

Widener Law Commonwealth
Summer & Fall 2020 Course Descriptions

LAW 530: Administrative Law (3 Credits)

This course studies the law governing administrative agencies, including executive departments, in the task of carrying out governmental programs. Topics include interrelations of legislative, executive and judicial agencies in development of public policy; decision-making processes and internal procedures of administrative agencies and legislative, executive and judicial controls on them.

LAW 784: Advanced Criminal Procedure (3 Credits)

This course surveys the criminal justice process from arrest through appeal. Constitutional provisions, statutes, rules of criminal procedure, and practice strategies concerning prosecutorial discretion, initial appearance, pre-trial release or detention, preliminary hearing, grand jury procedure, plea bargaining and selected trial and appellate issues are considered.

Pre-requisites: Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure

LAW 631: Business Organizations (3 Credits)

A.J.D./LL.M survey course that analyzes the conduct of business in each of the principal forms of business organization, and the relative rights and liabilities of the members of such organizations and third persons. The course reviews the uniform partnership statutes, the Model Business Corporation Act, and the Delaware General Corporation Law, and considers the legal principles governing agency and partnership relationships as well as corporations. The course introduces the federal securities laws and the state statutes governing limited liability companies, limited partnerships and limited liability partnerships.

LAW 503: Civil Procedure I (3 Credits)

This course studies civil litigation procedure, with emphasis on modern federal practice. Topics include pleadings, motion practice, discovery, joinder, summary judgment, and related topics.

LAWH 849: Client Interviewing (1 Credit)

This course develops the practical lawyering skills involved in client interviewing. Classroom time includes lecture/discussion and role playing/practical exercises. This is a course where you can become actively involved. You are expected to actively participate in the role-playing and exercises to develop your skills in the practical application of talking with a potential client.

LAW 803: Clinical Externships (2-4 Credits)

This course provides an extern clinical assignment in the practice of law with cooperating agencies such as a district attorney, public defender; legal aid society, etc. A weekly classroom component is also part of the externship program

Pre-requisite: Evidence

Co-requisite: Professional Responsibility

LAW 700: Conflict of Laws (3 Credits)

This course examines important issues peculiar to civil actions with multi-state elements, in both the state and federal courts. The principal topics include choice-of-law (determining which state's law applies), the *Erie* doctrine (determining whether state or federal law applies in federal diversity cases), personal jurisdiction, and recognition of sister-state judgments.

LAW 602: Constitutional Law (4 Credits)

This course introduces the United States Constitution as a source of law, largely through decisions of the United States Supreme Court. It examines foundational theories of government and individual rights from historical as well as contemporary perspectives. Topics may include judicial review, federalism, congressional power, executive power, due process, equal protection, and freedom of expression.

LAW 507: Contracts I (2 Credits)

This course studies the law governing contracts and contractual relationships. The course introduces the student to contract formation, performance, and non-performance, and explores the role of contract law in a market society.

LAW 7005X: Deal Skills: The Documents (1 Credit)

This class will introduce students to the legal processes and various documents commonly used to close a business deal, such as commitment letters, term sheets, "the deal" agreement, and promissory notes. The course will also familiarize students with the business and legal issues that an attorney must understand when drafting and negotiating documents for business deals. The class will use a large business loan closing for the basis of its discussion but the processes and documents are broadly applicable to mergers, acquisitions, real estate transactions, and other deals. Students are required to have read all of the assigned course materials prior to the first day of class.

LAW 798/799: Directed Research (1 or 2 Credits)

Students may write research papers for credit under the supervision of a full-time member of the faculty. The faculty member must approve the subject.

Pre-requisite: Successful completion of one Seminar

LAWH Essential Legal Skills (1 Credit)

This course aids students in developing skills that are essential for success in law school, on the bar exam, and in legal practice. Its emphases are on these four areas:

1. Critical reading and analysis. Students will be instructed in techniques of extracting and deconstructing the law from cases, statutes, rules, and other legal materials.
2. Communication of legal analysis. Students will be instructed in the effective, organized, written presentation of legal analysis built on reasoning and logic. Emphasis will be placed on the cogent application of legal rules to particular factual scenarios and the appropriate ways to use and respond to counter-arguments.
3. Learning as much as possible in each class session. Students will be instructed in techniques of class-preparation and note-taking, including identifying the most important parts of lessons.
4. Synthesis of lessons from readings and class to achieve a fuller understanding of the law. Students will learn techniques of self-directed learning so that they are better able to prepare themselves for examinations in both essay and multiple-choice

LAW 836: Evidence (3 credits)

This course studies the law governing proof of disputed factual matters in criminal and civil trials, including, but not limited to, issues of relevancy, competency, hearsay and other exclusionary rules, and the privileges of witnesses.

