

Solving Legal Problems

Summer 2014

Professor Sarah Eggleston

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Course Information / Policies

Required Texts

In-Class-Use and Homework materials will be provided by the Instructor.

Course Objectives

The five main objectives for this course are:

- To familiarize you with the performance test portion of the California Bar Examination;
- To further your skills in case synthesis and case analysis;
- To further your skills in fact gathering and factual application;
- To expose you to a broad range of documents a lawyer can be expected to prepare; and
- To give you a better understanding of the multiple roles an attorney assumes in practice such as that of a fact-gatherer, problem solver, negotiator, litigator, and counselor.

Course Methodology

The course uses past performance examinations and supplemental materials to teach the skills necessary to attain the above objectives. During the semester, we will use these past exams to discuss and prepare the various types of documents you may be asked to prepare while taking the California Bar Examination. We will also discuss the strategies, skills, and methodologies necessary for preparing those documents. But most of all, this is an interactive class. You are expected to participate and be fully prepared for each class.

There is no substitute for learning to take a performance examination or learning to prepare legal documents. To develop test-taking skills, you must actually take the exam under test conditions. There, as we complete each unit, you will take a 3-hour exam in class that will require you to prepare the types of documents that we have discussed to date.

Homework

To fully prepare you for any possibility, your homework will build on skills learned in class. The only way to get better, is to practice. PRACTICE A LOT. You will practice through giving your homework a good faith effort every time.

For full-credit, a paper copy of the homework, consisting of the written assignment and accompanying outline, must be turned in at the start of the class in which it is due. Any homework not turned in completed and at the beginning of class, will receive half-credit. If it is not turned in by the start of the next class period, no credit will be given at all. Also, if I feel that you have not given your homework a good-faith-effort, you may receive no credit for that assignment. If you are absent on a day that a class assignment is collected, it is your responsibility to ensure that the professor receives your assignment on time.

Be sure to bring 2 copies of each completed assignment to class. One must be printed as it will be turned in for your homework grade. The other copy may be used for in-class discussion and may be either printed or electronic. Be sure your name is on each page of your homework.

Assignments may be either typed or written. It is highly recommended that if you will be typing the Bar Examination, all your assignments be typed and vice-versa. Regardless of whether you are a typer or hand-writer, your outlines must be handwritten and turned in with each assignment.

Grading

Your grade is based on the points you accumulate over the course of the semester. This course does not include a mid-term or final examination, but instead uses examinations spread out over the entire semester.

Examinations account for 80% of your total grade. Each of the 5 exams given will be graded on a scale of 100 points. You're required to take each of the exams at the date and time listed on the syllabus. Your lowest score will be dropped and used to calculate your homework score. If you require special accommodations, please consult with me or contact Kelley Jones-Horwood well in advance.

Homework assignments account for 20% of your total grade. For each homework that you complete successfully and turn in on time, you will be given 1 pt. At the end of the class, your homework points will be tallied and added to your lowest exam score. This will then become your homework score for the class.

Participation

Legal education is a cooperative venture, and individuals who practice law must be able to work with others and orally communicate their ideas. Therefore, class participation is mandatory. Your final grade may be affected by class attendance and your participation in class activities. If it is extraordinary, a .2 bump upward (e.g. 2.7 to 2.9). If it is below average, it may have a downward effect of up to .1 (e.g. 2.7 to 2.6).

Attendance is an integral part of class participation. An attendance sheet will be circulated at each class. If you arrive late or leave early without permission from the professor, you may be considered absent from that class. Per WSU requirements, if you miss more than 2 classes during the semester, you may be withdrawn from the course.

Modification to Syllabus

I reserve the right to modify assignment materials or the syllabus dependent upon the pace of our progress, student performance, or need to better suit the course and program.

Office Hours / Appointments

As I work regularly on campus, I am almost always available to meet with students on an individual basis. My schedule is flexible, so please just see me at the Library or email me about setting up an appointment.