

COURSE SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS

COURSE: Basic Bar Studies

SEMESTER: Fall 2013

PROFESSOR: Professor Blasser
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TEXTS: 2013 *Barbri* California Outline
(Provided by Professor) 2013 *Barbri* Multistate Outline

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The goal of Basic Bar Studies (“BBS”) is to introduce students to the essay writing and organization skills necessary to succeed on the essay portion of the California Bar Examination and to make those students more effective and successful as law students and lawyers. More specifically, by the end of the course, successful students will have: (1) developed the basic essay writing skills for bar examination essay writing; (2) developed the legal-analytical skills necessary for success on the bar examination, to wit, the skills involved in identifying legal issues, drafting clear, concise and complete rule statements and using and analyzing facts; (3) mastered a basic organizational structure for each of the subjects tested by the California Bar Examiners; (4) developed pre-written essay material for each of the frequently tested topics on the California Bar Examination; (5) developed the ability to use issues checklists, outlines and pre-written material to write well-organized and thorough answers within the one hour allotted by the California Bar Examiners for each essay.

COURSE METHODOLOGY: This course has been designed as a significant departure from traditional law school instruction and course work. 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) substantial emphasis on teaching students to develop an approach to writing essays in each of the subjects covered by the course.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Legal education is a cooperative venture. Class participation therefore is a mandatory part of this course. Any student who is deemed unprepared for class will be treated as absent for that day and a student who is unprepared on two (2) occasions will automatically be withdrawn from the course. PLEASE NOTE THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING UNPREPARED AND BEING UNABLE TO “ANSWER” A QUESTION. 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: Your grade is based on three components: (1) your score on the midterm (50%); (2) your score on the final examination (50%); and (3) the essays you submit every week. For each essay that you fail to submit, one point will be deducted from your final course grade. Points may also be assigned or deducted from your final grade based on class participation (or lack thereof).

- **Homework and Essay Assignments:** For every class session you will be preparing homework assignments. Those assignments will include outlining and/or writing essay examinations and preparing pre-written materials, essay approaches, issues checklists and other assignments directed at helping you learn the material and practice the skills on which you will be tested on your midterm, final examination and the California Bar Examination. Because the goals of all of these assignments include giving you feedback, you will not be graded on the accuracy of your answers. You will, however, be graded on the extent to which your submissions demonstrate a good faith effort to do the assignments. You must prepare an answer to each assigned question or exercise and that answer must reflect a genuine effort to successfully complete the assignment. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a deduction from your final course grade, as set out above.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: If you arrive late to class, 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 CLASS.**

ASSIGNMENTS: Attached hereto are the class topics for each class. During the class session prior to the topic, you will be given an issues checklist or basic structure for approaching the subject. You will be responsible for reading a bar exam outline on that topic, creating a skeletal outline from that checklist and then developing pre-written material for that topic, to further fill in your skeletal outline. This will form the basis for your essay approach. During the following week there will be a brief substantive lecture that will allow you to evaluate the material you have prepared; you will also be given the opportunity to outline and organize essays on that topic and to write one essay and receive feedback. Other assignments will include submitting your pre-written material, approaches and essay outlines. These assignments may be altered or supplemented.

COURSE WEBSITE: Please sign-up for the Basic Bar Studies TWEN course by going to: www.lawschool.westlaw.com. There you will be able to add this course and you will be able to submit your weekly essays in the Assignment Drop Box

OFFICE HOURS, APPOINTMENTS AND EMAIL: Students may use my office hours to address their concerns regarding any of the course material or for other guidance. Sign-up sheets for the above-mentioned office hours will be posted outside my office (on the third floor in the faculty suite) on a weekly basis. Also, I am generally available before and after class and will respond to questions posed by email.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

DATE	TOPIC
Wednesday, August 28 th	Introduction and Overview; Basic Skills: Outlining/Organizing Essays; Pre-Writing; IRAC
Wednesday, September 4 th	Introduction to Pre-Writing: Contracts/U.C.C./Contract Remedies
Wednesday, September 11 th	Pre-Writing Continued: Re-visiting Contracts/U.C.C./Contract Remedies
Wednesday, September 18 th	First Amendment
Wednesday, September 25 th	Constitutional Law
Wednesday, October 2 nd	Evidence
Wednesday, October 9 th	Civil Procedure
Wednesday, October 16 th	Torts/Torts Remedies
Wednesday, October 23 rd	MIDTERM
Wednesday, October 30 th	Criminal Law and Procedure
Wednesday, November 6 th	Real Property
Wednesday, November 13 th	Community Property
Wednesday, November 20 th	Professional Responsibility
Wednesday, November 27 th	Wills and Trusts

FINAL EXAMINATION DATE AND TIME TO BE ASSIGNED AT A LATER DATE.