

University of Florida Levin College of Law
COURSE SYLLABUS
GENERAL FIELD PLACEMENT EXTERNSHIP
SEMESTER IN PRACTICE
LAW 6946
Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:

Professor Sarah H. Wolking

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Office Hours: Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. If this time doesn't work for you, please contact me to arrange a meeting at a more convenient time. Students are encouraged to reach out anytime to discuss legal issues or ask questions about their cases. You can email, text, call, or visit my office.

CLASS DATES, TIMES, LOCATION

Room: via Zoom

- Thursday, January 29th from 6:00 to 8:30 pm
- Thursday, February 26th from 6:00 to 8:30 pm - ***Student Presentations (Group A)***
- Thursday, April 2nd from 6:00 to 8:30 pm - ***Student Presentations (Group B)***

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Welcome to the externship seminar for students enrolled in Externships and Semesters in Practice. This seminar serves as the classroom component of your externship and is designed to deepen your understanding of legal practice, professional identity, and the ethical dimensions of lawyering.

Through guided reflection, class discussion, and structured assignments, you will critically analyze your experiences in the field, examine the core values of the legal profession, and develop skills essential for success. Together, we will focus not only on how to navigate legal practice effectively but also on how to do so with integrity, empathy, and a commitment to justice.

This course is based on the idea that learning from experience works best when paired with intentional reflection. You are encouraged to share your questions, insights, and challenges in our collaborative learning space.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Reflect thoughtfully on their professional experiences in the field and clearly convey the skills, values, and ethical considerations involved in legal work.
- Improve their understanding of their evolving professional identity and what it means to be a lawyer in different settings.

- Learn to manage workplace challenges by self-assessment, setting goals, and seeking constructive feedback from supervisors.
- Evaluate the cultures and practices of their placement organizations in light of their career goals and values.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Conduct legal research and analysis, and produce professional legal writing (e.g., memoranda, case summaries);
- Collaborate with peers and supervisors to investigate and resolve legal problems;
- Demonstrate a working understanding of case progression and procedural flow in litigation or other practice contexts;
- Interview clients and witnesses effectively and empathetically;
- Communicate clearly and professionally with judges, court staff, and legal professionals;
- Negotiate effectively and ethically, emphasizing problem-solving and justice-oriented results;
- Identify and address ethical dilemmas using the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and other frameworks;
- Pursue self-directed learning and actively seek feedback for growth;
- Identify inequities in law and legal systems, and examine ways to challenge these dynamics effectively; and
- Articulate their professional identity and how it reflects the core values of the legal profession, including integrity, service, and equity.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:

- ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct:
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_table_of_contents/
- The Seven Stages of a Field Placement (in Canvas under “files”)
- Judicial Wellness: The Ups and Downs of Sitting NY Judges (in Canvas under “files”)
- A BigLaw Partner’s Journey Through Clinical Depression:
<https://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/a-big-law-partners-journey-through-clinical-depression>
- Four Things Resilient Lawyers Do Differently: <https://pdclegal.org/news/4-things-resilient-lawyers-do-differently/>
- Mistakes Aren’t the Problem, Law’s Blame Culture
Is: <https://www.law.com/international-edition/2021/05/11/mistakes-arent-the-problem-blame-culture-is/>
- Moral Distress (in Canvas under “files”)
- Virtues and the Lawyer (in Canvas under “files”)
- My Father’s Life Was Shaped by Racism. So Was His Death (in Canvas under “files”)
- Why Young Bankers, Lawyers, and Consultants Need Emotional Intelligence (in Canvas under “files”)

Additional materials may be posted on Canvas throughout the semester.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING EVALUATION:

This course is graded on a pass/fail basis (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) and follows the Levin College of Law grading policies. To earn a satisfactory grade, students must attend every class, complete all reading and writing assignments, and give a presentation during one of our final class meetings. The minimum expectations are that students will:

- Work the designated hours (45 hours of work equals one credit);
- Complete their timesheets and other written work by the due dates—students who are more than one week late without prior notice and with more than three assignments risk not receiving academic credit for their placements;
- Perform work of satisfactory quality as determined by the supervising attorney and the professor; and
- Conduct themselves ethically and professionally regarding their academic and professional duties during the placement.

Please make sure to follow the above to prevent some or all of your credit from being denied.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Every two weeks, you are required to upload a journal assignment to Canvas. The ABA and best practices mandate that field placements include a reflective component. You will be given seven reflective writing prompts. These prompts help you step back and discover something new about the legal profession, your placement, and yourself. I encourage you to use these prompts as a starting point; if there's another topic or issue that interests you and you'd like to write about it, please do. If you wish to discuss your current placement in relation to your past summer employment, previous placement, or prior work experience, feel free. Each entry should be between 250-500 words or 1-2 pages double-spaced. Memos are due on Sundays by midnight.

