

## ***PRE-TRIAL CIVIL LITIGATION***

### ***Fall Semester 2016***

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Date and Time:           Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Instructor:                Nilab Rahyar Tolton  
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                                  Cell (949) 295-2646  
                                  Office Hours by Appointment

#### ***The Course***

This is a practical course that will teach you, among others, how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a case, prepare your pleadings in the case, prepare a discovery plan, conduct meaningful depositions, prepare dispositive law and motion, and effectively advocate for your client at every stage leading up to trial.

Outside preparation for this course will include an estimated 6-8 hours per week of assigned reading, written assignments, and preparation for in-class exercises.

The course is designed to facilitate the following institutional learning outcomes established by Argosy University: analytical reasoning, effective communication, information competency, interpersonal effectiveness, personal and professional integrity and ethical behavior, and professional competence.

The curriculum for this course is based on the programmatic learning outcomes of Western State College of Law, which include: doctrinal knowledge, practice skills, legal analysis, legal research, communication, advocacy of legal argument, client sensitivity and cultural competency, and legal ethics.

#### ***The Materials***

There is no assigned text for this class other than reference to the Rutter Guide, which will become your best friend. All other necessary materials will be provided.

#### ***Assignments and Grading:***

This is a practical class. Each student will participate as the attorney representing his or her client in a hypothetical case that the entire class will use. There is no final exam. Students will be required to turn in written assignments (including, among others, Complaint/Answer, Demurrer/Motion to Strike, Discovery Questions/Responses) throughout the semester. Assignments and due dates will be modified based on our progress during class. Because of the practical nature of the course, attendance is

mandatory. Please let me know if you have any extenuating circumstances requiring your absence.

Grades will be based on each of the written assignments, which will be weighed equally, for a total of 50% of your course grade. In class participation will account for 50% of your course grade.

### **DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:**

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The **Disabilities** Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Students Services Suite 119. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; [despinoza@wsulaw.edu](mailto:despinoza@wsulaw.edu). When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Associate Dean of Students Charles Sheppard at [cshppard@wsulaw.edu](mailto:cshppard@wsulaw.edu) or (714) 459-1152. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."

### **Argosy University Institutional Learning Outcomes:**

#### **1. Analytical Reasoning**

Analyze issues objectively, interpret and synthesize data and ideas, and develop feasible, flexible, and creative solutions to real world problems

#### **2. Effective Communication**

Identify audiences, assess information provided, interpret needs, and present relevant information using appropriate written, oral, and listening skills and media to meet the needs of the situation

### **3. Information Competency**

Gather, evaluate, and ethically use information from a variety of relevant technological and library resources to make decisions and take action

### **4. Interpersonal Effectiveness**

Develop individual and group interpersonal skills to improve and foster participation and interaction critical for achieving individual and group goals

### **5. Personal and Professional Integrity and Ethical Behavior**

Demonstrate a multi dimensional awareness of individual and social responsibility to act ethically and with integrity in a diverse, global society.

### **6. Professional Competence**

Apply skills appropriate to program objectives and employ critical reasoning to contribute to one's field and profession

## **Western State College of Law – Programmatic Learning Outcomes**

**Western State College of Law’s curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:**

#### **(1) Doctrinal Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedures, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

#### **(2) Practice Skills**

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student’s chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student’s particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial

analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

**(3) Legal Analysis**

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule, and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

**(4) Legal Research**

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

**(5) Communication**

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone, style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

**(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument**

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications, and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

**(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency**

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious

background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

**(8) Legal Ethics**

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.