Legislative Advocacy

Spring 2018, Room 284

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 AM

Course #6930, 2 Credits

Professor Tanner Amdur-Clark

Room 343

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00 PM, and by appointment

Welcome to Legislative Advocacy. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the tools necessary to become an effective advocate before legislative bodies, their members, and staff.  Students will gain the practical skills that lobbyists and other advocates use to effectively exercise the right to petition the government and redress grievances, understand how professionals effectively advocate on behalf of a cause, company or non-profit entity, review laws and regulations affecting lobbying and lobbyists, and comprehend the competitive landscape of public policy.  Over the semester, students will work through several distinct public policy problems and participate in exercises meant to simulate advocacy situations, culminating with students building a suite of advocacy documents and tools related to a policy issue of their choice.

**Class Schedule:**

The course will not be conducted in the usual manner of a law school substantive law class. Rather – with some accommodations necessarily made for certain in-depth topics and scheduling – the class will run on recurring pattern of learning about advocacy tools in the context of policy issues, and then applying those tools. Each Thursday, the class will discuss a particular advocacy tool (for example, talking points, an elevator pitch, or a one-pager) in the context of a mini policy case. Over the weekend, students will read more about the policy issue and produce some work product related to it, due Monday by 10:00 AM.  And on Tuesday, we’ll workshop the student work product or do experiential exercises as befits the issue/tool.

Readings and other assignments will be assigned week by week in class or on the course website. In accordance with ABA Standard 310, students should expect to spend approximately two hours, on average, of out-of-class reading and preparation for each of the two in-class hours each week. This schedule is subject to change, based on the pace of class and student interest.

**Grading:** Grades in this course shall be based on participation and contribution to the in-class portion of the course, as well as performance on the final portfolio project.

* Participation and Contribution (25%): Students are expected to contribute high-quality work product for workshopping in a timely manner, and participate in the in-class workshopping of student work-product in a respectful and constructive way.
* Final Portfolio Project (75%): Students will produce a portfolio of written advocacy tools related to a policy issue of their choice. Students will also schedule an oral component during the exam period, during which the student and instructor will role-play several advocacy scenarios. Written portfolios will be due at the start of each student’s oral component.

Grade distribution shall be in accordance with Levin College of Law’s posted mean and mandatory grade distribution policy, with the following letter grade and point equivalence table.

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| **Letter 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  |

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class and participate in in-class discussions. If you will not be in class for a particular day, please let me know by email. Similarly, if you are not going to be prepared for a particular class’ discussion (because of not having done the reading, for example), please also let me know before class.

**Accommodations:** Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Office of Student Affairs when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the exam. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

**Academic Misconduct**: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php.

**Use of Laptops:** Using personal electronic devices (laptops, electronic tablets, cell phones or any other similar gizmos) in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. However, laptops will be helpful for accessing and making notes/comments on workshopped documents – and will be allowed – but limited *strictly* to class-related uses.