Family Law

Professor Douglas E. Abrams

The casebook is Douglas E. Abrams et al., Contemporary Family Law (4th ed. 2015). We will also use a Missouri statutory supplement, which will be available shortly on my website: http://law.missouri.edu/abrams/.

We plan to write the manuscript for the casebook’s fifth edition during the summer of 2018. Thus the casebook will have a used-book market during the upcoming 2017-2018 academic year, but not afterwards.

The assignment for the first class session is to read pages v-vii of the casebook’s Preface (stop at “Chapter authorship”); the casebook’s Summary of Contents (pages xvii-xix); and the casebook’s pages 1-8 & nn.2-4, and 8-13 (stop at “Defining the Family”)

The reading assignment for the second class session will include pages 87-98 (the Obergefell majority opinion’s first two paragraphs, Part II, and the majority opinion’s last paragraph only).

Based on this reading and your general intuition and experience, please be ready to discuss these questions in class:

Why should the state regulate the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the marriage relationship?

Why are marriage and divorce any of the state's business?

If people want to live together (and perhaps have children) without following the state's prescriptions for getting married, why should the state withhold some benefits and protections that people receive when they follow these prescriptions?