

Common Course Outline

PALG/PRLW 101

Introduction to Law

3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

PALG/PRLW 101- 3 credits- Introduction to Law provides a fundamental understanding of the American legal system from a variety of perspectives, both civil and criminal. Students develop an appreciation of essential historical information concerning the development of the American legal system and the working structure of our government. Students gain an understanding of procedural issues in the courts, specific concepts of law, e.g., contract law, property law, etc., the distinctive characteristics of criminal law and procedure, and finally, the roles of various legal professionals and the effect of legal ethics on the practice of law. Students intent on pursuing advanced legal courses develop a solid foundation in the American legal system. Introduction to Law also provides a functional appreciation for students of other disciplines with regard to the impact of the legal system on their lives and chosen disciplines.

Prerequisites: RDNG 052 or ESOL 054, and ENGL 052 or ESOL 052

Overall Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. analyze the emergence of the American legal system from its English Common Law roots, including French and Roman influences on the American legal system;
2. diagram the structure of the current American legal system and the Maryland court system;
3. explain the differences in various forms of legal authority;
4. apply statutory, judicial, and administrative law appropriately to fact patterns using case law;
5. explain the steps of legal analysis in the review of case and statutory law;
6. discuss various positions of a legal argument through a review of case law and case briefs;
7. apply the types of jurisdiction on the state and federal levels appropriately to fact patterns;
8. diagram the progression of a typical trial;
9. analyze the pre-trial, trial and appeal/post-conviction relief stages of a trial;
10. explain the ethical standards applicable to the various component of the legal system;
11. analyze the role and evolution of ethical standards as they pertain to the various professions in the American legal system;
12. analyze the historical development of various areas of substantive law, including tort law, business law and criminal law;
13. distinguish between the elements and defenses of various areas of substantive law, including tort law, business law, and criminal law;

14. analyze current legal issues and topics from social, cultural and political perspectives; and
15. apply specific legal principles to real-life situations.

Major Topics

- I. History and Structure of the American Legal System
- II. Legal Analysis and Critical Thinking
- III. Substantive and Procedural Issues
- IV. Jurisdiction
- V. Contract Law
- VI. Tort Law
- VII. Business Law
- VIII. Criminal Law
- IX. Estate and Real Property Law
- X. Legal Ethics

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member and specific assignments and procedures for evaluating student performance will be described in the individual class syllabus, but will include the following:

1. A minimum of two exams combining objective and analytical/critical thinking components.
2. An oral presentation and collaborative learning project conducted in groups utilizing a debate format.
3. Written assignments to allow for both objective and analytical review of primary legal sources, including written assignments based upon the class readings.