

PLA 4955
3 Credit Hours

Summer 2016
Wed 1:00 p.m.

**UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES**

**Contemporary Issues in Law:
*A comparison of the legal systems of the United States and Great Britain***

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HPAI 359
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SYLLABUS

1. COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTOR

All e-mail between students and the instructor will be through the students' Knights E-mail addresses. Any e-mail sent through other accounts WILL RECEIVE NO RESPONSE.

2. COURSE INFORMATION

- a. **Catalog description:** This course will cover the structures of the legal systems of the United States and Great Britain. This course entails a comparative examination of the institutions, structure and sources of law in the Continental, Common Law and Anglo-American legal systems.
- b. **Course goals:**
 - i. At the conclusion of this course, the student will be fluent in the nuances, history, culture and attributes of the two major common law legal traditions in the modern Western world.
 - ii. The student will also be able to distinguish how the Anglo-American legal tradition differs and mirrors the legal practices in Great Britain in such areas as criminal justice, the legal profession, and civil liberties.
 - iii. The study of both traditions will highlight and analyze various legal concepts, including (but not necessarily limited to) the following: role of parliamentary government; concepts of separation of powers; concepts of judicial review and the role of the courts; concepts of legal education and the legal profession in both traditions; sources of law; civil law processes in both systems; role of jury trial; differences in criminal procedure and justice; and the protection of civil liberties.

- iv. By the end of the semester students will demonstrate progress in or mastery of the following objectives:
 - a) Compare and contrast the evolution of the Common Law system in the United States and England;
 - b) Analyze and assess the differences in the Common Law system in the United States and England;
 - c) Understanding and analyzing the differences in the adversarial systems of the United States and England;
 - d) Understanding and analyzing the Codes of Professional Conduct governing the practice of law in both jurisdictions;
 - e) Engage in and exercise skills in critical thinking, close reading of texts, verbal and written communication, and small group presentations.
- c. **Course prerequisites:** None. **The student must obtain the consent of the Instructor. The student is required to travel to the United Kingdom during Summer A for the course study.** Students will be expected to complete the assigned reading prior to class and be prepared to engage in meaningful discussion and analysis of the subject matter. Students will also be expected to attend ALL classes and be prepared to participate in good faith in the group exercises throughout the semester. Students should have a working knowledge of legal terminology.
- d. **Recommended text:** Course packet
- e. **The Instructor:**
 - i. Margarita M. Koblasz, B.A. (University of Central Florida); J.D. (Stetson)
 - ii. Admitted to Florida Bar.

3. GRADING: Grades will NOT be rounded.

a. Grading Scale

	89.99-87.00 B+	79.99 – 77.00 C+	69.99-67.00 D+	
100-94.00 A	86.99-84.00 B	76.99-74.00 C	69.99-64.00 D	59.99 & below F
93.99-90.00 A-	83.99-80.00 B-	73.99-70.00 C-	63.99-60.00 D-	

b. Grades will be based on the following:

Course Item	Percent of Final Grade
Discussions	75%
Final Assessment	25%

- c. **Discussions:** Students will be required to participate in online discussions during the course of the semester. Discussions will focus on the lectures as well as sites visits while in England.
 - d. **Final Assessment:** Students will be required to complete a final assessment at the end of the term. The Assessment will be cumulative and cover material discussed at both lectures and site visits.
 - e. **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is required and roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. Lateness and leaving class early constitute an absence at the professor's sole discretion
 - f. **Access to Grades:** You can access your scores at any time through WebCourses. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: <https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/>.
 - g. **Incomplete Grades:** The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.
 - i. **Late Work:** All assignments are due on the date given. Given the nature of this class and the work assigned, NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.
 - j. **Make Up Policy:** Given the nature of this class and the work assigned, NO MAKE UP WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.
 - k. **Review of Exams, Quizzes, and Writing Assignments:** All exams, quizzes, and writing assignments will be destroyed in accordance with UCF's policy after the issuance of the final grade in the course. Therefore, a request to examine or review such a document or a question about or objection to a grade must be made before the allotted time has expired.
 - l. **Computers:** Students are expected to have access to a computer frequently. Students will need to be able to access the internet during the time in England.
4. **FINAL EXAM:** The Final Assessment in the class will be given at the final class meeting during the semester. Students are expected to be prepared and in attendance.
5. **READING ASSIGNMENTS:** All reading assignments will be posted. Students are expected to review the postings regularly and prepare for class accordingly. Reasonable efforts will be made to give students timely notice of any changes; as such it will be assumed that students knew of any changes made to the postings. Due dates for all reading assignments will also be posted.
6. **STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- a. **Opinions Welcome and Encouraged:** You are welcome to share your opinions and ask questions without fear of reproach. I will share mine and you are welcome to choose what you believe for yourself.

- b. **Create a Respectful Environment:** You are safe to share ANY viewpoint you would like as long as it is done in a respectful manner. I have a **ZERO-TOLERANCE** policy towards racist, sexist, and/or homophobic language.
- c. **Cell phones & Texting:** Cell phones need to be shut off in the classroom. They are disrespectful to the instructor and other students. So make sure these devices are turned off BEFORE entering the class. If you have a **JUSTIFIABLE** reason for having one on, please come see me before class and we will work something out.
- d. **Avoid distracting behavior:** To make this a learning environment that is a productive learning environment it is important that you avoid distracting behavior (i.e. talking during lecture, text messaging, arriving late, leaving early, talking, writing notes, cell phone use, other activities such as reading the newspaper, and anything that might bother you or someone around you). Since many students (and instructors) are distracted by such behaviors, “violators” may be removed from class and referred to the Legal Studies Chair.

7. CALENDAR

- a. *Postings:* All reading assignments will be posted on the calendar portion of WebCourses as well as planned exercises. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REVIEW THE POSTINGS REGULARLY AND PREPARE FOR CLASS ACCORDINGLY.** Reasonable efforts will be made to give students timely notice of any changes; as such it will be assumed that students knew of any changes made to the postings.
- b. *Important Dates to Remember:*

Classes Begin	
Drop/Swap Deadline on myUCF	
Last Day for full refund	
Add Deadline on myUCF	
Withdrawal Deadline	
Classes end	
Final Examination Period	
Grades Due in myUCF	
Grades Available on myUCF	
Holidays	

8. GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- a. *3rd Party Notes:* Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.
- b. *Cheating/Discipline:* As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see <http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/>). **ANY STUDENT FOUND CHEATING ON ANY ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GIVEN A ZERO FOR THE SEMESTER AND REFERRED FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS. NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to give a "Z" grade in accordance with UCF's policy, if academic dishonesty is found.**
- c. *Disability Accommodations:* The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.
- d. *Indemnity Clause:* Please note that this syllabus is an outline of the course. The Instructor reserves the right to change the structure/content of the course during the semester as the instructor deems necessary in order to accomplish the course goals as stated above. Changes if any will be posted on WebCourses with reasonable notice of said changes to the students. It is the student's responsibility to download and read this syllabus and any revised syllabi during the course of the semester from WebCourses.