



The mission of Concord University is to provide quality, liberal arts based education, to foster scholarly and creative activities and to serve the regional community (<http://www.concord.edu/academics/>).

**Course Prefix, Number and Title: SOWK 320, SP TOP: FAMILY LAW**

**Course CRN # and Section: 20675, SEC 20**

**Semester Taught (including year): Spring 2019**

**Credit Hours: 3**

**Prerequisites:**

**Course Time:: Monday 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.**

**Building and Room Number: Admin 110**

**Professor: Judge Anthony Bisaha**

**Office Location: A107**

**Office Hours: Available before and after class and upon appointment**

**Email: [abisaha@concord.edu](mailto:abisaha@concord.edu)**

**Phone: 304-673-8547**

**Office Fax: 304-384-6091**

**College/Department Website**

**<http://www.concord.edu/sws>**

**Course Description/Rationale:** This course will study family law and some of its very important areas. The study principally deals with West Virginia family law, but has cases and application beyond our state.

This class is for any student interested in family law, but especially for students who want to work in the area of family law as social workers, attorneys, counselors, psychologists, law enforcement, and those interested in foster care/adoption.

**Course Management System:** Blackboard

**Hardware/Software Needed:** Laptop or computer

**Text requirements:** All materials provided by instructor. Access to WV Code helpful.

**Concord University Educational Goal(s):** To prepare and develop the skill and knowledge in Family Law so as to use those principles in the student's chosen field.

**National Standards:** NA

**Specific Learning Outcomes:** Students are expected to master the WV Code and cases related to Family Law. This includes, but is not limited to, child custody, child support, domestic

violence law, parental alienation, child abuse/overlaps, guardianship, guardian ad litem, foster care/adoption, and court procedure.

**Course Requirements:** It is critical that you come to class prepared with the required texts. This includes your preparedness for discussion on assigned readings and other supplemental assignments.

**Grading Policy and Scale, Make-up Policy, Late Work:**

Class participation is crucial to your learning in this class. Its importance is reflected below by amounting to 200/1000 points of your overall grade.

900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D

599 and below F

Students are expected to attend each class. Students should note that a majority of test questions are taken from lecture and class discussion. Excused absences are only allowed when the student is hospitalized or has had the death of an immediate family member. Additionally, school activities approved by the Academic Dean with one week notification of the Professor will be excused.

Three unexcused absences will result in a deduction of one letter grade from your overall course grade.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of an absence with explanation and to arrange for any late or make-up work prior to or during the next class meeting.

**Course Timeline (Schedule of Assignments/Assessments/Presentations):**

Materials assigned are to be read before coming to class. It is expected that each student will come to class and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings including an analysis of the cases. Students shall be prepared to discuss the facts of each case and the relevant legal issues. It will be the responsibility of the student, if the student is absent, to obtain from student colleagues any materials distributed or information disseminated.

Students will be given three equally weighed exams during the semester, in addition to a mid-term and a final. The mid-term and final exam will be comprehensive. Make-up tests must be arranged immediately and at least before the next scheduled class. Cheating or plagiarism on tests or projects will not be tolerated, and may result in expulsion from the class with a grade of F. Part of learning the law is learning to think, act and argue independently of others, and students are on the honor system in this class to do so. Appropriate assistance or informal tutoring between students and the formation of study groups, however, are encouraged in this course.

Exams (3 @ 100 points each).....	300
Midterm Exam .....	100
Final Exam .....	100
Family Law Practicum .....	150
Family Law Paper .....	150
Informed Participation .....	<u>200</u>
	1000

**Practicum and Paper:**

The purpose of the practicum is to experience an area of family law in action. A minimum of four hours of work/observation is necessary. You may choose from the following: SAFE House Domestic Violence Shelter; Domestic Violence worker/shadow, every Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon - Mercer County Family Court; Juvenile Drug Court, Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. - Mercer County Family Court; Family Court as scheduled with Judge Bisaha;

Contact names and numbers:

Pat Daniels - 304-436-8117

SAFE HOUSE

Family Court and Juvenile Drug Court

Judge Bisaha

(Contact - Sherri Sisk - 304-487-8424)

After your practicum experience, please write a minimum two page paper on your experience, what you may have learned, special observations, how it differed from what you expected, etc., etc.

The practicum is worth 150 points. The paper is worth 150 points – Each student must sign a confidentiality agreement to not discuss any of the persons/names of the parties observed. This is of utmost importance since Family Court is not open to the public, by law.

