Course Syllabus - FINAL  
Domestic Violence Law-WRC  
University of Houston Law Center  
Fall 2017 – M/W 5:30pm-7:00pm  

Profs. Janet Heppard and Diane McManus  

Course Description:  

Students will work individually and in small groups as they learn about the State laws, Federal Laws, and case law related to issues surrounding Domestic Violence. The topics may include domestic violence in the family code, criminal laws dealing with family violence, employment laws relating to family violence, and immigration and domestic violence. Writing assignments may include short articles, letters (e.g., demand, opposing counsel, client, court), pleadings, motions, and one longer paper on a chosen topic related to domestic violence. Each student will complete three to five practical writing assignments, with total production of at least twenty-one pages, based on an average of 250-300 words per double-spaced page.  

Course Materials:  

Class reading materials can be found on Blackboard; please let us know if you have any problems accessing our class file. It order to cover the material in the allotted time, you are expected to read all assignments prior to class.  

Laptops:  

Students may bring their laptops to class as there may be times when they will be using them for class exercises.  

Attendance Policy:  

Students are expected to attend and be prepared for each class. The University of Houston Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. Students who attend fewer than the minimum percentage of required classes may be automatically dropped from the course.  

Grading:  

Grades will be as follows: 5% class participation, 30% take home assignments (3), 5% paper presentation, 60% final paper.  

Final Paper: 10-15 pages not including endnotes (use endnotes rather than footnotes): 12 point font; double spaced; 1” left and right margins, top and bottom margins;  
  Paper topics due by: Sept 8  
  First Outline due: Sept 27  
  First Draft due: October 25  
  Final draft due: December 1
Office Hours:
To meet with the professors with questions regarding the class, students should email them with available times. jheppard@uh.edu and dmmcmunu@central.uh.edu

Note: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html
**Week 1 (August 21 and 23)**

*August 21: Overview of Class; What is Domestic Violence; History*

Additional Assignment for first day of class: In a paragraph or two for a total of at least 200 words, please explain your interest in taking this course. Bring a printed copy to the first day of class.

*Seventeenth Annual Gender and Sexuality Law Annual Review Article DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, 17 Geo. J. Gender & L. 211, 2016.*

“The Rule of Love”: Wife Beating as Prerogative and Privacy, 105 Yale L.J. 2117, June 1996

“20 Reasons Why She Stays” by Susan G.S. McGee

*August 23: Types of DV; Protecting your client: Interviewing and Safety Planning*

Safety Planning Information
Domestic Violence Screening and Interviewing Samples
Power & Control Wheel (Power and Control Wheel, Equality Wheel, Teen Dating Violence Wheel)
Article: Houston Chronicle August 2015: *Search for Answers: Experts Sayy Rage Common Thread in Domestic Abuse Cases*

**Week 2 (August 28 and August 30)**

*August 28: Domestic Violence and Family Law*

Divorce: Jurisdiction, Custody, Possession and Access

*Selected Texas Family Code Statutes re: Domestic Violence and Family Law*


*Holley v. Adams*, 544 S.W.2d 367 (Tex. 1982) (best interest standard)

*Lewelling v. Lewelling*, 796 S.W.2d 164 (Tex. 1990) (DV and custody)

*In Re Stephanie Lee*, 411 S.W.3d 445 (Tex. 2013) (Mediation)

*August 30: Writing Skills - LSS Professor Lauren Simpson: Writing a Demand Letter*

**Week 3 (September 4: no class (Labor Day) and 6)**

*September 6: Protective Orders*

*Texas Family Code Statutes re: Protective Orders*


**TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT due Sept 13: Group Assignment (no more than 3 per group):**

Draft application and order for protection based on hypothetical given; re-write due one week
Week 4 (September 11 and 13)

September 11: Domestic Violence in the International Context: DV in other countries

*We’re All in this Together: A Global Comparison on Domestic Violence and the Mean Necessary to Combat It*, 29 Alb. L. Rev. 297, 2015-2016


NOTE: read pages 1 -22 only.