LAW 636: Family Law (3 Credits)

This course considers state and constitutional issues relating to the regulation of sexual and family relationships. Among the areas that may be covered are defining what constitutes a family, entry into marriage, divorce, and its economic consequences (alimony, property distribution and child support) and child custody. The course draws on constitutional principles, statutes, and the common law to study the family in the legal system.

LAW 747: Federal Courts (3 Credits)

This course explores the role of the federal judiciary in our system of government. First, it examines the tensions inherent in the separation of powers between the political branches of the federal government and the judiciary. Second, the course explores the complicated issues of federalism presented by the existence of two sets of courts – state and federal. This course combines the study of constitutional theory with the reality of politics and jurisdictional practice in the federal courts. Topics that may be covered include standing, mootness, ripeness, the political question doctrine, Congressional power to limit federal court jurisdiction, the Eleventh Amendment, abstention, habeas corpus, § 1983 civil rights actions, and other important jurisdictional doctrines not covered in the basic Civil Procedure courses.

LAW 7011X: Federal Criminal Practice (2 Credits)

The course meets the requirements for experiential learning and will focus on federal criminal proceedings from a practice based perspective while introducing students to the different stages of a federal criminal prosecution. Topics covered will include the initiation of a federal prosecution, bail and detention hearings, pretrial discovery and motion practice in federal criminal cases, litigating suppression motions, plea negotiation and federal sentencing practice and procedure. Participatory simulations requiring both oral and written advocacy will be incorporated into the curriculum. Depending on student availability, attending criminal proceedings in federal court and meeting with participants in the federal criminal justice system (federal prosecutors, defense lawyers, ex-offenders) may be scheduled.

LAW 610: Federal Income Tax (3 Credits)

This course surveys and analyzes the federal system of income taxation. Topics include gross receipts, gross income, exclusions, gain-seeking and personal deductions, CREDITS, rates and tax accounting.

LAW 690: Fundamentals of the Bar Exam (2 Credits)

Fundamental of the Bar Exam is a pre-bar review skills-development course that uses bar examination materials to familiarize students with techniques for answering the multiple choice, essay, and performance test questions found on the bar examination. The course focuses on bar exam skills and is not a comprehensive review of the substantive law tested on the bar exam. Students will be required to work collaboratively in class and will have regular homework assignments to complete. This course is not a substitute for a commercial bar preparation course.

LAW 6035: Government Law Colloquium (1 Credit)

This seminar will consider the special areas of law that are involved in litigation by or against a state or local agency. It will review such substantive areas of law as mandamus; statutory construction; when the existence of a statutory procedure precludes other forms of litigation, such as a declaratory judgment action; and a constitutional challenge to a state statute on procedural, as opposed to substantive grounds. The seminar will consider real life litigation, such as the pursuit of a zoning board appeal or a workers' compensation claim.

LAW 709: Health Law (2 Credits)

This course is intended as an introduction and overview of the emerging specialty of health law, looking at cost controls and promotion of access to health care through private and public law. It provides a look at the history of American health care. The course looks at ways of measuring quality; and the role of physician licensing malpractice litigation, and health care. The course will explore the concept of 'informed consent,' reproductive rights and issues of death and dying. Finally, the course considers the traditional role of public health bodies.

LAW 703: Immigration Law (3 Credits)

This three-credit course is a survey of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Title 8 of the U.S. Code, and related case law and regulations. The course includes an introduction to the historical and statutory evolution of current immigration law as well as a review of the major subtopics within the law, such as legal immigration, immigration and employment, non-immigrant classifications, inadmissibility and deportability, constitutional issues and limitations, refugee and asylum matters, citizenship, illegal immigration and employer sanctions. The course addresses current issues and controversies as well as the political and public policy factors reflected by U.S. immigration law.

LAW 779: Intensive Trial Advocacy Program (I.T.A.P.) (3 Credits)

Intensive Trial Advocacy is a three-credit, seven-day NITA-style trial advocacy training program, adapted from the NITA Regional Trial Advocacy course designed for young practitioners. Students develop trial advocacy skills by seeing live and videotape demonstrations of proper trial advocacy techniques, which are followed by small group simulations taught by experienced trial practitioners and trial advocacy teachers. This is the equivalent to Trial Methods. A student may not take both.

Pre-requisite: Evidence.

