

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018**

LAW-6930 - 21422

Thursdays at 2:30 – 4:10 PM in Room 355B

STEVE MAXWELL

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Office: LIC 247

I am normally in my office during the business day when I am not in class. Appointments are not required. If you want an appointment, please text me. You are welcome to contact me anytime.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Reading materials as posted in Canvas

BARBRI will send you an email inviting you to select and purchase the book for this class. Neither book is available elsewhere. Even if you choose BARBRI for your postgraduate commercial bar course, neither book is included with the commercial program. You should only purchase one of the following two books. Once you choose a book, your selection is irrevocable. If you change your mind, you will have to pay for the other book as well. BARBRI will not issue refunds.

If you plan on taking the Florida bar exam, please choose:

Topics in Florida Practice, OR

If you plan on taking a bar exam in another jurisdiction, please choose:

Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) Testing

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Florida Bar Topics is a skills-development course that focuses on improving analytical skills to approach Florida bar exam questions successfully. The course is designed to help you pass. Additional emphasis will be on enhancing memorization skills and learning how to assess your own understanding and work product. The course will include a substantive review of selected subjects routinely tested on the bar exam. I use problems and exercises in a bar exam format to familiarize you with techniques for analyzing, organizing, and writing essays. We will also cover some Florida Multiple choice topics as time allows.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Let's be honest. You probably crammed your 1L year and didn't know what anyone was talking about in class. You learned what little law you knew and studied all night during the reading period.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018

You showed up tired and BS'd your way through an essay with whatever came to mind. You got through. This cannot be done successfully on the bar.

This course will teach critical reading, analysis, issue spotting, and their various sub-skills. The course also aims to review and build your knowledge of bar-tested areas. The course presents tools that build long-term memory in place of the short-term memory tools most law students (and students generally) use.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Spot issues in legal fact patterns through critical, active reading;
- Effectively plan/outline an essay response;
- State concise and accurate rule statements from memory which apply to the fact patterns;
- Apply the relevant law to the relevant facts for the issues raised in those facts;
- Memorize information for long-term (beyond the semester) retention;
- Understand the basics of the Florida Bar Exam and how to prepare; and
- Walk into the Tampa Convention Center confident of the exam grader's expectations.

GRADING SCALE:

The Levin College of Law's mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College's website. The lefts two columns in the following chart describe the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place, while the right column corresponds with the minimum points needed for the grade:

Letter Grade	Point Equivalent	Class Points needed
A (Excellent)	4.0	240
A-	3.67	239
B+	3.33	219
B	3.0	209
B-	2.67	199
C+	2.33	189
C (Satisfactory)	2.0	179
C-	1.67	159
D+	1.33	139
D (Poor)	1.0	119
D-	0.67	99
E (Failure)	0.0	Below 99

The law school grading policy is available at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/academic-policies#9> FL Bar Topics is not graded on a curve, mean, or distribution.

But, if you are taking FL Bar Topics, your grade isn't what you should care about—you should care whether you master the material and methodology expected for the bar. There is a high

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018

correlation between your cumulative law school GPA and bar passage both at UF and in various national studies. This class is designed to make your GPA irrelevant to passing the bar exam. I do not care whether your GPA is 2.0 or 4.0 – YOU CAN PASS.

6 Issue Outlines	10 points each	60 points
8 Essays	10 points each	80 points
1 Multiple Choice Set	10 points	10 points
1 Final Exam	100 points	100 points
TOTAL		250 points

ASSIGNMENTS AND ATTENDANCE:

Issue Outlines

The issue outlines are barebones, must-know law. Access the blank issue outlines for each subject on Canvas. Your task is to use these as the skeletons where you take down the law. Using the class lectures and your *Topics in Florida Practice* book, fill-in the legal rules you learn during your study of each topic. Remember, there are good rule statements in the model answers too. Steal these. Review every Issue Outline at least weekly between now and the bar exam. On the final exam and on the bar, you must be able to recite rules from memory. Begin this practice now. If you do not make a good faith effort, you will receive less than full credit. I reserve the right not to estimate what percentage of good faith effort you expended, and award a 0.

Essays

It is critical that you start writing for the bar exam. No one feels ready at this point, and that's normal. You're not ready. You may never *feel* ready. The goal with essays is to force you to recall what you've learned from compiling your Issue Outlines, and help you learn to plan to write. In fancy terms, the aim is greater awareness of how you learn, and identify areas for improvement. You will be graded on good faith completion of the essay. If you do not make a good faith effort, you will receive less than full credit. I reserve the right not to estimate what percentage of good faith effort you expended, and award a 0.

Final Exam

There will be a closed-book timed exam. You will be graded on your knowledge of the law and your ability to apply the law to the facts presented in the essays. You will also be graded on your essay writing, including your use of IRAC, overall organization, and following the formatting requirements of the essay.

