The United States Legal System: An Introduction

Margaret Z. Johns

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This book is designed to introduce incoming law students to the U.S. legal system in order to prepare them to get the most out of law school from the day it begins. Authors Johns and Perschbacher do not assume a great deal of prior knowledge and begin by explaining what legal education is all about. There is then a chapter on the legal profession -- who are all those lawyers, how are they regulated, and what are they doing? The book then covers the structure of our legal system, looking at the complex relationship between the states and the federal government as well as at the institutions of both. Finally, two important sources of law are considered: legislatures and courts. The book examines some of the ways that legislation is interpreted and some of the ways that the law evolves through the judicial process. The authors revised and updated all the chapters, but the biggest change is the complete replacement of chapter 6. Chapter 6 is basically one, long, complicated case. In the new edition, the authors are using Lockyer v. San Francisco as it raises very interesting questions about the rule of law and separation of powers. This book not only can serve as a crucial introduction for all law students but would also work well in an undergraduate course geared to pre-law students or a more general course about our contemporary legal system.

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