

US LEGAL LEARNING TREE – SYLLABUS (2026-27)

Welcome! I am glad you have signed up and I hope you will find my class interesting and worthwhile.

Course Content

I have decided to group classes into sections – see *page 2*.

Don't be intimidated! The beauty of this course is it is flexible. *My primary goal is to teach you about various aspects of the US legal system which I think will be of interest to you.* If for some reason there is topic or section you wish to skip, that is fine. And if it appears that certain topics are not a “good fit” for this group, I can substitute other topics. Sometimes I cover two topics in one class, and sometimes I change the order. I send an email on Wednesday regarding the following week's topic. As explained previously, readings are generally very short and intended to provide a short introduction to the subject, not to burden you with homework.

Other Course Information

- The first class will be held on ***Tuesday October 13th***
- My expectation is classes will be held ***at 8:00 pm China time***. I realize this makes things difficult for participants in the US.
- I do not “call on” participants or engage in Socratic Method Q&A. But I value participation highly because it makes the class better for all. I also value appearing on screen if possible.
- I will record all classes, but I prefer in person attendance because it leads to interaction.
- Before the first class, I will determine if the translation function on Zoom is helpful and not distracting. The feedback last year was that it was not helpful.
- There is no exam!
- Here is the Zoom link for all classes. I will share it often.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7686691352?pwd=wIU0Sf2hyFXsbU8IBcT8rptMgIxbNA.1&omn=87298475631>

Meeting ID: 768 669 1352

Passcode: hjPD1p

If you have any questions, please *send me an email* (ajsoven@gmail.com) rather than a DM on Xiaohongshu.

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CLASSES

Section I. Common Law and Structure of US Legal System

The Common Law and Stare Decisis

Brown v. Board of Educ.

U.S. Constitutional Issues

Section II. Chinese Companies in US Courts

When does a US Court have Jurisdiction over a Chinese business?

What is Discovery Like in US Courts?

How Does a Jury Trial Work?

Can a US Court Judgment be Enforced in China?

What are Punitive Damages and Should they Be Assessed?

Section III. Alternative Dispute Resolution

US Arbitration Basics

US Mediation Basics

Section IV. Ethics and Practice Issues

How Judges Are Chosen in the US Legal System

How Lawyers Find Clients and Get Paid

Section V. State Law Issues

What is Negligence all About?

What are Intentional Torts?

Property Basics and When Can the Government Take Your Property?

Section VI. Basics of US Corporate Law

Corporate Law Basics

Corporate Law Basics II

Section VII. Intellectual Property

Basics of US Copyright Law

Basics of Trademark Law

Basics of Trade Secret Law

Section VIII.

Basics of US Criminal Law

Basics of Employment Law

Basics of US Bankruptcy Law