Each student will give one presentation to the class on a substantive legal or professional responsibility topic of their choice that relates to their experience at the placement. The presentation should last 10 minutes (including time for questions and discussion). It will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Organization. Is the presentation well-structured and supported by convincing evidence for its conclusion?
- Content. Does the student present accurate and engaging material, and are the listeners likely to learn new insights about the topic?
- Delivery: Does the student seem confident, speak naturally without too much dependence on notes, and engage well with the audience?

Students may use technology like PowerPoint if they want, but it is not mandatory. Presentations will be given on the last two class nights, February 26th (Group A) and April 2nd (Group B).

1. January 25, 2026

Read:

- The Seven Stages of a Field Placement (in Canvas under “files”)

Upload to Canvas:

- Supervisor’s and Student’s Externship Agreement (MOU) (template in Canvas under “files”)

- Reflective Memo #1. Use this entry to introduce your placement, describe what you are currently doing, what you hope to accomplish before the semester's end, and why you chose this placement. I encourage you to provide some background on why you went to law school, what you hope to do afterward, and how this placement fits into your overall plan. What are you looking forward to, and what challenges do you foresee this semester? Through this journal entry, I hope to get to know you better.
- Professional Development Plan (PDP). Using the "PDP Externship" outline found in Canvas's "files" section, outline your goals for this externship. This is a valuable exercise. Be sure to review your goals with your supervisor.

2. February 8, 2026

Read:

- Judicial Wellness: The Ups and Downs of Sitting New York Judges (in Canvas under "files")
- [A BigLaw Partner's Journey Through Clinical Depression](#)

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #2. Meditation doesn't mean you have to sit in a lotus position; prayer doesn't require clasping your hands together. What activities help you relax and clear your mind? When can you most focus on one thing and shut everything else out? Are there activities you enjoyed in the past that you stopped doing as a law student? When you feel stressed, what calms you? What aspects of your field placement cause (or seem likely to cause) you stress or anxiety? The readings focus on judges and BigLaw attorneys. How do those lessons apply to you and your chosen practice area or field placement?

3. February 22, 2026

Read:

- [Four Things Resilient Lawyers do Differently](#)
- [Mistakes Aren't the Problem, Law's Blame Culture Is](#)

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #3. Please consider your mistakes in law school or your current or past work environment. Which mistakes did you handle well, and how do those differ from errors you could have managed better? Has anyone played a key role in helping you resolve and learn from your mistakes? What aspects of your field placement do you feel least confident about, and what strategies might help you anticipate mistakes, recognize, correct them, and learn from them moving forward? Have you seen someone nearby make a mistake, and if so, how did you (or could you) assist them?

4. March 8, 2026

Read:

- Moral Distress (in Canvas under "files")

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #4. The reading discusses the terms "moral injury/distress" and "moral residue" in the context of healthcare providers, describing how being unable to act or being prevented from acting according to one's values, beliefs, and moral outlook can affect them. Please reflect on situations where you have experienced or expect to face

moral distress in your field placement or practice. Does the “4As” model resonate with you? Is there another approach that could help you reduce moral injury and, in turn, lessen moral residue in your practice?

- Student Mid-term Self-Assessment (in Canvas, in the assignment text)

5. March 29, 2026

Read:

- Virtues and the Lawyer (in Canvas under “files”)

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #5. The reading highlights a return to the noble ideals of “lawyer-statesman” and “wise counselor.” Who do you know that embodies (or inspires you to be) a “lawyer-statesman” or “wise counselor”? What do they do differently from others in similar roles? What have you done, and what can you do to follow their example?

6. April 12, 2026

Read:

- My Father's Life Was Shaped by Racism. So Was His Death. (in Canvas under “files”)

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #6. The author shares her personal story to illustrate how our legal system “redacts and desecrates Black and brown lives.” What injustices, redactions, or desecrations stand out in your own life? Do you see people around you working to fix broken systems? There are many ways to address systemic problems—can you identify people in your life who are fighting racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, and other forms of injustice in different ways? Look around your placement. How does your placement address or ignore issues of perceived injustice? Do they have official statements or unofficial practices? Feel free to write in-depth about a specific kind of injustice or about the general issue of “difference” that you observe at your placement, in your area of law, or in the legal profession overall. What would you do if you were creating the rules or practices at your placement?

7. April 26, 2026

Read:

- Why Young Bankers, Lawyers, and Consultants Need Emotional Intelligence (in Canvas under “files”)

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #7. The reading discusses emotional intelligence in the workplace as consisting of three parts: your relationship with yourself, your relationships with your colleagues, and your relationships with your clients. Drawing on this reading and any prior readings and discussions this semester, please reflect on what kind of lawyer you aspire to be and how your field placement has shaped that vision.

