Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should <u>not</u> be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

GOVT 215
LOGIC AND LEGAL REASONING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces pre-law students to the role of basic deductive and inductive logic in the context of legal reasoning, including the application of legal rules and the application of precedents. This course is ideal for students who plan to attend law school. It will explain the basic logic involved in the LSAT exam, as well as introduce students to the types of reasoning and argumentation encountered in the study of law.

RATIONALE

The purpose of the course is to equip the student to think like a lawyer by training him or her in basic legal logic. The student will be able to identify deductive and inductive reasoning and will learn about the Socratic Method and the various forms of fallacies. The student will also learn to use legal reasoning to form cogent and persuasive legal arguments. It is important that the pre-law student studies logic and legal reasoning because it will prepare him or her for the rigorous intellectual engagement her or she will experience in law school.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the Academic Course Catalog.

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

A.   Computer with basic audio/video output equipment

B.   Internet access (broadband recommended)

C.   Microsoft Office

IV. **MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Describe the differences between basic deductive and inductive logic.

B. Identify the formal techniques of evaluating legal arguments and deductive systems.

C. Apply legal rules and precedent to decision making and critical thinking.

D. Formulate reasoned and cogent legal arguments.

V. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

A. Textbook readings and presentations

B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and Student Expectations, the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

C. Discussion Board Forums (2)

Discussion boards are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the student will create a thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. Each thread must be 350–500 words and demonstrate course-related knowledge. In addition to the thread, the student will reply to the threads of at least 2 classmates. Each reply must be 150–300 words. For each thread and reply, the student must support his or her assertions by including at least 1 citation from either the textbook, the Bible, or an additional scholarly source. Current Turabian format must be used for all citations.

D. Thesis and Introduction Revision

The student will revise an introductory paragraph from a research paper. The provided paragraph will include a thesis statement that contains an argument. The student will revise the paragraph so that it is logically coherent in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the assigned Reading & Study material.

E. Newspaper Opinion Editorial Critique

The student will read an opinion editorial of his or her choice from a respected news source and will write a response of at least 2 pages summarizing the argument, identifying fallacies in the argument, critiquing the argument, and explaining how the argument could be improved.

F. Socratic Method Reading Checklist

The student will read the *Brown v. Board of Education* case and complete a written reading checklist based on the Socratic Method.

G. Identifying Argument in Case

The student will read the *Brown v. Board of Education* case and write a 2–3-paragraph response identifying the categorical syllogism, the major premise, and the minor premise.

H. Quiz

The quiz will cover the Reading & Study material for the assigned module/week. The quiz will be open-book/open-notes, contain 10 multiple-choice and true/false questions, and have a time limit of 30 minutes.

I. Tests (2)

Each test will cover the Reading & Study material for the assigned modules/weeks. Each test will be open-book/open-notes, contain 20 multiple-choice and true/false questions and 1 essay question, and have a time limit of 1 hour and 15 minutes.

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

Course Requirements Checklist		10
Discussion Board Forums (2 at 50 pts ea)		100
Thesis and Introduction Revision		100
Newspaper Opinion Editorial Critique		150
Socratic Method Reading Checklist		150
Identifying Argument in Case		150
Quiz	(Module/Week 2)	50
Test 1	(Module/Week 3)	150
Test 2	(Module/Week 4)	150
	Total	1010

B. Scale

A = 900–1010   B = 800–899   C = 700–799   D = 600–699   F = 0–599

C. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

COURSE SCHEDULE

GOVT 215

Textbook: Aldisert, *Logic for Lawyers: A Guide to Clear Legal Thinking* (1997).

MODULE/ WEEK	READING & STUDY	ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
1	Aldisert: chs. 1–2 2 presentations 1 website	Course Requirements Checklist Class Introductions DB Forum 1	10 0 50
2	Aldisert: chs. 3–4 1 presentation 1 Biblical position paper	Thesis and Introduction Revision Quiz	100 50
3	Aldisert: chs. 5–6 1 presentation	Test 1	150
4	Aldisert: chs. 9–10 1 presentation 1 PDF	Test 2	150
5	Aldisert: chs. 11–12 1 presentation	Newspaper Opinion Editorial Critique	150
6	Aldisert: ch. 8 1 presentation 2 videos 1 website	Socratic Method Reading Checklist	150
7	Aldisert: ch. 13 1 presentation 1 website	Identifying Argument in Case	150
8	1 presentation 1 video	DB Forum 2	50
		TOTAL	1010

DB = Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course module/week (except Module/Week 1) begins on Tuesday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Monday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final module/week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on **Friday**.