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## I. INTRODUCTION

This guide is a curated selection of useful resources for international LLM students who might be unfamiliar with common law systems and the U.S. legal system specifically. However, this guide is also useful to others looking to attain a basic understanding of the U.S. legal system. Many of these books will cover topics in more than one of the subjects listed above, but are grouped based on their primary focus.

## II. THE LEGAL SYSTEM

William Burnham, *Introduction to the Law and Legal System of the United States*, 6th ed. (KF386.B88 2016). Explains the structure of the U.S. legal system, sources of U.S. law, and legal procedure, including a short history for context, and covers main law school course subject areas such as torts, property, and contract law; also includes a section on the effect of international law on the U.S.

F. Allan Farnsworth, *An Introduction to the Legal System of the United States*, 4th ed. (KF387.F37 2010). Discusses the culture of legal education and legal practice in the U.S., explains the U.S. legal system and procedure, summarizes common areas of U.S. law, and has an appendix on how to reading case law and statutes.

John A. Humbach, *Whose Monet?: An Introduction to the American Legal System*, 2d ed. (KF8863 .H86 2016). Teaches the legal system by following a real world case from beginning to end explaining the process and legal problems faced at various stages of a case.

Eldon H. Reily & Connie de la Vega, *The American Legal System for Foreign Lawyers* (KF387 R448 2012). Provides a detailed explanation of U.S. legal structure including the basis of and scope of judicial review in chapter 8.

JR Swanegan & Ellen S. Podgor, *Overview of U.S. Law*, 2d ed. (KF 385 .O93 2019). Provides a preliminary explanation of seventeen subjects typically offered by U.S. law schools, as well as a chapter comparing the U.S. legal system with a civil code system.

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs. *Outline of the U.S. Legal System* (<https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/gov/outlinelegalsystem.pdf>). Explains the history and organization of the U.S. federal and state court systems.

### III. LEGAL LANGUAGE

Translation dictionaries in a number of languages can be found in the Reference section starting with the call number K52.

*Black's Law Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Reserves and Reference KF156 .B53 2019 and online in Westlaw). Considered the most authoritative American legal dictionary.

*Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations* (<http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/>). Well-respected resource to decipher unknown legal abbreviations, usually part of a citation.

Rupert Haigh, *Legal English* (Reference K94 .H35 2018). Discusses grammar and syntax in a legal context as well as common language in difference legal context; includes a useful section titled “*What to Avoid*” that explains common mistakes and issues.

### IV. THE U.S. LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Teresa Brostoff, *United States Legal Language and Culture: An Introduction to the U.S. Common Law System*, 3d ed. (KF272 .B76 2013). Targeted at LL.Ms, this book discusses best practices for taking notes in class, outlining in preparation of finals, dealing with stress and culture shock, and reading and briefing cases; also covers writing, research, and other legal skills.

David Hricik, *Law School Basics: A Preview of Law School and Legal Reasoning*. (Online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE008540620>). Provides an overview of law school in chapter 2 and explains the structure of US legal education and how that structure is linked to the common law system of the US in chapter 5; remainder of the book has historical information, discusses legal reasoning, research, and writing, and has a section on Bluebooking.

Edwards, George E. *LL.M. Roadmap: An International Student's Guide to U.S. Law School Programs* (KF272 .E385 2011). Advises on many situation LL.Ms may face during law school such as financing their education, immigration issues, and options after graduation.

Hegland, Kenney F. *Introduction to the Study and Practice of Law in a Nutshell*, 8th ed. (KF273 .H4 2020 and online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE009648313>). Short review of the case analysis and legal argumentation using simplified faux cases; includes advice on studying and outlining for law school.

Johns, Margaret Z. & Rex R. Perschbacher. *The United States Legal System: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (KF385 .J64 2016). Introduces legal education, the legal profession, the legal system, and primary sources of the law.

*The Federal Court System in the United States: An Introduction for Judges and Judicial Administrators in Other Countries*, 4th ed. (2016). Office of Judges Programs, Admin. Office of the U.S. Courts (<http://www.uscourts.gov/file/federalcourtssystemintheuspdf>). Written for foreign legal practitioners, this booklet covers U.S. federal judicial system's structure, jurisdiction, administration, and the interplay between the judiciary and other branches of government and the public.

## V. LEGAL REASONING, RESEARCH, & WRITING

Morris L. Cohen & Kent C. Olson, *Legal Research in a Nutshell* (KF240 .C54 2021 and online at <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE010577758>). Often used as a research textbook, this condensed guide provides a good summary of U.S. legal research, and contains an appendix of major treatises by subject area.

Kevin Fandl, *Inside the American Legal Mind: An International Practitioner Guide to American Legal Reasoning* (KF300 .F36 2016). Explains the interplay between the judiciary and legislature in making US law (chapter 3) and the way the law can evolve over time.

Craig Hoffman & Andrea Tyler, *United States Legal Discourse: Legal English for Foreign LLMs* (KF250 .H64 2008). A brief guide to language in law and how it differs depending on the interaction, such as avoiding jargon during client communications.

Nadia E. Nedzel, *Legal Reasoning, Research, and Writing for International Graduate Students* (KF240 .N43 2017). Provides an initial comparison between civil law and common law, and then covers the research and writing process; includes charts and summaries for reference.

Helene S. Shapo, Marilyn R. Walter, & Elizabeth Fajans, *Writing and Analysis in the Law*, 7th ed. (Reserves KF250 .S52 2018). The textbook used in the LLM legal research and writing course; advises on the structure of legal writing as well as tone, content, and editing.

Jill J. Ramsfield, *Culture to Culture: A Guide to U.S. Legal Writing* (KF250 .R358 2005). Includes clear visual depictions of U.S. legal structure and authority, dedicates an entire chapter to clarifying U.S. analytic patterns, which illuminates how courts come to their decisions, and explains the role of language in the law, including how meaning can evolve in a series of cases.

John B. Thornton, *U.S. Legal Reasoning, Writing, and Practice for International Lawyers* (KF386 T483 2014). Includes a chapter comparing civil law systems to the U.S. system and exercises to practice the writing instruction.

## VI. FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCES

Fandl, Kevin J. *Guía Práctica del Sistema Legal Americano para Profesionales en un Mundo Jurídico Global* (KF385 .F3618 2013).

Hay, Peter. *US-Amerikanisches Recht: ein Studienbuch* (KF385 .H319 2015).

Ito, Masami. *アメリカ法入門* (KF386 .I87 2012).

Levasseur, Alain A. *Le Droit Americain* (KF387 .L355 2004).

Lin, Lizhi. *英美法导论* (KF385 .Y564 2012).

## VII. ADVANCED LEGAL SKILLS

Anne M. Burr & Howard Bromberg, *U.S. Legal Practice Skills for International Law Students* (KF300 .B87 2014). Covers advanced skills such as litigation practice, client communication, professional responsibility, and negotiations.

Kevin J. Fandl, *Lost in Translation: Effective Legal Writing for the International Legal Community* (K94 F36 2013). Covers contracts drafting and academic legal writing and provides exercises to practice legal writing skills.

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