

Prepared by the Department of Social Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, and Human Services

Date of Departmental Approval: March 2014

Date Approved by Curriculum and Programs: May 2014

Effective: Fall 2014

1. **Course Number:** LGS131
Course Title: Family Law
2. **Course Description:** (formerly BIT131) The law of marriage, divorce, annulment, legal separation, pre-marital agreements, cohabitation, child support, alimony, and adoption will be studied, as well as their implementing procedures.
3. **Student Learning Outcomes** (instructional objectives: intellectual skills):
Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to do the following:
 - Engage in critical thinking by reading and writing about the history and evolution of family law and family court procedures
 - Describe the role of the paralegal in domestic relations matters.
 - Describe the role of a paralegal in a specialized law office which concentrates in family law and domestic relations, including research and interpretation of family laws and cases.
 - Distinguish between fact and opinion, identify and formulate problems, as well as propose and evaluate solutions in domestic relations.
 - Develop communication skills by organizing and presenting ideas in a logical order, collecting and using information presented.
 - Conduct interviews, obtain information and prepare court forms and use information presented.
 - Apply domestic relations laws and cases to facts presented in class as well as real and hypothetical situations.
 - Evaluate different interpretations of law and cases using critical thinking, logic, and reason with respect to objective and subjective viewpoints
 - Prepare for litigation, including court forms.
 - Recognize moral and ethical dilemmas, including subculture norms and personal and societal values.
 - Analyze family law statutes, rules and cases, and their component parts to use the elements of each, and the remedies available.
 - Describe the social policy behind those family laws and cases which impact nuclear families and extended families, and the society in which they live.
4. **Credits:** 3 credits
5. **Satisfies General Education Requirement:** No
6. **Prerequisites:** LGS130/BIT130
7. **Semester Offered:** Fall (even years)
8. **Suggested General Guidelines for Evaluation:** The student's final grade is based on tests, written assignments, participation in debates and meaningful class participation that demonstrates the ability to apply logic, reasoning, and critical thinking skills. As part of the evaluation students must demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively, as well as examine their own values.
9. **General Topical Outline (Optional):**
 - Scope of the Family Law Practice
 - Family Court System, Where to Find the Law in Massachusetts
 - Ethics and Malpractice
 - Preliminary Interview
 - The Financial Statement
 - Breach of Promise, Heart Balm Statute and Contracts Restraining Marriage
 - Ante-nuptial Agreements and Cohabitation

Legal, Void and Voidable Marriages, Annulment
Drafting and understanding Legal Separations, Separation Agreements
Divorce: Grounds & "No-fault" Divorce;
Drafting Complaints, Pretrial Preparation, Pretrial Conference & Hearings,
Prejudgment Remedies;
Discovery, Evidentiary Issues; Valuation of Property, Tax Considerations;
Medical Insurance, Life Insurance;
Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law;
Child Custody, Support and Alimony;
Post Judgment Remedies, Modification and Contempt;
Adoption, Change of Name, Paternity