– Please don’t wait until late in the term for your experience since there is a deadline of November 1, 2016 and papers are due –November 29, 2016. Only a few students can attend at one time also.

– More details to follow

**Teaching Plan:**

We will begin with an introduction to Family Law. Thereafter, we will cover up to one unit per week. This plan and syllabus may be amended based upon student progress and/or the professor’s discretion. The Teaching Plan is very aggressive; therefore, it is imperative that students expend time and effort to keep up with the readings and assignments. Any student needing special accommodation must let the Professor know as soon as possible.

Accommodation will be made in accordance with University guidelines.

## **FAMILY LAW TEXT CHAPTERS**

### Chapters

- 1 Introduction, Important Definitions
- 2 Prenuptial, Marriage Agreements - WV Code 48-1-203
- 3 Divorce - jurisdiction, venue, grounds - WV Code 48-5-101 et. seq.
- 4 Equitable distribution - WV Code 48-7-101 et. seq.
- 5 Spousal support and Alimony - WV Code 48-6-301
- 6 Child custody/Shared parenting - WV Code 48-9-101 et. seq.
- 7 Custody modifications/Relocation - WV Code 48-9-401
- 8 Parental alienation - Is it a syndrome?
- 9 Child abuse/overlaps
- 10 Child support - duties, obligations, child advocate office - WV Code 48-13-301
- 11 Paternity - Michael K. T. Case
- 12 Domestic Violence Law - WV Code 48-27-101
- 13 Guardian Ad Litem and their role in the Family Court system
- 14 Guardianship - WV Code 44-10-4
- 15 Grandparent rights and visitation - WV Code 48-10-101 et. seq.

### **Accessibility/Accommodations:**

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### **Concord University Honor Code**

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states:

*"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."*

The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

### **Class/Online Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### **Emergency Alert System**

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

### **Emergency Information**

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information go to: <http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

#### University Closure

No students or employees are to report.

#### Classes Cancelled

Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.

#### Operating on an Inclement Weather Delay

Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See <http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

*\*Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.*

## **Student Conduct**

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

## **Sexual Harassment & Assault**

Federal law, Title IX, and Concord University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (Including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through the Concord University Counseling Center (304-384-5290). Alleged Violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Concord University Title IX Coordinator at 304-384-6327 or [titleix@concord.edu](mailto:titleix@concord.edu). Reports to Campus Security can be made at (304-384-5357). As an employee at Concord University, I am a mandatory reporter which means I must report any sexual misconduct I am made aware of. This includes verbal or written (such as in an assignment) disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

## **Technology Services**

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail [cuhelpdesk@concord.edu](mailto:cuhelpdesk@concord.edu).

## **Syllabus Disclaimer**

**"This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please check it regularly."**

## **Miscellaneous:**

### SPRING 2019 CLASS GUIDELINE

- Class 1 - 1/14/19 - Intro, Mock Argument, Case Handout
- Class 2 - 1/21/19 - Lecture, Chapters 1 and 2
- Class 3 - 1/28/19 - Lecture, Chapters 2 and 3, Work Practicum Discussion (WPD)
- Class 4 - 2/4/19 - Lecture, Chapters 3 and 4
- Class 5 - 2/11/19 – Lecture, Chapter 5, WPD, Exam Prep
- Class 6 - 2/18/19 – Class, Exam 1 (Chapters 1 – 5), Chapter 6
- Class 7 - 2/25/19 – Lecture, Chapters 7 and 8

- Class 8 - 3/4/19 – Lecture, Chapters 9 and 10, Exam Prep  
3/11/19 – Spring Break – No Class
- Class 9 - 3/18/19 – Class, Exam 2 (Chapters 6 – 10) WPD
- Class 10 - 3/25/19- Lecture, Chapters 12 and 13
- Class 11 - 4/1/19 - Lecture Chapter 11, Midterm Exam (Chapters 1 – 10)
- Class 12 - 4/8/19 – Work Practicum Experience Due, Lecture Chapters 14 and 15
- Class 13 - 4/15/19 – Exam 3 (Chapters 11 – 15)
- Class 14 - 4/22/19 – Adoption, Foster Care, Courtroom Testimony, and protocol
- Class 15 - 4/29/19 – Last Class, Course Review, Work Practicum Paper Due  
5/6/19 - Final Exam