LAW 752: International Environmental Law (2 Credits)

This course will provide an overview of the basic rules of international law. It will focus on selected international environmental treaties, including the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and will explore the U.S. domestic consequences of international agreements, particularly the need for energy efficiency. For students who elect to do so, the class may be used to satisfy the writing requirement. No pre-requisites.

LAW 772: International Scholastic Competition (1 Credit)

Students may earn one or two credits for participation in interscholastic moot court, trial advocacy and other competitions sanctioned by the law school as appropriate interscholastic competitions. The list of approved interscholastic competitions includes but is not limited to National Moot Court, Jessup International Moot Court, Douglas Moot Court, Patent Moot Court, Polsky Moot Court, American Trial Lawyers Association Competition, Texas Trial Lawyers Competition, American Bar Association Client Counseling Competition and like events.

LAW 809: Judicial Externship (2-4 Credits)

Students enrolled in the Judicial Externship Program are assigned to selected state and federal trial and appellate judges for a maximum of two semesters. Externs prepare legal memoranda, conduct legal research and perform duties normally assigned to a law clerk under the supervision of the assigned judge and the judge's graduate law clerk. The program is designed to enhance the student's writing and research skills, familiarize the student with court procedures, permit observation of court proceedings and enable the student to learn the operation of judicial chambers. Students will meet with the faculty supervisor for mid-semester and end-of-semester reviews. Students are required to keep a daily log and retain a copy of all written work produced for the court. Graded Pass/No Pass.

Pre-requisite: Evidence

Co-requisite: Professional Responsibility

LAW 761: Land Use Planning (2 Credits)

This course examines legal and administrative aspects of land use and development, including zoning law and the constitutional “takings” issue. Other possible topics include nuisance law, building codes, urban redevelopment, growth controls, cluster development and open space preservation, aesthetics, environmental issues, and flood plain zoning.

LAW 7022X: Law and Mindfulness (2 Credits)

Mindfulness and The Law explores how mindfulness and mindful practices can improve the underlying qualities lawyers need to succeed in law and that assist in developing essential lawyering skills including problem solving, counseling, analysis, and advocacy. The course focuses on giving you tools to allow you to develop a consistent practice of mindfulness. This is a personally-engaging class involving self-reflection, journaling, and meditation – both in class and on your own. Drawing upon your experience with mindfulness, you will research and write a paper on the application of mindfulness to the practice of law.

LAW 770: Law Review Board (1 or 2 Credits)

Please contact Widener Law Review for more information.

LAW 763: Law Review Staff (1 Credit)

Please contact Widener Law Review for more information.

LAW 509: Legal Methods I (3 Credits)

This course introduces basic techniques of legal analysis, writing and research. Students will learn how to read legal authorities, conduct legal research, analyze legal problems, and draft predictive legal memoranda. Course requirements include substantial writing assignments.

LAW 512: Legal Methods III – Advanced Legal Research (2 Credits)

This course will build upon basic legal research skills. The tools of legal research, including technology based sources, will be investigated in detail. Legislative History, research in specialized areas of law, and non-legal research will be covered. Emphasis will be placed on research techniques and sources that students will need to rely upon their practice of law.

Pre-requisites: Legal Methods I & II

Enrollment: Limited to 20 students

LAW 512: Legal Methods III – Contract Drafting (2 Credits)

This course provides students with the opportunity to learn and practice the basic principles of contract drafting and interpretation. Emphasis will be placed on drafting agreements that effectuate clients' need and anticipate potential legal problems. Students will be required to work collaboratively in class, will have regular homework assignments to complete, and will individually draft several written contracts.

Pre-requisites: Legal Methods I & II

LAW 512: Legal Methods III – Judicial Opinion Writing (2 Credits)

This course provides students with the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to draft effective judicial opinions. The course will focus on writing judicial opinions through a process that involves sound legal research, logical reasoning and organization, and self-revision. Students will also diagnose their individual weaknesses as writers and will work to correct these problems. Professionalism will be emphasized and ethical considerations unique to the judiciary will be introduced. Students will be evaluated on a series of written assignments, including at least one appellate opinion. This course may be of particular interest to students who will be judicial law clerks or will be engaged in appellate practice.

