

**CHILD, PARENT, AND THE STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW**  
**SPRING, 2026 SYLLABUS – LAW 6714 – 3 CREDITS**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays 11AM -12 PM

**MEETING TIME:** Wednesdays and Fridays 9:00 AM – 10:25 AM

**LOCATION:** HH 355A

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

My goal in teaching this course is to help you think critically about the law governing children. In this course, we will explore broad themes that run throughout the law, distill cases, interpret statutes, and identify assumptions that underlie this body of law. I hope to make this class interesting for everyone, including those students who do not intend to practice law in this area.

It is important to remember that we come to this class from various backgrounds, with many different beliefs about how the world should work, and what the law should be. My goal is not to change any fundamental beliefs that you hold. Instead, when you leave this course, my hope is that you not only have a good working knowledge of the subjects that we have covered, and can apply law from cases and statutes to real life situations, but that you understand that there are assumptions that underlie the law in this area, what these assumptions are, and can think critically about cases, statutes and the body of law that governs children.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- understand concepts of the law related to children,
- be aware of lawyer's roles and ethical problems in representing children, and
- appreciate the difficulty of developing and applying rules related to child, government and parent interaction and conflict.

**REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:**

*Children and the Law: Doctrine, Policy, and Practice (Abrams, Mangold, and Ramsey) 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*

Please be sure to register for the Canvas course and have any required materials with you in print or easily accessible electronic form in class. You are responsible for checking your Canvas page and the e-mail connected to the page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING EVALUATION:**

Your course grade will be based on primarily on your final examination. I will give you detailed information about your exam, as well as practice exam questions, later in the semester.

I may boost borderline grades based on active and thoughtful class-participation. I may also lower borderline grades based on excessive absences, tardiness, or disruptive behavior.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the Law School. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Students are allowed four absences during the course of the semester. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are not recorded as absent if they come in late. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement will be dropped from the course. The law school's policy on attendance can be found [here](#).

**UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES:**

Other information about UF academic policies and resources can be found at [this link](#).

**COMPLIANCE WITH UF HONOR CODE:**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Law Honor Code located [here](#). The UF Law Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so.

**INFORMATION ON UF LAW GRADING POLICIES:**

The Levin College of Law's mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College's website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

Letter Grade	Point Equivalent	Letter Grade	Point Equivalent
A (Excellent)	4.0	C (Satisfactory)	2.0
A-	3.67	C-	1.67
B+	3.33	D+	1.33
B	3.0	D (Poor)	1.0
B-	2.67	D-	0.67
C+	2.33	E (Failure)	0.0

The law school grading policy is available [here](#).

**OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:**

UF Law respects students' [observance of religious holidays](#).

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.
- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

**EXAM DELAYS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:**

The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](#).

**STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Assistant Dean Brian Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester. Students may access information about various resources on the UF Law Student Resources Canvas page, available at <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635>.

### **STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

### **RECORDINGS OF CLASS**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor and Student Conduct Code.

**ABA OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS REQUIREMENTS:** ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Each weekly class is approximately 3 hours in length divided onto 2 days/class periods, requiring at least 6 hours of outside of class including reading the assigned materials, writing critical analyses, and developing your final paper.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

This syllabus is offered as a guide to the direction of the course. Our pace will depend in part on the level of interest and the level of difficulty of each section and is subject to change.

If not otherwise indicated, pages are from your assigned textbook, Children and the Law (“Text”)

### **Chapter 1: The Status, Rights, and Obligations of Children**

January 21: Syllabus; Text pages 18-31 (Meyer, Pierce)

January 23: Text, pages 31-35, 39-60 (Prince, Tinker, Morse)

January 28: Text, pages 66-80 (Troxel, Yoder)

January 30: Text, pages 80-103 (Bellotti, Endrew F.)

February 4: Text pages 142-159  
(Michael H., In re C.K.G.)

