Family Law

Professor Douglas E. Abrams

The casebook is Douglas E. Abrams et al., Contemporary Family Law (4th ed. 2015). A few assignments will come from the co-authors’ Summer 2018 Update, whose link is on the bottom of the first page of the Syllabus. We will also use a Missouri statutory supplement, which I will send you by email attachment.

By February 1, the o-authors will submit the manuscript for the casebook’s fifth edition, for publication in May or early June. Thus the fourth edition will not have a used-book market after the current semester.

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 pages 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.A and B, 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 marriage?

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 for following these prescriptions?