters 10-12 on standards of review. Prepare a summary statement about the Broward matter, Exercise 3-1, pages 34-38; bring four copies to class.

Wednesday, August 12
Morning:
• Overview of the U.S. Legal System, continued (Powerpoint presentation)
• Anatomy of the Civil Litigation Process (Powerpoint presentation)
Afternoon:
• Introduction to Legal Research: Lexis software

**Homework for Thursday, August 13:**
Prepare an analysis supporting Broward’s or Warren’s position in Exercise 6-4 or 6-5, page 93, for class discussion.

Thursday, August 13
Morning:
• Discussion of Broward and Warren arguments based on *Everett* case (Appendix)
Afternoon:
• Q&A on material covered to date

**Homework for Friday, August 14:**
Study material covered during the week. Midterm will be open book.

Friday, August 14
9:00 – 10:00  multiple choice midterm

10:15-12:10
• exam review
• background on thematic line of cases
• in-class research assignment on the section’s line of cases

1:00-2:30  Film “Lost in the Fine Print” and Panel Discussion in Tishman Auditorium

**Homework for Monday, August 17:**
Brief cases assigned by professor and be prepared for class discussion.
Complete the research assignment started in class Friday and submit to course website by 9:00 a.m.

Read *Graduate Lawyering* chapters 8 and 9 and your section’s line of cases.

**Week 2:**

**Monday, August 17**
Morning:
- Discuss line of cases relevant to section
Afternoon:
- Introduction to Legal Research: Westlaw software

**Homework for Tuesday, August 18:**
Brief cases assigned by professor and be prepared for class discussion.

**Tuesday, August 18**
Morning:
- Discuss line of cases relevant to section
Afternoon:
- Discuss line of cases relevant to section

**Homework for Wednesday, August 19:**
Review NYU Classes materials on exam-taking.

**Wednesday, August 19**
9:00-11:00 Practice essay exam; submit to course website
11:15-12:00 Review three sample essay exams in class
1:00-2:00 Exam Workshop by Teaching Assistants

**Homework for Thursday, August 20:**
Review course and identify questions.

**Thursday, August 20**
Morning:
- Discuss practice essay exam
- Wrap-up question and answer session
Afternoon:
- Questions and Answers
- Online course evaluation

**Homework for Friday, August 21:**
Prepare for examination.

**Friday, August 21**
10:00-12:00 Final Exam