### **Chapter 2: Defining the Child-Parent Relationship**

February 6: Adoption Law Conference

February 11: Guest Speaker, Teresa Drake – Domestic Violence and Children

### **Chapter 3: Representing Children**

February 13: Text, pages 159 – 171 and 193 – 198 (SoHoo, Wendy G-M, In re Thomas C.)  
Florida Statute 743.015 Disabilities of nonage; removal

February 18: Asynchronous Learning Day

Text, pages 225-228, 240-255; (Kingsley, Kenny A., In re A.D.) Florida Statute 39.01305  
Appointment of an attorney for a dependent child with certain special needs; 39.822  
Appointment of guardian ad litem for abused, abandoned, or neglected child

Please watch: Judge Madelin F. Einbinder: The Judge and Child Partnership: Engaging Youth in Court Hearings <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cv-9aebFPdk>; Overview of the dependency system (from perspective of a former foster child – created for current foster kids): <https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Education-Outreach/Court-System-Videos/Dependency-Court-Make-Your-Voice-Heard>; Overview of specialized court systems: <https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Office-of-Problem-Solving-Courts/Mental-Health-Courts>

February 20: Asynchronous Learning Day; Text, 913-924, 926-935 (City of Rochester, In the Matter of Leif Z.); assignment to be provided

### **Chapter 10: Regulating Children’s Conduct**

February 25: Model Act Governing the Representation of Children in Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency Proceedings; Dependency Flowchart #1: [https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/215991/file/Floridas\\_Dependency\\_Flow\\_Chart\\_page1.pdf](https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/215991/file/Floridas_Dependency_Flow_Chart_page1.pdf); Dependency Flowchart #2: [https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/215992/file/Floridas\\_Dependency\\_Flow\\_Chart\\_page2.pdf](https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/215992/file/Floridas_Dependency_Flow_Chart_page2.pdf),

## **Chapter 4: Abuse and Neglect**

February 27: Text page 305 (starting with the chart) - 321 (In re Juvenile Appeal, In re S.T.); Florida Statute 39.301- Initiation of protective investigations; Florida Statute 39.401- Taking a child alleged to be dependent into custody; law enforcement officers and authorized agents of the department; Florida Statute 39.501 - Petition for dependency

March 4: Text pages 344-347, 358-366 (In re T.G., DeShaney); Florida Statute 39.01- Definitions; Florida Statute 39.001 - Purposes and intent; personnel standards and screening; 39.621 - Permanency determination by the court

March 6: Text pages 366-372, 375-387 (In re N.M.W., Alma S.); Florida Statute 39.806 - Grounds for termination of parental rights; Florida Statute 39.810 - Manifest best interests of the child

## **Chapter 5: Foster Care**

March 11: Text 438-44; 480-490 (In the interest of T.G, M.D.); Text 514-525 (P.P.); Florida Statute 39.701 - Judicial review.

March 13: Text 631 – 649, (Stanley, Lehr, Michael H)

## **Chapter 7: Adoption**

March 25: Guest Speaker, Mary K Wimsett  
Please read Heart of Adoptions v. JA, 983 So. 2d 189 (pull from Westlaw, Lexis, etc.)

## **Chapter 6: Criminal Abuse and Neglect**

March 27: Field Trip – Child Protection Team 1699 SW 16th Avenue  
Gainesville, FL. 32608-1173; Text 527 – 534, 540-545 (Ogin, Crawford)

April 1: (Craig, J.C.); Florida Statute 90.803 (23) - Hearsay exceptions; Statement of Child Victim

## **Chapter 8: Medical Decision-Making**

April 3: Text pages 689-706, 714-720 (Parham, Newmark)

## **Chapter 11: Delinquency**

April 8: Observe delinquency court in Alachua County. Review Delinquency Flowchart:  
<https://www.flcourts.gov/content/download/402738/file/Delinquency-Flowchart-2018.pdf>

April 10: TBD

April 15: TBD

April 17: Guest Speaker – Magistrate Baker

April 22: Review