

Law 540 Syllabus

Family Law

Spring 2026

Wednesday and Thursday 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. on Teams

Professor Sally Kolb

Course Description

This course in Family Law will explore privacy, marriage, parentage, nonmarital cohabitation, divorce/annulment among other topics. Related issues include palimony, spousal support and parental rights and responsibilities, and domestic violence. In the context of divorce, we will explore topics such as the allocation of parental responsibilities, child support, property and debt division, and spousal support. Some of the reading assignments may include potentially triggering material. This course will utilize a page in D2L. All assignments will be posted in D2L. The Professor may, from time to time, send out notifications/updates via email as well.

Professor Kolb hereby acknowledges some portions of this syllabus were taken directly from Dean Upchurch's Family Law syllabus and thanks Dean Upchurch for her guidance.

Learning Objectives

As a student in this class, you should expect to achieve the following learning outcomes throughout the semester:

- Students will be able to critically examine the Constitutionality of regulations regarding marriage; students will make critical and effective arguments regarding the meaning of these regulations and their constitutional validity, and confidently predict the outcome of a challenge to these regulations.
- Students will be able to identify relevant facts necessary to analyze a case for allocation of parental responsibilities. Students will be able to identify legal issues related to parentage from a relevant fact pattern, make critical and effective

arguments through application of statutory and case law, and determine the likely resolution of those issues in each fact pattern.

- Students will be able to identify legal issues related to divorce, including property division and economic support, from a relevant fact pattern, make critical and effective arguments through application of statutory and case law, and determine the proper resolution of these matters in the case.
- Students will be able to identify the legal issues raised by a fact pattern involving premarital agreements, make critical arguments regarding the enforceability of such agreements and confidently predict whether a particular agreement will be enforced.
- Students will be able to identify legal issues arising from domestic violence and determine the proper legal approach to help resolve these issues for clients.
- Students will be able to build techniques used in representing adult clients in family law matters. Students will develop strategies for representing diverse populations and demonstrate cultural competency.
- Students will be able to identify potential ethical dilemmas common in family law practice and articulate strategies for avoiding or resolving these dilemmas.

Office Hours

By appointment. Please email the Professor to set up an appointment. The Professor will be available immediately following class. The Professor will also be available via Teams as needed.

The best way to contact the Professor is by email.

Grading

Due to class size, the School of Law's mandatory curve will apply to final grades where required. Grades will consist solely of the final exam score.

Attendance

Active class participation is essential to success in this course. As such, attendance is mandatory and you may miss no more than five (5) classes during the semester. I

would advise that you not use up all of your absences early in the semester. Those exceeding the maximum number of absences will be subject to the ramifications described in the Law School's attendance policy. See School of Law Rules III.5 (f)-(g).

Student cameras are expected to be on at all times during class. Students are expected to use electronics only for class-related purposes during class times.

To be marked present for class, you must (1) complete the entire assignment for that day by the start of class; (2) participate in the class discussion and in any in-class projects, quizzes or polls. If you miss answer questions asked of you in class, but you were otherwise prepared for class, you may upload your case briefs for the day to D2L immediately after class to be marked present. **If you miss more than five minutes of class for any reason (other than an approved accommodation), you will be counted as absent.**

Please note the Professor does not distinguish between excused/unexcused absences. An absence is an absence. If a student is facing a situation which may result in excessive absences, please notify the Professor and Dean Upchurch as quickly as possible. Please use absences appropriately. This policy is to provide the utmost fairness to all students.

As this class is conducted exclusively on-line, should you have technical difficulties preventing you from attending class during a particular class session, please notify the Professor immediately via email. If the issue involves being unable to access the on-line class period, please take a screen grab which includes the clock and date and time and send that to the Professor immediately.

