

Pre-Law Seminar

Last Updated: Tue, 12/16/2025

Course prefix: PUBP

Course number: 3610

Section: All

CRN (you may add up to five):
81190

Instructor First Name: William

Instructor Last Name: McNeil

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course will cover two general areas of practicing law: (1) a focus on specialized fields; and (2) oral advocacy. The first section of the course will include examination of the legal profession in the areas of criminal law, torts, constitutional law, military justice, intellectual property, contracts and property/estate planning. The next section will be a general overview of oral advocacy components and litigation skills. Both of these sections emphasize skills and values that are essential to success in law school, competent lawyering and the practice of law in a variety of fields.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of foundational concepts of some of the broad areas of law such as torts, contracts, criminal law, litigation, etc.
- Articulate your personal and professional motivations for considering a career in law and position those within the values and norms of the legal profession.
- Develop skills in trial advocacy, including persuasive writing and oral argument.

Required course materials:

[American Law and the American Legal System in a Nutshell](#), Lloyd Bonfield, West Academic Publishing, 2nd Ed. 2021.

The Significant Lawyer: The Pursuit of Purpose and Professionalism, William S. Duffey, Jr., Mercer University Press, 2022

Other materials may be assigned and available as files on Canvas.

Grading policy:

Your total points earned will be divided by **300** to determine a percentage grade, and your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	Below 60%

Attendance policy:

Given the small size of this class, once a week class meeting schedule, and the interactive nature of this class given the subject matter, **attendance is taken each class period and class participation is a significant portion of your grade.** Any requests for an absence to be excused must be made via e-mail to Prof. McNeil either before or immediately after class. Excused absences are at the professor's sole discretion, and documentation may be required. Excused absences will only be granted in narrow circumstances that include, but are not limited to, Institute sanctioned absences, illness, jury duty, requirement for military service, religious observances, and death of a family member. It is the student's responsibility to request that an absence be excused either before or immediately after the absence from class. **If you have an excused absence, it will not affect your participation grade.**

Please do not come to class at all if you are sick, whether it is COVID or something else. Please let me know via e-mail ASAP if you will miss or have missed class due to illness.

All absences not excused by the professor are unexcused absences, and your absence may affect your participation grade. Note that job interviews, career fair attendance, conflicts with other on-campus commitments (tour guide, students orgs, etc.), trips, etc. are generally unexcused absences.

Georgia Tech's official attendance policy can be found at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>. In addition to the GT rules, it states "All students are responsible for obtaining an understanding of each instructor's policy regarding absences." Information about how to notify instructors when you need to miss class and what kind of documentation you should provide is at: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/student-absence-regulations/>.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion