

CLASS POLICIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

COURSE: Introduction to Legal Methods: Week One, Fall 2013

REQUIRED

TEXT: Michael Hunter Schwartz, Expert Learning for Law Students
Ruth Ann McKinney, Reading Like a Lawyer (2nd Edition)
Marty Peters, Juris Types

RECOMMENDED

TEXT: A legal dictionary

FACULTY:

Professor Paula Manning, pmanning@wsulaw.edu
Professor Lisa Blasser, lblasser@wsulaw.edu
Professor Udoka Nwanna, unwanna@wsulaw.edu

- **Course Objectives:** To assist students in developing the skills necessary to succeed in law school, in practice and on the bar exam—and to make students more effective and successful as law students. More specifically, by the end of the course, successful students will have: (1) developed the learning skills they need to succeed in law school; (2) begun to develop legal-analytical skills, particularly the skills involved in identifying legal issues, understanding and using rules of law, and using and analyzing facts; (3) developed the ability to read and understand court opinions and legal rules, and (4) developed their ability to express ideas and understanding regarding legal issues, both orally and in writing.
- **Course Methodology:** The class begins the week following orientation and meets once per day, and then continues through the first semester, meeting once per week. Unique features of the course include: (1) multiple opportunities for practice and feedback with respect to the knowledge and skills that are the objectives of the course; (2) exercises designed to help students learn, understand and remember the course materials; (3) team based learning activities; and (4) substantial emphasis on teaching students the learning, reading and thinking skills they need to succeed in law school, in practice and on the bar exam.
- **Class Participation:** Legal education is a cooperative venture, and lawyers must be able to orally communicate their ideas. Class participation therefore is a mandatory part of this course. Please note, there is a significant difference between being unprepared and being unable to “answer” a question. You should stay sufficiently ahead on your assignments to ensure your readiness to participate for each class. Neither the assertion that you did not anticipate the class or group getting so far, nor that you read the assignment too long ago to remember it will excuse a failure to be prepared. You will not be deemed unprepared simply because you venture an incorrect answer in class (unless, of course, your answer reflects inadequate preparation). You may be excused from participating once during the course for any reason of your choosing if you request an excuse **prior to the commencement of class**. Aside from the above-referenced excuse, there is no such thing as an excused failure to be prepared.
- **Course Grading:** Successful completion of this course is a requirement for graduation from the Law School. The course will be graded based on the following:

1) **Attendance and participation in class.** As set out above, class participation is required. Attendance is also required—both because lawyers are required to appear where they are expected, and because most of the learning and application of the required reading for this course occurs during participation in class exercises. If you arrive late, leave during class time or depart early (without prior permission), you will be marked absent for that session. **If you miss more than two class sessions, you will be withdrawn from the class and required to repeat the course.**

(2) **Completion of all assignments set out on the syllabus.** For most class sessions you will be preparing homework assignments. The assignments will help you practice the skills on which you will be tested on your law school examinations, and the bar examination. Because the goals of all of these assignments include giving you practice and feedback, initially you will not be graded on the accuracy of your answers; you will, however, be graded on the extent to which your submissions reflect and demonstrate your effort to do the assignments well. To pass each of the initial assignments you must prepare an answer to each assigned question or exercise that reflects a genuine effort to successfully complete the assignment and a genuine effort to implement the feedback that is given on prior assignments.

As the semester progresses and you have had an opportunity to practice the skills, the difficulty level of the assignments and the professor's expectations will increase. Your final grade will reflect the extent to which you have implemented the feedback you are given on the initial assignments, as well as the extent to which you demonstrate mastery of the skills taught in the course.

NOTE: A lawyer is expected to meet deadlines; failure to turn in documents on time may have serious consequences, including the loss of a clients' right to present a claim or defense. It is important to begin to exhibit the professionalism that is required of a practicing lawyer, including submitting all documents (assignments) on time. Therefore, **late assignments will not be accepted. Failure to hand in assignments on time may result in a failing grade in the course.**

- **Course Web Page:** The course has its own web page that includes lists of learning objectives, study guides and quizzes. To get to the course web page, you will need a Westlaw password, which will be provided to you at Orientation/your first day of class.
- **Seating Chart:** A seating chart will be distributed at the beginning of the first class. Please print the name (first and last) you wish to be called in the space reflecting the seat you have chosen for the semester. Any student whose name does not appear on the chart will be dropped from the course.
- **Assignments:** Attached are the reading assignments and class topics. Assignments may be altered or supplemented.
- **Office Hours, Appointments and E-mail:** Students may use office hours to address their concerns regarding any of the course material or for other guidance.

NOTE: All reading assignments should be completed prior to coming to class. Please read chapters 1-8 of the Schwartz text and chapters 1-4 of the McKinney text prior to the first Orientation session.

Session	Topic	Pre-class reading and assignments	Assignments
SESSION 1: August 12th, 2013 Day: 10:00am-2:00pm Evening: 6:30pm-9:30pm Room 110 (**Note: All sessions during the week will be held in Room 110**)	Succeeding in Law School Learning Styles/Preferences Learning and Study Strategies Intro to Legal Analysis	Schwartz Ch. 1-8; McKinney Ch. 1-4	Due in class: VARK assessment Reading Speed Assessment Myers-Briggs Inventory Signature Strengths Assessment STELLAR Survey Form (Green) <u>NOTE: ABOVE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED AT ORIENTATION, PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS SESSION</u>
SESSION 2: August 13th, 2013 Day: 10:00am-2:00pm Evening: 6:30pm-9:30pm	Reading Like a Lawyer	McKinney Ch. 5-11; Schwartz pp. 85-103	Baby Reggie Re-Writes Self-Assessment
SESSION 3: August 14th, 2013 Day: 10:00am-2:00pm Evening: 6:30pm-9:30pm	Briefing Court Opinions	Schwartz pp. 105-122	
SESSION 4: August 15th, 2013 Day: 10:00am-2:00pm Evening: 6:30pm-9:30pm	Learning in the Law School Classroom Case Briefs The Socratic Method Note taking Using your laptop wisely Time Management Study Aids	Schwartz Ch. 10	<i>Gideon v Wainwright</i> Brief
SESSION 5: August 16th, 2013 Day: 10:00am-2:00pm Evening: NO CLASS HELD	A Simulated Class Experience Reflections and Assessment: Evaluating your performance	Reading to be assigned during Session 4	TBA AT END OF CLASS

