

# LSTD303

**STUDENT WARNING:** This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

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## Course Summary

**Course :** LSTD303 **Title :** Family Law

**Length of Course :** 8

**Prerequisites :** N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

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## Description

**Course Description:** This upper level undergraduate course introduces students to the legal and procedural requirements of family law. Students will explore various legal procedures and extrajudicial methods. Topics such as marital agreements, separation, divorce, alimony, custody, adoptions, domestic violence, cohabitation, and same-sex marriages will be covered. Emphasis is placed on linking theory to practice.

### Course Scope:

Family law is an area of the law that permeates the lives of almost everyone. From birth to death and every life event in between, family law is there. Understanding the basic concepts of this area of the law is essential for anyone interested in the legal field. For those interested specifically in family law, this overview will provide a foundation for practice and further study. Many complex and controversial issues arise in the area of family law, including same sex marriage, Native American adoptions, and domestic violence. Having a solid understanding of the basics of this area of the law will allow the student to better analyze family law issues as they arise both in practice and in life.

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## Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Recall the historical role of family law from colonial American to present day.
  2. Examine the legal aspects of premarital agreements, same-sex marriages, and cohabitation.
  3. Demonstrate important considerations during the client interview process.
  4. Restate the various types of alimony.
  5. Analyze the distribution of property and debt after dissolution.
  6. Identify assorted legal features of child custody, visitation, and third party rights.
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## Outline

**Week 1: Introduction to Family Law**

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## Course/Learning Objectives

CO-1: Recall the historical role of family law from colonial American to present day.

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LO-1: Identify the sources of law used to resolve family matters.

LO-2: Describe the role of societal values in the development of family law.

LO-3: Identify and describe the activities that constitute the unauthorized practice of law.

LO-4: Understand the ethical issues that arise in the area of family law practice.

## Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 1 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Forums

**Introduce yourself in the Forum.** Please tell some of your background and why you are interested in paralegal studies. Your introduction should be posted by Wednesday and you need to reply to two classmates for full credit.

**Respond to Part 2 of the Forum for Week 1.** Your initial post is due **Wednesday** and 2 replies to classmates are due Sunday of this week. Initial posts to the Forum must be a minimum of 500 words, and follow up posts in Forum are 250 words minimum. ALL posts should have sources and citations in bluebook format.

## Assignment

CALI Assignment #1:

FAM 19 Constitutional Aspects of Family Law

## Week 2: Marriage

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## Course/Learning Objectives

CO-2: Examine the legal aspects of premarital agreements, same-sex marriages, and cohabitation.

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LO-5: Determine the requirements for a valid marriage.

LO-6: Identify the legal benefits of marriage.

LO-7: Explain the difference between a divorce and an annulment.

LO-8: Describe the difference between premarital and postnuptial agreements.

LO-9: List and explain the requirements for drafting a premarital agreement.

## Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 2 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Forums

Week 2 Forum: Initial Post due Wednesday and 2 replies due Sunday of this week.

## Assignment

Choose brief, see Writing Assignment for details. Case Brief due Week 7.

CALI assignment Week 2

## **Week 3: Ending a Marriage**

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### Course/Learning Objectives

CO-3: Demonstrate important considerations during the client interview process.

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LO-10: Understand the statutory factors considered by family court judges in evaluating the issue of alimony.

LO-11: Distinguish marital property from separate property.

LO-12: Identify the factors considered in determining a child's best interest.

### Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 3 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Forum

Week 3 Forum: Initial Post due Wednesday and 2 replies due Sunday of this week.

## Assignment

CALI Assignment # 3: FAM11 Alimony

## **Week 4: Midterm**

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### Readings

Review the Midterm Review for week 4 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Assignment

MIDTERM EXAM

## **Week 5: Family Law Practice**

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### Course/Learning Objectives

CO-4: Restate the various types of alimony.

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LO-13: Understand the rationale behind implementation of the child support guidelines.

LO-14: Describe the child support enforcement process.

LO-15: Understand the emotional aspects of family law practice.

LO-16: Describe the role of the paralegal in the client interview process.

LO-17: Determine proper geographical venue in which to file divorce pleadings.

LO-18: Know how to draft dissolution of marriage complaint or petition.

#### Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 5 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

#### Forum

Week 5 Forum: Initial Post due Wednesday and 2 replies due Sunday of this week.

#### Assignment

CALI Assignment # 4: FAM16 Determining Child Support

### **Week 6: Dispute Resolution**

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#### Course/Learning Objectives

CO-5: Analyze the distribution of property and debt after dissolution.

