

Course Syllabus

The Business of Law Firms Spring, 2023 Compressed Course Syllabus

Course # _____

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Room _____

CLASS SYLLABUS AND POLICIES:

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

This one-credit compressed course will enrich the College's offering by focusing on a topic not often addressed in law schools: the business side of law firms. The goal is to provide the students with the skills and insight to navigate the early stages of their career and avoid having to learn these valuable lessons through trial and error. Through this course, the students will gain a basic understanding of how law firms are operated and discuss the strategies they can use to advance their career.

2. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Students should read the assigned materials before each class and be prepared to discuss the assigned materials during class. Students should also read any supplemental materials distributed through the Canvas class webpage. Reading assignments may be changed or added.

Supplemental Materials: This course will include supplemental materials accessible through the Canvas class webpage and students should review those materials as part of the preparation for each class.

3. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: This is a compressed course. Attendance during all class hours is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. If there is some reason why you must miss class, please contact me in advance via telephone or email and ask for an excused absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and obtaining any handouts or assignments. If for any reason you anticipate missing more than 20% of the class time, you are advised to withdraw before it is too late to do so. The law school's policy on attendance can be found at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies>.

4. METHOD OF EVALUATING STUDENTS AND DETERMINING GRADES

Classroom Participation: Each student is expected to participate in class discussions. Students may be called on to answer questions and are expected to engage with speakers. Voluntary participation is encouraged. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Participation grade will be based on attendance, class engagement, and interaction with guest speakers.

Final Exam: The final exam will cover topics from the lectures, guest lectures and all assigned readings. Students should expect short essay answer questions and full-length essay questions. The final exam will take place on January 27, 2023, and will constitute 80% of the final grade. The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](#).

Grades: Final grades will be based on classroom participation (20%) and a final exam (80%). Grades

will be assigned based upon the standards required by the law school. The UF Frederic G. Levin College of Law grading policy is located at <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/uf-law-studenthandbook-and-academic-policies>

Grading Scale: The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent.

Letter Grade	Grade Point Equivalent
A (Excellent)	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C (Satisfactory)	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D (Poor)	1.0
D-	0.67
E (Failure)	0.0

5. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Preparation for Class: Students are expected to spend, on average, two (2) hours preparing for every one (1) hour of scheduled class time. Students are expected to complete assignments and relevant readings prior to each class session. Reading assignments can be found through the course webpage on Canvas.

6. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Each of these topics will be addressed from the perspective of both a plaintiffs' law firm and a traditional corporate firm. The primary text for the course will be *The Business of Law*, Third Edition, by Edward Poll. This text will be supplemented by articles, lectures, and guest speakers addressing the daily topics.

Day/Time	Topic/Text	Brief Description
Day 1 (3 Hours)	<u>Law Firms as a Business</u> Required Reading: Ch. 1 – Law is a Business Ch. 15 – Pricing Legal Services	A. Introduction B. Law firm business models and budgets C. Hourly v. Plaintiff/Contingency D. Representation agreements
Day 2 (3 Hours)	<u>Interviewing/Recruitment</u> <u>Life as an Associate</u> Require Reading: Ch. 11 – Rules to Improve Clients Relations Ch. 12	A. What you need to know about a law firm's business B. How to market yourself to law firms C. Associates' Role in the Firm D. Guest Speakers – Associate Panel E. Accelerating your training F. Autonomy/Ownership G. Guest Speakers – Hiring Partners
Day 3 (3 Hours)	<u>Internal Advancement</u> Required Reading:	A. Guest Speaker – Scott Westheimer on professional/community involvement B. Business Generation

	Ch. 5 – Creating the Marketing Plan <i>Mentoring helps new and experienced lawyers make the connection</i> , ABA, Vol. 30, No. 6. <i>When it Comes to Business Development for Young Lawyers, Motive and Mindset Matter</i> , National Law Review, Volume XII, Number 290.	C. The Importance of Mentors D. When to Speak Up E. Guest Speaker – John Morgan of Morgan and Morgan
Day 4 (3 Hours)	<u>Career Changes</u> Required Reading: Ch. 2 – First Steps in Starting a New Practice Ch. 3 – The Planning Process Ch. 6 – Solo and Small-Firm Marketing Ch. 24 – Hire is Not a “Four-Letter Word”	A. The role of risk in career decisions B. Switching law firms C. Guest Speakers – Legal Recruiters D. Starting your own firm E. Guest Speakers – Small Firm Owners
Day 5 (2 Hours)	<u>Use of Technology and Social Media</u> Required Reading: Ch. 7 – Use the Internet to Market your Legal Services Ch. 8 – Use Social Media to Market Yourself Ch. 10 - Branding	A. Generating business from social media B. Use of a Website C. Use of LinkedIn for recruitment D. Developing a niche E. Guest Speaker – Law Firm Social Media Director

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. Those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

7. CLASSROOM DEMEANOR, COMPUTER USE, AND CELL PHONE USE

Student participation is encouraged. Students may use their computer during class for the limited purpose of taking class notes only. Students are requested to silence or turn off their cell phone and all other electronic devices prior to the start of class, and to not turn them on or use them during class.

8. OFFICE HOURS

Before and after class, as announced during class, and as set by appointment.

9. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Florida is committed to providing equal educational access to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered,

students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or at accessuf@dso.ufl.edu if you have any questions.

10. COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary of the results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

11. HONOR POLICY

All UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment. The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/%20sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the professor.

12. CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

13. ETC

This syllabus may be changed as the need arises.