SITE VISITS:

During the semester, the Director of Externships may conduct virtual or in-person site visits to many externships to meet with supervising attorneys. If I plan to visit your placement, I will make sure to let you know about the visit.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING WEEKLY TIMESHEETS:

Please complete weekly time sheets that accurately and meaningfully describe the work performed. Please do not record time with a single, recurring description: “Work on a motion to suppress evidence.” Instead, break down the tasks involved:

“research law on standing—2 hours”

“research law on stop and frisk—three hours”

“begin draft memorandum for attorney—2 hours”

Also, think carefully about the words you use to describe your work. Use persuasive verbs. “Motion to suppress brief” is not compelling; “Researched, wrote, and revised motion to suppress brief” is persuasive. No matter what area of law practice you enter, being able to accurately and persuasively describe your work has tremendous value, and this semester is a great time to hone these skills!

You will use electronic timesheets created by UF Law’s IT Team, which will be emailed to your supervisor for approval. You should submit the completed timesheet to your supervisor each week. Remember, you do not receive credit for hours worked during a lunch break, but if you participate in a working lunch, please log those hours.

To set up your weekly time recording, just log in here and follow the prompts: [TIMESHEET LINK](#)

You will need to enter your supervisor’s email address so your hours can be approved.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the law school. Attendance at each session of this course is mandatory. Any missed session will result in a 5-point deduction from a student's final grade (on the 100-point scale) for each absence. If you have a valid reason for missing class, you should contact the instructor before or shortly after class ends so your absence can be excused.

This class aims to provide a unique experience for each student. It is not a lecture-based course focused on case law. Instead, I expect students to actively participate in exercises, readings, and discussions to reflect on their field placements, career paths, professional identity, and professionalism. Please ensure you actively participate in class. Our experience will be more enriching if everyone is mindful of their involvement. The law school’s attendance policy can be found at this link: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies#>

UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW STANDARD SYLLABUS POLICIES:

Additional information about UF Levin College of Law policies, including compliance with the UF Honor Code, Grading, Accommodations, Class Recordings, and Course Evaluations, can be found at this link: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635/files?preview=98226140>

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

You can find more information about UF academic policies and resources at [this link](#).

ABA OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS REQUIREMENTS:

ABA Standard 310 requires students to spend 120 minutes on out-of-class preparation for each “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Since our class lasts about two and a half hours, you should plan for at least five hours of preparation outside of class. This includes reading assigned materials, completing written assignments, and submitting your bi-weekly reflections.

Throughout the semester, articles and viewing materials related to current events will be added to your assignments periodically.

COMMUNICATION, COURTESY, AND CIVILITY:

Please practice common courtesy in all email messages and class discussions. Turn off your cell phone during class. I reserve the right to lower your final grade if you engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for your classmates.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PLATFORMS (GAI) AND PLAGIARISM FOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Students must follow UF Law’s policy on GAI and plagiarism in their class work. However, they can use tools like Grammarly to correct grammar issues. For tasks assigned at your placement, please follow the AI policies provided by your placement.

INTERNET USE DURING CLASS:

Using the Internet during class is not permitted unless I give permission. You must not check social media, email (including law school- or career-related messages), or news websites. Think of class as an important client meeting and plan your email needs accordingly. Even for valid reasons, internet use conflicts with professional standards. If you have questions about this rule, please talk to me.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

This syllabus acts as a guide for the course's direction. Our pace will largely depend on the interest level and difficulty of each section and may adjust accordingly. Reading and supplemental assignments will be posted on Canvas and may be updated periodically throughout the semester. In addition to completing the assigned readings, please be prepared to discuss your cases during each class. These “case rounds” enable students to connect with one another and help them analyze legal, ethical, and practical issues more easily than working alone. Learning through rounds is one of the highlights of clinical legal education!

This is a full list of assignments and deadlines for the Spring 2026 semester (listed by due date):

Assignment Name	Due Date	How to submit
MOU and PDP	1/25/26	email to wolking@law.ufl.edu or upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 1	1/25/26	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 2	2/8/26	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 3	2/22/26	Upload to Canvas
Student Mid-term Self-Assessment	3/8/26	email to wolking@law.ufl.edu or upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 4	3/8/26	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 5	3/29/26	Upload to Canvas

Reflective Memo 6	4/12/26	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 7	4/26/26	Upload to Canvas
Supervisor's Evaluation of Extern	4/26/26	Provide form (in Canvas under "files") to supervisor and ask them to return it via email to wolking@law.ufl.edu
Final Externship Evaluation	4/26/26	Upload to Canvas