As of the publication of this syllabus, the exam is scheduled for 1:00PM on Friday, December 7th, 2018 in room 21422. This is subject to change by the office of Student Affairs. It is your responsibility to keep informed regarding the exam.

If you miss a class, obtain notes from another student. If you know that you will miss a class for any reason, please talk to me prior to that class.

Late Assignments

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018

All assignments must be completed and turned in by the deadline listed on Canvas. An assignment that is one or more minutes late and up to one day late will automatically lose 20% of its points. If it is over one day late, it may lose up to 100% of its total points, at my discretion.

Canvas Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be submitted via Canvas. If Canvas is down, you must email me the assignment before the deadline, but still submit your assignment to Canvas as soon as Canvas becomes available. Canvas difficulties are not a basis for an extension on any assignment.

I strongly recommend you download the Canvas student app and enable alerts. The app will help you stay apprised of any assignment updates, including changes to due dates.

Essays will be submitted twice - once to Canvas, as well as to the Kaplan portal.

Class Attendance

If extraordinary circumstances prevent you from attending class, being prepared for class, completing an exam or quiz, or turning in an assignment by the deadline, you must contact me as soon as is reasonable in the situation that arises. Out of fairness to other students in class, you must provide something evidencing the extraordinary circumstances.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

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>.

PROFESSIONALISM

As a future attorney, you are expected to conduct yourself in class and outside of class with professionalism and civility. All communications with members of the UF community should be professional and appropriate. This includes any conferences, group work, e-mails, and so forth. I will dismiss any student from the classroom for what I believe constitutes unprofessional conduct or a lack of civility.

TECHNOLOGY USE:

Your cellphone/smart watch/fitness wearable/etc. must be set on silent or vibrate, as applicable, during class. Your cellphone should not be visible to you or other students during class. You may not use Google Glass or the equivalent during class. Recording of class is not permitted.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

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

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018**

the student who must then provide this documentation to the Dean Rachel Inman when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

CHANGES AND CONFLICTS:

This syllabus is subject to modification. I will notify you of any significant changes or additions. If there is a conflict between a rule provided in this syllabus and a rule provided in the Student Handbook or Student Honor Code, the rule in the Handbook or Honor Code prevails. Please alert me of any such conflicts that you identify.

CLASS PREPARATION WORKLOAD:

ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Florida Topics has 2 “classroom hours” of instruction each week, requiring at least 4 hours of preparation outside of class.

Accordingly, you will have about 20 pages of reading each week. Because the course includes a wide variety of legal areas and a multitude of rules, you should spend the bulk of your time outside of class on memorization techniques we will discuss in class. A significant portion of your time outside of class should be completing the issue outlines on the subject covered, as well as completing the practice essay. Each activity spent outside of class should help reinforce your memorization and application of the legal rules. The course will cover the topics most likely to be tested on your bar exam, so be liberal with your time investment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The following resources can be found at www.floridabarexam.org:

- The Florida Board of Bar Examiner’s Released Essays and Sample Answers
- The Florida Board of Bar Examiner’s Test Specifications

PLEASE NOTE: SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION

TENATIVE CLASS AND ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

Week Date	Class Topics	Reading Due	Assignments Due to Canvas
(Week 1) August 16	Syllabus & Course Info FL bar exam Professional Responsibility	Syllabus Bar Breakdown Pages i-iv; 151-165	Complete the Survey

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SCHOOL OF LAW
FLORIDA TOPICS – SPRING 2018**

(Week 2) August 23	Property	Pages i-iv; 167-182+ Supplement	Professional Responsibility Issues Attack Outline
(Week 3) August 30	Property	Pages 167-182; Supplement	Practice Homestead Essay
(Week 4) September 6	Property	Pages 167-182; Supplement	Property Essay 1
(Week 5) September 13	Contracts	Pages 51-71	Property Issues Attack Outline
(Week 6) September 20	Contracts	Pages 51-71	Contracts Essay 1
(Week 7) September 27	Contracts	Pages 51-71	
(Week 8) October 4	Torts	Pages 197-222	Contracts Issues Attack Outline
(Week 9) October 11	Torts	Pages 179-222	Property Essay 2
(Week 10) October 18	Torts	Pages 179-222	Torts Essay 1
(Week 11) October 25	Florida Constitutional Law	Pages 17-37	Torts Issues Attack Outline Contracts Essay 2
(Week 12) November 1	Florida/Federal Constitutional Law	Pages 17-37; 39-45	Fl Con Law Issues Attack Outline
(Week 13) November 8	Wills - Trusts	CMR Wills 1-26	Torts Essay 2
(Week 14) November 15	Wills - Trusts	Pages 223-235	Wills – Trusts Issues Attack Outline Fl Con Law Essay