September 13: International Issues and Domestic Violence

Preventing International Abduction - Hague Convention;


*The Hague Convention and International Child Abduction – Blog by Brad Reid (Huffington Post - April 6, 2016)*

*Ermini v. Vittori*, 758 F.3d 153 (2d Cir. 2014)

Hague Convention Helps and Powerpoint

Week 5 (September 18 and 20)

September 18: DV and Criminal Law


“What’s Love Got to Do With It?: Examining Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue Using Their Eyes Were Watching God”, 81 UMKC L. Rev. 867 (Summer 2013)
“Why Do Women Use Force or Violence in Intimate Partner Relationships – National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Article: Houston Chronicle August 2015: Problem with rogue drones hits new heights

September 20: Termination (and Adoption) as related to domestic violence


Article: Houston Chronicle August 2015: State tried to remove children

Week 6 (September 25 and 27)

September 25: DV in Criminal Court con’d: student group work

September 27: Property and Landlord/Tenant Laws and Domestic Violence


Texas Property Code §92.016: Right to Vacate

Housing Info Client Helps

Experiential Legal Writing by Diana Donahoe (Client Letters)

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT due Oct 11: Demand letter to Landlord and case update letter to client; re-write due: one week after first draft returned

Week 7 (October 2 and 4)

October 2: Employment Law and Domestic Violence


EEOC FAQ’s: The Application of Title VII and the ADA to DV in the Workplace


Experiential Legal Writing by Diana Donahoe (Memos)

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT: first draft due Oct 18: Memo to Human Resources; re-write due: one week after draft returned

October 4: DV and Immigration Law (VAWA and Asylum) – Speaker: TBA
Recognizing Domestic Violence as a Basis of Asylum article

Week 8 (October 9 and 11)

October 9: DV and Immigration Law (U VISA, T VISA, SIJS) – Speaker: TBA
Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Disability eligibility article)

October 11: Diversity and Domestic Violence
Animal Law/LGBT/Teen/Male Victims

Safety Planning for Pets (SAF-T Program)

Expanding DV Protective Orders to Include Companion Animals, ABA Commission on Domestic Violence, Vol 8 – Summer 2007


DV and Pets: List of States that Include Pets in Protective Orders – 2017

Description of Power and Control Wheel in relation to Animal Abuse

Teen Power & Control Wheel

Dating Abuse and Teen Violence Facts – National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Male Victims of Intimate Partner Violence - National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Power & Control Wheel for LGBTQ victims

BuzzFeed News Article: This is What Domestic Violence Looks Like When You’re LGBT by Patrick Strudwick

**Week 9 (October 16 and 18)**

**October 16: Technology and DV**

*Technology Helps from National Network to End Domestic Violence, Safety Net Project*


**October 18: Best Practices and DV – Speaker: Maisha Colter: Director of Legal Advocacy at Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse (AVDA) in Houston**

*Professional Responsibility in Civil Domestic Violence Matters, 24 Hastings Women’s L.J. 3, Winter 2013*

**Week 10 (October 23 and 25)**

**October 23: Student Presentations (3)**

**October 25: Student Presentations (3)**

**Week 11 (October 30 and November 1)**

**October 30: Student conferences re: final paper**

**November 1: Student conferences re: final paper**

**Week 12 (November 6 and 8)**

**November 6: Student Presentations (3)**

**November 8: Student Presentations (3)**

**Week 13 (November 13 and 15)**

**November 13: Professionalism; Managing Difficult and High Maintenance Clients**

*Ethical Issues Attorney re: DV — Speaker: Judge Judy Warne*

*High-Conflict Divorce: Legal and Psychological Challenges, Houston Lawyer March/April 2008*
Dealing with Manipulative People (excerpt from “In Sheep’s Clothing” by George K. Simmon)

November 15: Secondary Trauma and Dealing with Stress
Compassion Fatigue and Attorneys, Texas Bar Journal, September 2010.

**Week 14 (November 20 and 27)**

November 20: Law Practice Management: Speaker: Mary Quinn

*Being the “Lincoln Lawyer” –Law Practice Management on the Road* by Kenneth Raggio

November 27: Final Class >> “Sleeping with the Enemy” movie