

**Course Syllabus
Immigration & Family Law
University of Houston Law Center
Spring 2019**

Profs. Rosemary Vega and Janet Heppard

Course Description:

In this class, students will work individually and in groups to find legal solutions to hypothetical situations where immigration and family law intersect (e.g. marriage, divorce, adoption, domestic violence, the Hague Convention and Suits Affecting the Parent Child Relationship). Students will study family-based immigration law and learn how it relates to representation of individuals in family court. They will develop practical skills that will enable them to successfully represent clients who are seeking immigration benefits through a family member. Students will learn the practical aspects of representation of non-citizens in family court.

Course Materials: TBA: materials to be posted on Blackboard

Laptops:

Students must bring their laptops to class as there will 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.

Learning Outcomes for this Course:

- Increased knowledge of the intersection of Immigration and Family Law
- Development of Interviewing and Counseling Skills
- Improvement in legal writing skills
- Mastery of relevant substantive law in areas including Family Law and Immigration Law
- Increased knowledge of stress management skills
- Recognition of the benefits of cultural competence in the legal field
- Enhanced knowledge in law practice management

Assessment:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

20% class participation, 25% take home assignments, 55% in-class final exam. For the final exam, 10 single-sided, double-spaced pages of notes will be allowed.

Participation counts for 20% of the student's grade in this course. Actions that demonstrate participation are: 1) Asking questions, 2) Answering questions and 3) Making comments (extra points for comments that relate to material in the text or POM and for sharing relevant life/professional experiences). We will keep track of which students are participating. In addition, if students want to keep track of what they contributed and on what date i.e. the question asked, the answer given, the comments made, etc. students can send the professors this record at the end of the semester.

Final Exam:

Exam Date: May 6, 2019 6pm-9pm

Office Hours:

To meet with the professors with questions regarding the class, students should email them with available times. rvega5@central.uh.edu and jheppard@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

January 14: Course Overview

Family Law Definitions of Marriage and Children

Definitions: The Marriage Relationship/Informal Marriage/Bigamy/Paternity

Immigration Law Definitions of Marriage, Children, Fiancé(e)s and Widows(ers);

January 16: K Visas, Visa Bulletin; Priority Dates; Filing a Family-Based Petition

Week 2

January 21: MLK: no class

January 23: Child Status Protection Act, Adam Walsh Act, Death of the Petitioner

Week 3

January 28: Divorce Proceedings in Family Court:

Divorce/Jurisdiction/Custody (Standing/Access/Child Support)/UCCJEA

January 30: Divorce Proceedings – con'd

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT due February 11: Draft Petition/Counterpetition for divorce.

Week 4

February 4: Conditional Permanent Resident Status

February 6: Termination of Parental Rights/Adoption in Family Court (including Intercountry Adoptions)

Week 5

February 11: Other Applications of the Hague Convention (International Abduction/Enforcement)

February 13: Immigration and International Adoptions

Week 6

February 18: Adjustment of Status

February 20: Consular Processing; Accompanying v. Following to Join; Cross-Chargeability

Week 7

February 25: Inadmissibility Issues: Public Charge, Security related grounds, etc

February 27: Waivers: Unlawful Presence, Misrepresentation, Provisional Waivers, who does not qualify for a waiver

Week 8

March 4: Waivers: cont'd

Quiz and Review

March 6: In-class Quiz

This week will include a quiz (multiple choice and short answer) as a review of what the class has studied so far. The quiz will **not** be graded and will be discussed in class following completion of the quiz. The quizzes will also be turned in at the end of class so that the professors may make comments and then return the quizzes to the students.

Each student will submit one short answer question and one multiple choice question (along with the answers) by email to the professors by **February 25**. These questions may be used in the quiz and will otherwise be used to help review the material covered thus far.

The quiz is designed to help students determine their level of understanding of the course as well as to help the professors focus on where students need more help. If a student does not do well on the quiz, the student should make an appointment with one of the professors so that the professor can help the student better understand the course material.

MARCH 11-15 SPRING BREAK

Week 9

March 18: Inadmissibility issues: Public Charge, Security related grounds, etc

**March 20: Domestic Violence
Texas Family Code: Protective Orders**

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT due April 1: Draft application and order for protection

Week 10

March 25: Violence Against Women Act petitions (Immigration)

March 27: Special Immigrant Juveniles (Family- SAPCR/Declaratory Judgment)

Week 11

April 1: Special Immigrant Juveniles (Immigration)

April 3: Representation of Family Beneficiaries in Removal Proceedings

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT IMMIGRATION: Write a letter to USCIS pursuant to fact pattern distributed in class. You will need to create letterhead, cite to statutes, case law and regulations. Due April 8.

Week 12

April 8: Cuban Adjustment Act

April 10: Professionalism; Managing Difficult and High Maintenance Clients (Immigration and Family); including ethics

Week 13

April 15: Interviewing and Counseling

April 17: Dealing with Stress and Compassion Fatigue

Week 14

April 22: Law Practice Management (Invited Speakers)

April 24: Review – Last Class

FINAL EXAM:
