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Law 101: Everything You Need To Know About American Law



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About American Law

JAY M. FEINMAN



Synopsis

The best-selling first edition of Law 101 provided a vividly written and indispensable portrait of our nation's legal system. Now, in this revised edition, Jay M. Feinman offers an updated survey of American law, spiced with new anecdotes and cases, and incorporating fresh material on topics ranging from the President's war powers, to intellectual property, standard form contracts, and eminent domain. Here is an exceptionally clear introduction to law, covering the main subjects found in the first year of law school, giving us a basic understanding of how it all works. Listeners are introduced to every aspect of the legal system, from constitutional law and the litigation process to tort law, contract law, property law, and criminal law. Feinman illuminates each discussion with many intriguing, outrageous, and infamous cases, from the scalding coffee case that cost McDonald's half a million dollars, to the sensational murder trial in Victorian London that led to the legal definition of insanity, to the epochal decision in *Marbury v. Madison* that gave the Supreme Court the power to declare state and federal laws unconstitutional. He broadens the listener's legal vocabulary, clarifying the meaning of everything from "due process" and "equal protection" in constitutional law, to the distinction between "murder" and "manslaughter" in criminal law. Perhaps most important, we learn that though the law is voluminous and complex, it is accessible to all. Everyone who wants a better grasp of current legal issues - from students contemplating law school, to journalists covering the legislature or the courts, to fans of Court TV - will find here a wonderful source of information: A complete, clear, and colorful map of the American legal system.

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Customer Reviews

Ever heard of Tort Law? Roe V. Wade? The Miranda Warning? What is Constitutional Law, what rights does it protect? How does a lawsuit begin? What happens at trial? What is a criminal act? The answers to those and many other similar questions are in "Law 101" an excellent introduction to the American Legal System. In nine chapters, organized in questions and answers format, that cover Constitutional Law, the litigation process, personal injuries and tort law, businesses, consumers and contract law, property law, criminal law and criminal procedure, the book offers an easy to read and highly educational insight of the legal system, explaining clearly how courts, judges, juries and lawyers operate and work to solve the legal issues that reflect everyday's life. Well written and covering the basic subjects that every lawyer learns during the first year of Law School, this book is accessible to lay readers and law students alike. Outstanding and useful. A five stars book that will help you to understand the law and many of the legal issues you commonly have to face.

In Law 101, the author attempts to explain major concepts found in American law and the legal system without going into the finer detail. He succeeds. Major concepts covered in this book include constitutional law, basic rights, tort law, contract law, property law, and criminal law. Also covered are the litigation process in civil suits and criminal trials. Each of these subjects covers a lot of things, but the author has managed to succinctly summarize each one into the major things that need to be known in order to understand each topic. He also brings in famous and important court cases that really show how the law is applied to different situations. From important cases such as Marbury v. Madison or Roe v. Wade to more infamous cases such as when a woman scalded herself after spilling hot coffee and was able to successfully sue McDonald's. Even with the amount covered in this book, it still is only the tip of the iceberg. It really opened my eyes to just how complicated the law can be especially when it comes to dispensing justice fairly. I would recommend this book to those with an interest in learning about law and the American legal system. Although it will not turn you into a lawyer overnight, it will give a greater understanding of the major concepts of law and court cases often heard about in the news.

Since I just recently reviewed Jay Feinman's excellent Un-Making Law, I may as well review this one too. This book is a terrific resource, both for people in general who want to know how U.S. law works and for students headed to law school who want to jump-start their studies. Basically, it's a user-friendly (but not oversimplified) introduction to the entire first-year law school curriculum.

Feinman's claim is that the law isn't something mysterious that you have to belong to an esoteric priesthood in order to understand; on the contrary, it's possible for the ordinary layperson to understand what the law is and how it works. His book bears out that claim. Heck, I wish _I'd_ had it to read before I started law school; he sets out the major concepts clearly and intelligibly, in the process touching on many of the key cases. I'd have had a _much_ better idea of what to expect during my first year if I'd read this first. (Nor would that have exhausted its usefulness. It would probably be handy to have around while, say, Putting Together The Big Picture for your state bar exam.) Nor, of course, is it just for future lawyers. It's suitable for anyone who wants to know how the U.S. legal system works. ('Knowing how it works' here means 'understanding the principles and competing incentives that drive the development of U.S. law', not 'knowing how to act as your own lawyer'. This book isn't about 'how'; it's about 'why'. If you want to draft your own employee handbook or something, get a book from Nolo Press.) You don't have to be of any particular political persuasion to profit from it, either. It's very fair and even-handed, carefully presenting both sides of every controversial issue. In fact, just about the only people in the U.S. who may not get much out of it are practicing attorneys, who are already supposed to know all this stuff. And even there, it's just barely possible that . . . nahhhhh.

Outstandingly well written! It covers the first year law school courses. Well organized and very informative. Not written in "leagalease". Essential reading for the non-lawyer needing a general knowledge of the law. I'm not a lawyer and have read several books on the general subject of law. This book is far above the others in writing style, comprehensive, and the amount of info covered. I bought it as a "necessary" read, but was surprised at how well it is organized. A pleasant and informative read! I strongly recommend it

I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn more about the basics of law but does not want to read through tedious, mind-numbing text. This book covers a lot of ground (basically all of the main doctrines of US law) and is entertaining at the same time due to the author's clear / concise narrative and numerous examples. From the beginning, Feinman explains that "law is not in the law books" but that law "lives in conduct; it exists in the interactions of judges, lawyers and ordinary citizens". Law is how we interpret it to be at a given time - it is in and of the people. From this and other insights, Feinman has helped me gain a greater appreciation for the US legal system as well as making me a more legal savvy citizen. In this day and age this is important - at one time or another we will all have to consult a lawyer for something.

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