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LO-19: Define the phrase “cooling off period” and explain the purpose of pendent lite motions.

LO-20: Understand the role of discovery in a dissolution action.

LO-21: Explain the various types of alternative dispute resolution options used to resolve family law disputes.

#### Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 6 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

#### Forum

Week 6 Forum: Initial post due Wednesday, 2 replies to classmates due Sunday of this week.

### **Week 7: Dissolution of Marriage**

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#### Course/Learning Objectives

CO-6: Identify assorted legal features of child custody, visitation, and third party rights.

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LO-22: Learn how to draft a separation agreement.

LO-23: Identify modifiable and nonmodifiable portions of a dissolution decree.

LO-24: Describe situations where government intrudes into family matters.

## Readings

Review the Weekly Lessons for week 7 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Forum

Week 7 Forum: Initial Post due Wednesday and 2 replies due Sunday of this week.

## Assignment

Case Brief DUE.

CALI Assignment #5.

## **Week 8: Final Exam**

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## Readings

Review the Review Lesson for week 8 located under the Lessons tab in the classroom. Click on the Readings and Resources link to access the readings.

## Assignment

***Final Comprehensive Examination covering entire course with emphasis on weeks 5-8.***

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## **Evaluation**

### Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in points deducted from your final course grade.

### Deductions:

Late forum posts can be penalized up to 5 points per day

Late assignments can be penalized up to 5 points per day

### **Grading:**

Name	Grade %
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## **Materials**

**Book Title:** Bluebook: Uniform System of Citation, 20th ed. - available online through the APUS Online Library: <http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=https://www.legalbluebook.com>

**Author:** Harvard, Columbia Law Review

**Publication Info:** Harvard, Columbia Law Review

**ISBN:** 9780692400197

**Book Title:** Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

**Author:**

**Publication Info:**

**ISBN:** N/A

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## Additional Resources

You will be required to complete five CALI (The Center for Computer Assisted Legal Instruction) lessons. You need to register using the instructions below and make sure you save your scores so I can verify you completed the lesson. The instructions are as follows:

### CALI Registration Information:

1. Go to [www.cali.org](http://www.cali.org) and click on the 'Not a registered user yet?' link.
2. In the field requesting an authorization code enter: **AMEPUNstu622**
3. Provide the information requested on the next screens.
4. At the completion of the registration process you will be logged on to the CALI website and may use the legal education lessons.

On subsequent visits to the website, log on by just entering your email address and the password you created when you registered on the site. The authorization code is used only the first time when you registered on the website.

The assignments section contains embedded links to the required lessons. Please use these links when completing the lesson and make sure you do a complete ScoreSave before you exit the lesson.

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## Course Guidelines

### Writing Expectations

All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. They should use correct grammar and checked for spelling and other errors prior to submission. Specific details are provided in the assignment section as assignment formats vary. Uploaded documents in the assignment section should be in word (.doc, .docx) format. Faculty may require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will automatically analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism or overuse of quotes for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. The expectation is that the writing will be in your words after analysis of the sources.

### Citation and Reference Style

The central function of legal citation is to allow the reader to efficiently locate the cited source. All courses in the Legal Studies program require that any narrative essay or composition format follow the legal citation guidelines set forth in The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation. Do not purchase The Bluebook, as it is available at the APUS library. Use this link to access: <http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=https://www.legalbluebook.com>

## Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

## Deductions

Late forum posts, assignments, and exams may be penalized five (5) points per day.

## Netiquette

Online universities promote the advancement of knowledge through positive and constructive debate – both inside and outside the classroom. Forums on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting – basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the rewards and excitement of learning which does not include descent to personal attacks or student attempts to stifle the Forum of others.

Technology Limitations: While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Sakai classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.

Humor Note: Despite the best of intentions, jokes and especially satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :) )

## Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

## Online Library

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to [librarian@apus.edu](mailto:librarian@apus.edu).

Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan: The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors’ publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.

Electronic Books: You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.

Electronic Journals: The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

Tutor.com: AMU and APU Civilian & Coast Guard students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) connects you with a professional tutor online 24/7 to provide help with assignments, studying, test prep, resume writing, and more. Tutor.com is tutoring the way it was meant to be. You get expert tutoring whenever you need help, and you work one-to-one with your tutor in your online classroom on your specific problem until it is done.

Legal Studies Program Guide: This should be your starting point as you explore the resources available for the Legal Studies Program! <https://www.apus.edu/apus-library/online-research/research/research->

## University Policies

### [Student Handbook](#)

- [Drop/Withdrawal policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)

The mission of American Public University System is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

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