Pre-requisites: Legal Methods I & II

Enrollment: Limited to 20 students

LAW 512: Legal Methods III – Writing for Criminal Practice (2 Credits)

The goal of this course is to enhance students' written and oral skills in the context of a specific practice area. These practice areas may include Administrative Law, Business Organizations Law, Criminal Law, Employment Law, Family Law, and Tax Law. Employing more sophisticated forms of analysis, presentation, and persuasion than are taught in Legal Methods I and II, students will research, draft, and edit written documents commonly used in a specific practice area. These documents may include business plans, client letters, office memoranda, trial-related pleadings or memoranda, or appellate briefs. Students will also give an oral presentation related to their written work product. This oral presentation may be a presentation to a client or in-house counsel, a mediation, or an argument before a trial or appellate court.

LAW 7012X: MidPenn Legal Services Practicum (1 Credit)

Extended Division students will have the opportunity to participate in an externship placement in partnership with MidPenn Legal Services, the legal service provider for low income clients in our region. The practicum will be made up of several opportunities to learn the law in the area of public interest representation, interviewing and counseling experience with client contact, and working with clients in clinical settings both in Dauphin and Perry counties. In addition to this experience, the first group of participating students will be involved in creating a new clinical program that MidPenn wishes to embark upon. Pardon Clinics operate in relatively few areas of the Commonwealth but provide great benefits for the recipients. The process is set forth by the PA Board of Pardons but often is not easily managed by those seeking a pardon. Creating an efficient, accessible process where individuals have guidance is an opportunity for students to build a program that can be put into place in 2019.

MidPenn will be the umbrella organization but WLC students will be able to be active “practitioners” in the program as part of their externship experience. Students will participate in the practicum as part of the current Clinical Externship program and will be required to comply with the requirements of that course.

LAW 902: Moot Court Interscholastic Competition (1 or 2 credits)

Please contact Moot Court Honor Society for more information.

LAW 925: PA Civil Clinic (3-6 Credits)

The Pennsylvania Civil Clinic is a one-semester client service clinical program offering an opportunity to study and to undertake actual cases in general civil litigation in the Pennsylvania courts on behalf of clients who are unable to afford legal services from traditional private sources. Clinical participants interview and counsel clients; frame legal issues and prepare for litigation; and participate in negotiations, non-judicial dispute resolution and litigation on behalf of clients before administrative agencies and state and federal trial courts. Students may also assist in appellate cases before state and federal courts. Clients are represented by clinical interns under the supervision of the Clinical Director.

Pre-requisites: Evidence & Professional Responsibility

LAW 926: PA Civil Clinic Leader (2 Credits)

The Pennsylvania Civil Clinic Leader is a one semester client service clinical program offered to selected students who have completed one semester in the Pennsylvania Civil Clinic. Students who are selected as Clinic Leader will continue to participate in the representation of actual clients in the general civil practice of the clinic. In addition, Clinic Leaders assist in the management of the Civil Clinic by ensuring that the materials used by the Clinic comply with applicable rules. The Clinic Leader also assists in supervising students by helping them in their research as well as their preparation for court proceedings. Clinic Leaders may also be asked to continue representation of clients from prior semesters or to work on special projects that may arise in the Civil Clinic from time to time.

Pre-requisites: Evidence, Professional Responsibility, and Pennsylvania Civil Clinic

LAW 743: PA Criminal Practice (2 Credits)

This course provides an examination of various statutes, court decisions, procedural rules and defense and prosecution strategies involved in the journey of a criminal case through the Pennsylvania court system, including arrest, preliminary hearing, discovery, pre-trial motions, trial, sentencing, and appeal.

LAW 786: Pre-Trial Methods (2 or 3 Credits)

Pre-Trial Methods is a semester-long simulation course focusing on litigation document preparation, discovery and motion practice. The course emphasizes motion practice and discovery skill, and includes written drafting exercises as well as oral deposition simulations and oral motion arguments. Pre -Trial Methods is graded A through F.

Pre-requisites: Evidence

LAWH 7021X: Privacy & Cybersecurity (1 Credit)

This course is a two-day immersion into privacy and cybersecurity law, which is among the fastest-growing areas of law in the nation and the world. The course will survey the foundations of privacy law, privacy law as it is associated with the life cycle of data, and the nature and substance of privacy and data protection law as it has grown up in commercial sectors in the United States.

LAW: 7014X Pro Bono: Elder Law (1 Credit)

A two day intensive immersion into the growing field of elder justice. The course will include discussion of the evolving social and economic status of those over age 60, the victims and the perpetrators, and community resources for older adult victims. Focus will be given to legal remedies for common types of victimization, the strengths and weaknesses of the current legal system, and ethical considerations.

