

Syllabus: The American Legal System

CELOP ▪ Boston University
Fall 2011 ▪ Joseph Pettigrew

Week 1 - September 29

Introduction to the course; introduction to the American system of government

Week 2 – October 4 & 6

The American system of government & federalism; preview of upcoming Supreme Court cases; illegal downloading

Week 3 - October 11 & 13

The structure of the judicial system (federal and state); preparation for visit to federal courthouse

Week 4 - October 18 & 20

Visit to the Federal District Court in Boston (Oct 18); follow-up & discussion; oral presentations

Week 5 - October 25 & 27

The Bill of Rights and individual liberties; oral presentations

Week 6 – November 1 & 3

“The Road to Brown” (video on *Brown v. Board of Education*); ; oral presentations; *midterm exam*

Week 7 – November 8 & 10

Jury trials – theory and practice (begin); Mass. jury-orientation video; oral presentations

Week 8 - November 15 & 17

Jury trials – theory and practice; civil vs. criminal law; an episode of *Law & Order* (TV show)

Week 9 – November 22 [Nov. 24, Thanksgiving]

Visit to Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (tentative)

Week 10 – November 29 & December 1

Special topics (depending on students’ interests); begin watching *A Civil Action*

Week 11 –December 6 & 8

Continue *A Civil Action*; special topics (students’ interests)

Week 12 – December 13 & 15

Review & Final Exam

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

A landmark Supreme Court decision (*Brown v. Board of Ed.*, *Roe v. Wade.*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, etc.)

(Note: This syllabus is *tentative*. = It may change.)