

UNIVERSITY OF ROME TOR VERGATA

SUMMER PROGRAM IN AMERICAN LAW

SUMMER 2018

By Professors Shannon Gardner and Courtney Abbott-Hill

Course Syllabus -- Introduction to American Law and Legal Writing in American Law

Welcome to Introduction to American Law and Legal Writing in American Law. This syllabus sets forth important information about the course, including expectations and goals for the course, topics to be covered, and information about the writing assignments.

Please let us know if you have any questions about this syllabus. We look forward to working with you.

1. Overview – Course Goals

We have goals for what we hope students will achieve by completing this program. By the end of the Introduction to American Law course, students should understand the structure of the United States government and legal system, including the three branches of the federal government and the role of each branch in making law. Students also should understand key provisions of the United States Constitution, and know the sources of law in the United States and the hierarchy of those sources. Students should know the basic structure of the federal court system in the United States, including the different functions of appellate and trial courts, and the role of juries in the legal system. Students also should have assessed and considered strengths and weaknesses of the legal system in the United States, and reflected on the differences between the legal system in the United States and their home country.

By the end of the Legal Writing in American Law course, students will understand the writing styles and methods of research utilized in the United States. This course is designed to simulate an environment that a typical American practitioner would likely encounter in early law firm practice within the American system, but also to prove instructional and valuable to any student, regardless of career goals. Students will work on a series of research and writing assignments that closely simulate those typically given to associates or law clerks by law firms or judges within United States jurisdictions. The course also focuses on reinforcing skills proficiency through research instruction in general, as well as intensive assignment-specific writing instruction, guidance, feedback, and individual mentoring. Ultimately, the course is designed to give students as much practical training as possible to confidently master the ability to independently research, analyze, organize, and write legal memoranda and briefs on a variety of topics in both objective and persuasive writing.

2. Class Times

We will meet for Introduction to American Law from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and for Legal Writing in American Law from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. As we have only ten class sessions, please do your best

to attend every class and to arrive on time. We value the input and participation of students in each class and our discussions.

3. Required Readings

In preparation for classes, you may be asked to complete some reading. [Limited reading assignments to be determined.]

4. Assignments

[Assignments to be determined after course topics are finalized.]

5. Course Grades

[Program grades, or successful completion requirements, to be determined after assignments are determined.]

6. Office Hours

We are available to meet with students for questions or further discussion. Professor Gardner may be reached at spryan03@law.syr.edu. Professor Courtney Abbott-Hill may be reached at rsrisman@law.syr.edu.