“Property law examines relations among people regarding control of valued resources.”

Course Description

Though the law of property is deeply rooted in history and precedent, its principles and methodologies are readily adaptable to the contingencies of a rapidly changing world. For this reason, property law is central to the development, maintenance, and growth of modern law and jurisprudence.

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the basic rules, concepts, and theories of American property law. It is also designed to provide property law in both a theoretical, contemporary, and practical framework. The development of this law will be examined in the context of historical, political, moral, and legal considerations that have influenced property law in the past and in contemporary society.

Course Objective

The course has three goals. First, the course will teach you fundamental property law, its rules and doctrines. Second, the class will seek to help you understand the role of property law as an institution that has been instrumental in shaping the legal history, culture, citizenship and notions of justice and rights in the United States. You will do this by studying various laws, theories and policies that have existed historically as well as in their current state. These activities will aid you in understanding and allow you to critique the jurisprudence of property law. Third, the course will assist you in developing your basic lawyering skills. This includes the ability to spot the issue, state a rule, and draw conclusions and examine its application in other cases and contexts. You will also be expected to practice the art of legal persuasion through discussion as well as through written assignments.

The course will include lectures, class discussion, videos, learning assessments, and written assignments.

1 JOSEPH SINGER ET. AL., PROPERTY LAW xxxi (2014) (italics added).
I. **Required Course Materials**

-SINGER ET. AL, PROPERTY LAW: RULES, POLICIES & PRACTICES (Aspen, 6th ed. 2014) (referred to below as “CB”) ISBN: 978-1-4548-3761-9 (editions are available to purchase new or used or rent)

-I will also assign additional cases, articles, written or other assignments, etc., which you will need to download from Blackboard.

II. **Blackboard**

As stated above, I will use Blackboard to communicate with the class. This means all course information, announcements, assignments, supplemental materials, etc. will appear on Blackboard. You will also turn in your assignments via the “Assignments” folder in Blackboard. Blackboard will be up by January 1, 2017. Be sure to check to ensure that you can access Blackboard for the course and it contains an email address that you check regularly.

III. **Laptops and Other Electronic Devices**

I do not recommend taking notes on your computer. First, research has found that taking notes by laptop is detrimental to learning as it impairs conceptual learning as well as long-term fact-finding. Second, this finding correlates to the studies that have been done that show multitasking is not conducive to learning as it decreases attention and focus. Third, surveys have found that students prefer a no-laptop learning environment because students feel they are more engaged during the class with fewer distractions.

With that said, however, I will allow you to use laptops for note taking only. Please turn off wifi during class as not to disrupt others around you. Use of cellphones, iPads, or other electronic devices is prohibited. Prohibited use of computers, cell phones, iPads, or other technological devices during class will result in penalties to a student’s participation grade or other sanctions as deemed appropriate. If I find that laptop use is disruptive to class, I reserve the right to ban their further use.

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IV. Office Hours and Emailing the Professor

My office hours are Mondays from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. So that students' time is not wasted by waiting to speak with me during office hours, I maintain a sign-up sheet for office hours on Blackboard. Please sign up on that page. You are more than welcome to drop-in during this time, but students with appointments will have priority. Also, I am happy to meet with you at another time if you cannot meet during my office hours. To schedule an appointment outside of office hours, email me with a few times that you are available.

Feel free to contact me by email with logistical questions such as expected absences or scheduling an appointment to see me. However, substantive questions always require a longer and deeper explanation than can be appropriately addressed in an email. For this reason, no substantive questions sent to me via email will be answered but I will happily discuss them with you in person during office hours or a scheduled appointment.

V. Grades

Your grade will consist of two components, explained more fully below:

- Final Exam—85%
- Engagement—15%

A. Final Exam: Your final exam will take place on May 8, 2017 from 10am – 1pm. It will be an open-book exam. You will also be allowed to bring in a calculator. No other materials will be allowed. The exam will be three hours and consist of two hours of multiple choice and one hour of short answer questions.

B. Engagement: Each student is expected to be appropriately engaged throughout the semester. “ Appropriately engaged” means that you are required to: be in attendance and on time; carefully complete reading assignments prior to attending class; actively participate in class discussion; and complete all assigned written exercises in a timely and professional manner. Further explanation is below:

1. Preparedness: I expect students to be prepared for each class. **If you are not prepared** for a particular class, please let me know by 9:00 AM **before class via email** so that I will know not to call on you that day. This privilege is available no more than twice and counts towards your absences (see below). I reserve the right to count you as absent if your inability to answer questions is the result of being unprepared for class.

2. Respect: For those who are NOT speaking, this means you should be listening to and learning from your colleagues; for those who ARE speaking, this means being prepared and making time for others to participate in class. In addition, individuals have differing views on issues.
To ensure that everyone will feel comfortable sharing their ideas and views, we will all listen and respond respectfully.

3. **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. Therefore, each time you are absent it will be counted against you. In addition, you may not miss more than 8 classes, as the Law Center requires that you attend 80% of your classes or you will be removed from the class.

4. **Tardiness:** I expect all students to be in class and in their seats at the start of class. Late attendance is disruptive to the class and will count as an absence.

5. **Class Assignments:** You will be required to prepare short assignments from time to time throughout the course. I will consider these assignments as part of your engagement and will, therefore, be calculated in this section of your grade. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by the deadline set out in the course schedule.

### VI. **Deadlines and Assignment Submissions**

You are entering the professional world. That world is filled with deadlines. If deadlines are missed, your client suffers as well as your license and reputation. For that reason, **late work will not be accepted**. Therefore, any assignments or papers received after the deadline will be given a zero (0).

### VII. **Reading Assignments**

The course schedule (posted on Blackboard) is designed as a guide to the class. I may, at times, need to change class assignments and I will do so by an in-class announcement and/or revision to the course schedule. As a general rule, we will cover one assignment in each class period, although I may cover less or more, depending on class discussion. Unless I instruct you otherwise, you are expected to read the next day’s assignment even if we do not completely cover the previous day’s assignment in class.

Due to time constraints, we may not discuss everything that you have read. However, you are still responsible for all assigned readings for future classes and exam purposes.

### VIII. **Course Outline**

A. Property in a Free and Democratic Society  
B. What Can Be Owned?  
C. Relations Among Neighbors  
D. Ownership in Common  
E. The Legal Framework of the Market for Real Estate  
F. Constitutional Protection for Property