

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY LGL 117 – FAMILY LAW (3 CR.)

Course Description

Studies elements of a valid marriage, grounds for divorce and annulment, separation, defenses, custody, support, adoptions, and applicable tax consequences. Includes property settlement agreements, pre- and ante-nuptial agreements, pleadings, and rules of procedure. May include specific federal and Virginia consumer law. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

This course is designed to acquaint the student with the law governing marriage, annulment, separation and divorce and with the legal rights and duties of spouses, children and other family members.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, proficiency (at the high school level) in spoken and written English is recommended for its successful completion.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- a) Understand the elements of a valid marriage
- b) Understand the legal rights and obligations of spouses and parents
- c) Understand the grounds for annulment, separation, and divorce, and the legal defenses to those actions
- d) Understand the principles governing child support, custody, and adoption
- e) Understand the law governing prenuptial and property settlement agreements, as well as the principles used to divide marital property in the absence of agreement
- f) Draft, use and understand the provisions of the court documents and of the written property agreements commonly used in family law matters
- g) Understand the procedures used in family law cases, and assist a lawyer in each phase of handling such a case

Major Topics to be Included

- a) Marriage v. Cohabitation in the eyes of the law
- b) Constitutional restrictions on laws governing choice of spouse and procreative privacy
- c) Legal rights and duties of spouses and parents
- d) Separation: grounds, defenses, and support
- e) Child support and custody
- f) Paternity actions: rights and duties of unwed fathers
- g) Divorce and annulment: grounds and defenses
- h) Alimony and property division, including prenuptial and separation agreements and tax consequences
- i) Adoption: substantive law and procedures