

PENN STATE LAW FIRST YEAR (PSLFY)

PSLFY 900: Civil Procedure

4 Credits

Civil Procedure concerns the rules and principles that govern the litigation of a civil case. The course addresses systemic issues related to how and where a lawsuit is filed, including: personal and subject matter jurisdiction; venue; the notice required once a lawsuit has been filed; and which substantive law-state or federal-should apply in federal court. The course also familiarizes the student with the stages of a lawsuit, including: pleading; structuring the lawsuit; discovery; termination of a lawsuit without trial; trial; and actions that may be taken after a jury verdict or bench trial. Although reference is made to state laws, the course concentrates on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

PSLFY 903: Constitutional Law I

3 Credits

The course examines the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches in determining limits of national and state powers and protection of the individual and civil rights provided in the United States Constitution.

PSLFY 905: Contracts

4 Credits

Contracts is concerned with the formation of contracts. The traditional offer and acceptance are analyzed in light of problems presented by modern bargaining techniques. Voidability of contracts formed by fraud, mistake, illegality, and unconscionable advantage is also stressed. The performance of contracts and the parol evidence rule are discussed.

PSLFY 907: Criminal Procedure

3 Credits

Criminal Procedure explores part of the interface between the criminal justice system and the United States Constitution. It introduces students to constitutional analysis by examining key provisions of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments as they apply to police investigation and interrogation as well as to the circumstances under which indigent defendants are guaranteed the assistance of counsel.

PSLFY 908: Legal Research Tools and Strategies

2 Credits

The primary goal of the Legal Research Tools and Strategies course is to familiarize first year students with the process of discovering, evaluating, critically analyzing, and applying sources of American legal authority used by lawyers to understand facts and resolve issues. While much of the course necessarily focuses on students developing a comfortable facility for the discovery phase of the legal research process in which they learn to find law and legal commentary in its various publication formats, an equally important outcome of the course is to provide students with opportunities to evaluate, analyze and apply the legal authority they discover in the context of the legal matters they will be expected to handle as law students and lawyers.

PSLFY 910: Criminal Law

3 Credits

This course deals with what is called substantive criminal law, i.e., crimes. Numerous crimes such as homicide, theft, and conspiracy are examined, and defenses such as self-defense and insanity are scrutinized. A primary focus of the course is the utilization and interpretation of criminal statutes.

PSLFY 912: Applied Legal Analysis and Writing I

3 Credits

Applied Legal Analysis & Writing I introduces first year law students to analyzing and writing about clients' legal issues. Throughout the semester, students will represent fictional clients. To assist those clients, students must learn to conduct accurate and in-depth legal analysis to help the clients with particular legal issues, and students must learn to communicate that in-depth legal analysis in both written and oral communications. In Applied Legal Analysis & Writing I, the focus of the semester is on objective analysis, fact-finding, and writing. Students will learn to draft formal and informal office memoranda, which are fundamental tools for communicating objective analysis. Students receive significant individual feedback on writing assignments.

PSLFY 914: Applied Legal Analysis and Writing II

2 Credits

Applied Legal Analysis and Writing II continues to build on the skills learned in Applied Legal Analysis and Writing I, but now students will be learning to be an advocate for a fictional client. Students continue to analyze clients' problems using various sources of legal authority and to further refine their writing style. However, ALAW II focuses on persuasive writing, so students will learn to draft client letters as a transitional exercise into persuasive writing. Further, students will draft trial court briefs or memoranda of law that, in practice, would be filed with a court. Students also will learn other communication skills, including presenting an oral argument to a court. ALAW II continues to implement the problem-solving approach to teach persuasive writing, and students continue to receive significant individualized feedback.

PSLFY 920: Property

4 Credits

This course introduces the basic concepts and principles in the law of property. Topics include: acquisition and allocation of property rights; restrictions on owners' rights to use, limit access to, and sell or dispose of their property; and the relationships among multiple owners of rights in the same property. The emphasis is on real property, although the course also addresses intellectual property and other types of personal property.

PSLFY 925: Torts

4 Credits

Tort law seeks to remedy civil wrongs that result in harm to person or property. The class will focus on basic concepts such as the intentional torts, negligence, strict liability, and products liability.