

Spring 2018

The Practical Aspects of Being a Lawyer

CLASS SYLLABUS

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Overview of the Course: Students in this course are associates in the fictional law firm of Bigby & Bull LLP. During the course you will receive assignments and challenges requiring you to accomplish tasks typically required of associates – and partners – in a law firm setting. Such tasks will include completing research and writing assignments in a thorough and timely manner, preparing oral presentations, improving (or developing) your networking skills, learning to develop and nurture clients, working in teams, developing a business plan, "pitching" to clients, seeking financing for your firm, and negotiating a transaction. There will also be lectures and discussions on issues facing lawyers, law firms and the legal profession in general today, including managing your career, the changing legal market, opportunities for lawyers in that market, how technology is affecting the practice of law, and the ethical issues facing lawyers in this rapidly changing environment.

The purpose of this course is to start you on the road to developing the practical skills necessary to survive and thrive in a career in the law. By the end of the semester, students should have an understanding of the importance of developing business, how law firms are financed, the financial aspects of running a firm, how to build a network, how to develop and work with clients, and how to maintain professionalism. Please read the course introduction for additional information.

Course Materials: During the semester, reading will be assigned from a variety of law review articles, excerpts from periodicals and other sources.

Reading assignments will be assigned several weeks in advance either in class or by email.

Class Schedule: The class will meet on Mondays from 4:10 p.m. to 6:00 p.m..

Attendance and Preparation: You are working for a law firm so **you are expected to attend and be prepared for class.** One component of your grade will be class attendance and participation. If you know you will miss a class, please send me an email at least 24 hours in advance letting me know and describing the reason.

There is no dress code for the course, and no grading credit will be given or deducted for how a student dresses for class. **But, remember, this is a law firm.**

Lateness: You are expected to be on time.

Final Grade: Your final grade will be based on a number of factors: class attendance and participation (15%); written assignments (35%); oral presentations and exercises (50%). These percentages are only estimates and may vary slightly in each case. There is no final examination in this course.

With respect to your written assignments, they should be clear, concise, free of typographical and spelling errors, and tailored to their audience. Class participation should evidence thoughtfulness and preparation, not merely a desire to be heard. Working with others in teams is an important component of the class as is providing your views on the issues presented.

Computer Policy: Laptops, phones, iPads, and other such "indispensable" items should be stowed away during class.

Communications: The assignments, as well as any other information, will be communicated by email. Please check your email regularly. The best way to communicate with me is by email.

I will always be available in person before and after class or on the telephone at any time with a little advance warning.