

Legal / Judicial Process for the Legal Administrator

SUMMER SEMESTER 2007

May 29-July 12, 2007

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Course Policies

I. Course Overview and Objectives

This course is an introduction to what lawyers do and how the legal system works. It involves several intensive research and writing exercises, with significant feedback from the Professor.

Reading, Assignments and Discussion will address these basic themes:

- How to read case law and interpret it;
- How to conduct legal research;
- Drafting several typical legal documents; and
- Settlement and ADR.

In the Summer of 2007, this course will be taken entirely online. Distance Education can be just as effective as in-class courses, but certain factors must be taken into account – by both the student and the Professor. Some of these are detailed below.

II. Important Factors to Consider When Taking a Web-based Course

- This course will require the same commitment of time, study, and effort as a typical “on-site” one-semester course.
- Since the course takes place entirely online students must be able to work independently and organize their time.
- The online nature of the course will allow most assignments to be undertaken on a schedule most convenient to each student. Nevertheless, there will be firm assignment deadlines that will be part of the grading scheme, and several “real-time” classes that will take place at a date and time certain.
- You do not need to be a computer engineer to be a successful online student. You do, however, need to be comfortable using E-mail, the Web, and a word processing program such as Microsoft Word.
- You must be an active participant in the course – you can’t “hide” as some students do in an in-class environment. It is much easier to tell in an online environment who is not participating.

- The course has been designed to allow anyone with internet access to complete the requirements. Broadband access (e.g., a DSL or cable hookup) is strongly encouraged. You will also need a headset with earpiece and microphone that works with your computer. These are easy to find and purchase at your local office supply store. We will use these for the “Red” classes on the syllabus, and use the Wimba Live Classroom software so that we can all be online at the same time.
- The first assignment for the course (in addition to a reading assignment listed on the syllabus) is to send Prof. Thomson an E-mail introducing yourself, attaching a resume and a picture.
- To learn more about your Professor, visit the “About me” page on his web site: www.law.du.edu/thomson

III. Course Structure

The course structure is detailed in the syllabus, a separate document also available from the Professor’s web site. You must obtain and review that document, but this information should also be helpful in understanding the syllabus. You must also access the course Blackboard site, using your DU ID and Password. Much of the work of this course will take place within the Blackboard site, and you should check it every day at least once to see if there are new announcements, assignments, postings or other materials for your review.

Timeframe of course

The course will begin May 29 and finish July 12, 2007. Because there are so many written assignments during the semester, there is no final exam. Thus, the course is completed on the timely submission of your final assignment.

Organization of course

The course will contain 8 classes made up of online PowerPoint presentations. You must access these presentations and view them on or near the day prescribed in the syllabus. Otherwise, you will fall behind in the course.

Each module will have a set of readings and most will include a written assignment. In most cases, a writing assignment will deal only with one module; however, in some cases writing assignments may deal with two modules. In all instances of written assignments, the reading assignments – together with the PowerPoint presentations - should provide enough information for a satisfactory response, but be sure to contact the professor if you have questions.

There are two classes that will be conducted in the form of an asynchronous online discussion. You may contribute to those discussions at times that are convenient to you over two days on either side of the day marked in the syllabus, but you must contribute.

There are three classes that will be conducted in the form of a real-time online discussion using the “Live Classroom” button on the Blackboard site. This means everyone will be required to log on at a date and time certain. We will set a time on the days marked in the syllabus that is workable for everyone. Well before the class date please access that site and

make sure your computer is configured to access the live classroom. You will also need a headset with a microphone.

There are several exercises and training modules that will be conducted online. You will not need to do these necessarily on the particular day given on the syllabus, but you should complete them within a day or two of those dates.

There are two telephone calls with the Professor, which will be set up by appointment. One of these will be to discuss the course and answer any questions you may have, and the other will be to review a particular assignment of your written work after you have handed it in and the Professor has reviewed it.

E-mail discussion boards

Because of the online nature of the course, students will be expected to participate in a series of class participation discussion boards. The asynchronous discussion boards will generally be a few days in length and take the form of a posting from the instructor to be followed by comments from students. It is important to check the discussion board at least once a day to see if new materials have been added that might prompt additional responses from you. The discussion boards will be contained and operated within the Blackboard site for the course.

IV. Required Reading

The text for the course is TeachingLaw.com (Aspen 2006). The Professor has negotiated a license to each student of this online textbook *for free* this summer (it is usually over \$100 per license). There are numerous reading assignments in the text for the course, and these are listed in the syllabus with the preface “TL” – and the name of the main part of the online text and subparts that you will need to read prior to the class. There will also be supplemental reading assignments that will be posted in the Course Materials section of the Blackboard site, but you will be notified about these through announcements on the site.

V. Grading/Assessment

Grading and assessments will be measured based on three components:

- The written assignments;
- Online quizzes and exercises;
- Participation on discussion boards.

1. Written Assignments and Online Quizzes: 75% of the grade.

Assessment of written assignments will consider:

- Degree to which the student demonstrates an understanding of the assignment;
- Citations to relevant supporting materials;
- How well you have understood the course materials;
- Grammar and spelling;
- Clear and concise writing style;
- Legal analysis.

Papers will be submitted by way of an on-line “drop box” – which will either be located on the Blackboard site or the TeachingLaw.com site (I will let you know which one). Please click on the relevant assignment and then follow the instructions to upload the assignment.

Individual assignments should contain the following information on the top of the first page:

1. Student’s name;
2. Writing assignment name;
3. the Date.

In addition, the name of the file that you upload should be in this format:

{assignment name}_{your name}_{date}. {extension – for Word, this is .doc}

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at midnight of the day the assignment is noted as being due on the syllabus.

2. Discussion Board/Live Class Participation and Online Exercises: 25% of the grade

This component will be measured by active, timely, and engaged involvement in the discussion boards. Discussion boards will generally take the form of a posting by the Professor and responses by the students. Postings might include references to the assigned readings from the textbook, which the students will need to read, followed by several questions to consider in responding. Assessment of the postings will consider:

- Degree to which the student demonstrates an understanding of the question and the underlying issues involved with the question;
- How well course materials are brought into consideration of the underlying question;
- Reference to “outside” materials that may have a bearing on the question or consider a different aspect of the question;
- Clear and concise writing style.

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If you have questions about any of the information contained in this Policies document, please contact Professor Thomson either by phone or E-mail. He will be glad to speak with you; online courses create a distance between the professor and student simply because we don’t see each other in a classroom. The only way to bridge that is with a phone call or an E-mail – so be sure to call or write if you have a question. (The live classroom also helps with this – feel free to ask questions in those classes). Of course you would always be welcome to stop by the office as well, and if you are in Denver, this might be a realistic option for you. Just send an E-mail to set up an appointment.