

# Preface

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We are pleased to provide an updated and revised seventh edition of *Family Law: Examples & Explanations*. Each of the 24 chapters features recent developments in family law, and includes hundreds of hypothetical examples and explanations, most of which are based on fact patterns taken from actual cases. Because new developments in family law often reflect underlying societal changes in family structure and demographics, this volume incorporates empirical research and census data that are likely to be of interest to the reader. We also highlight ways that the practice of family law and the role of attorneys have been transformed through the use of processes such as mediation and collaborative law.

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## THE STYLE, APPROACH, AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS BOOK

This book contains a balanced and in-depth analysis of family law. Because the tapestry of family law is complex, and because we believe that focus is an essential ingredient to learning, we have separated the subject of family law into specific topics that are organized as chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into discrete sections that often include hypothetical examples and illustrative explanations. We have based our analysis and the examples and explanations on nationally accepted legal principles.

Our view of a book that is commonly used as a supplementary text is to reflect the coverage and depth of a typical family law course. However, because family law is so often state specific, the text contains contrasting perspectives from various jurisdictions. Any model or uniform acts are included at the beginning of each chapter to help frame discussions for disparities in state approaches. To eliminate confusion and to assist with family law research, we have included hundreds of citations to relevant state decisions and legislation associated with the principles under consideration.

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## THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK IN RELATION TO YOUR FAMILY LAW COURSE

There is variation in how professors organize family law courses, as reflected across different family law casebooks. The index and table of contents should

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assist the reader in locating content that corresponds with the materials covered in your family law class. Broadly, the book is broken up into five main sections:

I. *Family Definition and Regulation*: The newly added Chapter 1 explores the evolving definition of “family” in America, the relationship between family and marriage, and the circumstances under which the state and federal government regulate the family.

II. *Marriage Formation*. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the history of marriage, the requirements of a valid marriage as defined through common law and legislation, and the circumstances under which a marriage may be void or voidable.

III. *Divorce*. Chapters 5-14 comprise of the bulk of a typical family law course: issues surrounding dissolution of marriage. This includes discussion of child custody, child and spousal support, division of property, and contracts between parties surrounding dissolution-related issues.

IV. *Non-Marital Relationships*. Chapters 15 and 16 cover the rights and regulation of individuals who are not in a traditional marital relationship, including unmarried cohabitants and parents.

V. *Advanced Topics in Family Law*. Chapters 17-24 cover advanced topics in family law. In some law schools, these topics may be covered in separate courses, including courses on reproductive rights, children and the law, and alternative dispute resolution. Accordingly, these chapters broadly summarize key issues within each of the covered areas.

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## WELCOME TO COAUTHOR PROFESSOR STEPHANIE L. TANG

Professors Oliphant and Ver Steegh are pleased to welcome Professor Tang as a coauthor of the 7th edition. She made substantial contributions to every chapter and we are grateful for her extensive family law expertise, her impressive research and writing skills, and her creative ideas for improving the book. It’s been a pleasure to collaborate on this new and updated version!

Robert E. Oliphant  
Nancy Ver Steegh  
Stephanie L. Tang

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