LAW 702: Professional Responsibility (3 Credits)

This course examines the duties of lawyers toward clients, courts, and society. Ethical problems which confront the lawyer are raised and discussed in terms of the Model Rules of Professional Conduct, the Model Code of Professional Responsibility and case law. The areas covered include confidentiality, conflicts of interest, competence and unauthorized practice.

LAW 515: Property I (4 Credits)

This course studies the basic elements of the law of real and personal property. Topics in personal property may include ownership and possession, finders' rights, bailments, bona fide purchasers, gifts, bank accounts, and accession. Topics involving real property include adverse possession, estates and future interests, marital interests, concurrent ownership, and landlord-tenant law. The course may also include other topics which are covered in more detail in upper level electives: nuisance law, zoning, constitutional limitations on public land use regulations, eminent domain, private land use restrictions (easements, licenses, servitudes), and real estate conveyancing and recording.

LAW 646: Sales & Leases (3 Credits)

This course covers Articles 2 and 2A of the Uniform Commercial Code. Coverage generally includes all the stages of contracts for the sale and lease of goods from formation to breach and remedies. Documents of title (Article 7) and payment by means of letters of credit (Article 5) may also be covered. The course may also include comparisons and contrasts with the Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods.

LAW 600: Secured Transaction (3 Credits)

This course provides an introduction to the law governing contractually created interests in personal property used to secure payment or performance of obligations. The course involves a study of the creation, perfection, priority and enforcement of security interests in personal property under Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code. The course also includes an examination of relevant provisions of the Bankruptcy Code and some other state and federal statutes that affect security interests.

Prerequisite: Property I

LAW 638: SEM: Insurance (2 Credits)

Studies the law of the insurance enterprise including insurance marketing, theories of insurable interest, measures of recovery, subrogation, protected parties, nature of loss, warranties, representations, concealment, and rights at variance with policy provisions.

LAW 6045X: SEM: Sustainability Law Practicum (2 CREDITS)

Sustainable development is an internationally and nationally recognized framework for reconciling development (economic development, social wellbeing, and peace and security) with environmental protection and restoration. This course will examine the historical origin of this framework, its meaning, the enormous environmental and poverty challenges that sustainable development is intended to overcome, and its actual and potential effect on international, national, state and local law. The course will emphasize, but not be limited to, the effect of sustainable development on the United States. The course will include a detailed examination of specific sectors where sustainable development ideas are taken more seriously (e.g., local governance, business and industry, green building, and (to some degree) climate change) and will examine the theoretical and practical implications of those developments for law.

Note: This class will count toward the Certificate in Environmental Law

LAW 850: Starting Your Own Firm (1 Credit)

The course will be valuable to those who are considering careers in private practice, whether as part of an established firm or as a solo practitioner. By the conclusion of the course, students will have an understanding of marketing, business technology, law practice economics and the infrastructure issues of a law practice. Students will review, revise and critique the key documents and agreements needed to establish a practice and operate a law firm, as well as the various software and applications available to assist them in managing their time and billing clients. Students will have an opportunity to apply key law firm marketing techniques and methods to the practice that they envision opening, running and developing.

LAW 773: State Constitutional Law (2 or 3 Credits)

This course examines the significance of state constitutions, their role in our federal system, and competing approaches to their interpretation. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of state declarations of rights in providing guarantees in addition to, and different from, federal guarantees of individual rights, and on separation of powers issues. Other topics include local government, public education, state and local taxation, limits on debt and expenditures, and the processes of amending or revising state constitutions.

Pre-requisite: Constitutional Law

LAW 972: Taxation of Business Entities (3 Credits)

This course surveys the federal income tax consequences associated with doing business as a partnership, limited liability company, corporation, and S corporation. It examines the tax issues arising upon the formation, operation, sale, and liquidation of the business entity. Students will spend significant time on statutory interpretation.

Pre-requisite: Federal Income Tax

LAW 519: Torts I (2 Credits)

This course examines and analyzes the general theories of tort liability for injuries to persons or property: intentional misconduct, negligence, and strict liability. The course may also introduce principles and theories of products liability. Defenses to all theories of liability are also covered.

LAW 781: Trial Methods (2 Credits)

Trial Methods is a semester-long course focusing on oral trial practice skills and on strategy and planning for civil or criminal trials. One hour each week will be devoted to lectures and demonstrations of trial skills. Two hours each week will be devoted to simulation exercises under the supervision of experienced practitioners and judges. The course will conclude with a short jury trial. *Students may not take both Trial Methods and I.T.A.P.*

Pre-requisite: Law 836: Evidence

Note: Pre-Trial Methods is not a Pre-requisite for Trial Methods