Students who need accommodations can contact Office for Access and Accommodations (formerly DSS) at this link to their website <https://access.siu.edu/>

Ban On Collaboration on Written Assignments

You are not allowed to obtain help from any other person (including any other student or professor) or from generative alternative intelligence (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT) on **any** written assignment in this course. This ban on collaboration

includes obtaining written materials online from any source (including publicly posted materials that are not specifically authorized in the assignment itself) and communicating with anyone other than Professor Kolb or using generative alternative intelligence about the assignment. **If you violate the ban on collaboration policy, you can be found in violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. When in doubt about how to proceed, please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarizing another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Honor Code and can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. The Honor Code defines plagiarism as:

passing off another's ideas, words, or work as one's own, including written, oral, multimedia, or other work, either word for word or in substance, unless the student author credits the original author and identifies the original author's work with quotation marks, footnotes, or other appropriate designation in such a way as to make clear the true author of the work.

Notice Of Recording Policies

For the benefit of students who are unable to attend a particular class due to an unavoidable circumstance, and for students who wish to review a particular class to better facilitate learning objectives, class sessions will be recorded via Echo360 by Professor Kolb and made available by request. Because of the possibility of a technical malfunction, Professor Kolb cannot guarantee the successful recording of every class.

Attachments

This Syllabus incorporates by reference the Provost Syllabus Attachment on the course D2L page.

Final Exam

This course will utilize a traditional, timed final exam. Students are allowed to use a computer to type the exam. More information will be provided closer to exam time. Students will submit/upload this exam either before or at the expiration of the set amount of time right at the expiration of time. The exam is allotted a maximum of three hours.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the conduct code of the School of Law. Students are expected to treat one another with respect. This class will, at times, explore some sensitive topics. Family Law is one of the most intimate areas of law. This course will explore family law in general but also explore family law at times as it pertains to marginalized groups. During class discussion, views may be expressed that differ from one's own. Students must treat one another with respect and respect each other's views, even if they do not agree with them.

Course Materials

Required casebook is as follows:

Contemporary Family Law by Abrams, Cahn, McClain, Ross, Matsumura & Weaver (6th Ed)

ISBN 978-1-64242-860-5

Reading assignments will be primarily from this casebook, however, additional supplemental materials will be assigned, all of which will be available online. These materials will traditionally consist of statutes and cases.

Assignments

Weekly reading assignments will be listed on the class D2L page. Occasionally, there may be overlap of a particular reading assignment, in the sense that an assignment may be made for a particular class period, but the reading may be discussed in part or in its entirety the next class period due to time constraints. The Professor has assigned

the reading in the manner most beneficial to class discussion and to complement the lesson for the day. Some class periods will naturally have slightly more reading than others. Every attempt has been made to average this reading out over the course of the semester, which may result in slightly uneven reading assignments across various weeks. There may, from time to time, need to be minor adjustments to this class and the Professor will notify students of that as quickly as possible either by email and/or by an announcement in class.

There will be at least one in-class group project assigned. There will further be one individual ungraded written assignment. These are assigned to give students an opportunity to apply what has been learned in the class. The Professor will provide written feedback to each student on their individual assignment. Under the ABA standards, you should expect to spend 150 minutes per week in class (2.5 hours), plus (a minimum of) six hours of study a week, for a total of 8.5 hours per week.

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

SIU SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL – Spring 2026

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: We ask that you become familiar with **Emergency Preparedness @ SIU**. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness @ SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts, visit <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.

DISABILITY POLICY. SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. The Office of Access and Accommodations, formerly Disability Support Services, coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval, please contact OAA immediately at 618-453-5738 or disabilityservices.siu.edu. You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to ensure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations

and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty. Please send approved accommodations to your faculty through the DSS online portal.

SALUKI CARES and COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS). The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students, and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-2461, or siucares@siu.edu, <https://salukicares.siu.edu/>. Associate Dean Shelia Simon ssimon@siu.edu or (618) 536-8321 is available at the Simmons Law School to help students access university resources. Additionally, counseling services are available through CAPS ([*Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)*](#) | [*Student Health Services | SIU*](#)). A counselor is at the law school every Wednesday from noon until 4:30pm in Room 268 for drop-in appointments.

SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

<http://safe.siu.edu>