

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW**

**COMPLEX CIVIL LITIGATION
FALL SEMESTER 2025**

LAW 6311 CLASS NUMBER 23877

**MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY
10:35 –12:00 PM HH - 360**

COURSE SYLLABUS



Why Should I Take This Course?

Complex civil litigation (CCL) shapes today's society. CCL challenges government actions and laws, defends human and civil rights, remedies collective wrongs, corrects mass tort violations, and safeguards statutory rights.

Complex litigation involves employment rights, consumer rights, political rights, financial rights, constitutional rights, and environmental rights.

Student Learning Outcomes:

In this course you will:

- (i) Learn and apply the statutes, case law, and debates over what has been called “complex litigation” which involves management of cases involving multiple parties and multiple issues across multiple state and federal jurisdictions.
- (ii) Learn and apply relevant principles and case law governing due process, damages, and available remedies and relief.
- (iii) By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to understand, manage, and handle the procedural issues, rules, and structures of consolidation, joinder, and transfer in federal and state (a) multiparty litigation, (b) multidistrict litigation, and (c) class action litigation.

Who Is Your Professor?



I joined the UF Law faculty as a Legal Skills Professor in 2017 after 30+ years of practicing complex civil litigation with Holland & Knight in Miami/Tampa (1983 – 2010) and Quarles & Brady (2010 – 2016) in Tampa. Before leaving the practice of law, I was a UF adjunct professor at UF Law for 10 years.

I am from Philadelphia. You will undoubtedly notice my latent Philadelphia accent.



I hold a BA in philosophy from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and an MA in philosophy from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. I graduated from UF Law in 1983.

Office Hours and How Can You Contact Me!

I want to hear from you by email, phone, or text. Please let me know If you have something to share with me – an inspiration, a new thought, a frustration, or concern.

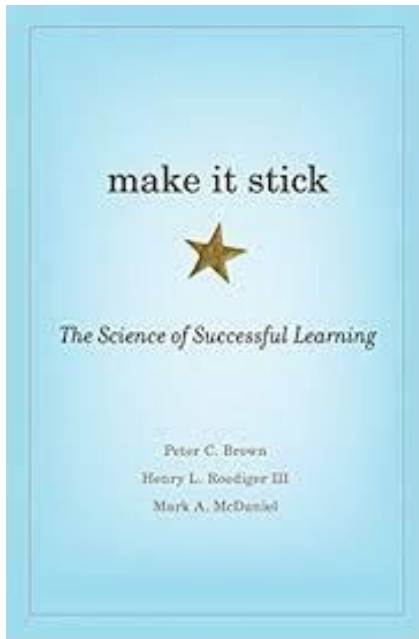
Email	Telephone	Text	Office
hamiltonw@law.ufl.edu	480.993.8777	480.993.8777	376 Holland

Office Hours:

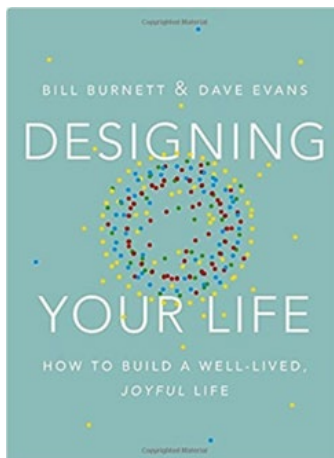
2:00 – 3:00 PM Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment.

How You Can Do Well in this Course. It's Simple!

My teaching practices are reflected in [***Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning***](#) by Peter C. Brown.



This course will introduce you to a litigation career path. You will want to see if it fits your interests and passions. I recommend the book ***“Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived Joyful Life,”*** by Burnett and Evans, Alfred A. Knopf (2016), for helpful strategies to find career directions that may work for you.



Attendance: You are expected to attend all the class sessions. I take attendance for every class.

Examination and Grading Policy: The total points you can earn in the class are based on quizzes, attendance points, and the final exam. Keep in mind that **your final grade** will reflect your **class rank**. For example, a numerical average of 92% on various exercises and assignments during the course might not result in an A- final grade when combined with the final exam score. Early assignment scores should not lead you to expect a similar final grade. Most students perform well on the early check-up quizzes, and the assignments and exercises are usually completed correctly for full points.

How Will I be Graded?

1. Final examination: 300 points.

There will be a 3-hour essay final examination administered in class by the Registrar's office.

2. Three In-Class Check-up Quizzes: 20 points each quiz (total quiz points: 60)

There will be three short multiple-choice check-up quizzes spaced evenly throughout the semester. The goal of these check-up quizzes is to help reinforce the course's basic principles and to provide a quick overview of your understanding. Each quiz is 20 minutes long and consists of multiple-choice questions. We will review each quiz in class after it is completed.

3. Class Attendance and Participation: 2 points are earned for attending each class (total class points: 60)

The goal of class participation is to gain a deeper understanding through probing responses and thoughtful answers. Class participation will be assessed using the following rubric:

- (1) Asking and answering questions that illuminate the issues,
- (2) Asking and answering questions that enrich the class dialogue and advance the class' understanding of the issues,
- (3) Participating in the class dialogue and discussions,
- (4) Participation team debates and mock exercises,
- (5) Engaging in class activities, exercises and projects.
- (6) Demonstrating class preparation.

Classes will contain numerous individual and group exercises and problems.

We may occasionally hold a remote class on Zoom. Students participating remotely are required to be actively engaged and to be “on screen,” unless they have prior approval.

Is this Course Graded on a Curve?

I am provided with a curved grade range by the Registrar, and the class grade average must fall within that range. In past semesters, my grade point average has been around 3.25.

Are Smartphones and Laptops Permitted in the Classroom?

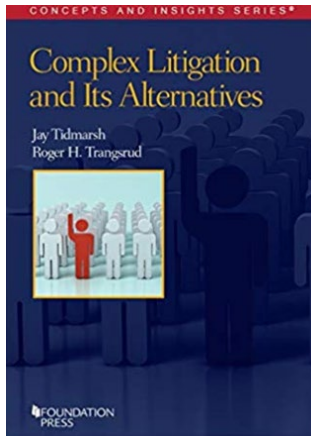
You may use laptops in class for taking notes. I will turn off my phone when I arrive, and I ask you to do the same. Please limit your laptop use to note-taking only, and **avoid visiting social media sites, texting, or emailing**. I expect your full attention during class. Nothing life-changing will happen while you're offline in class.

What Notes Should I Take in Class?

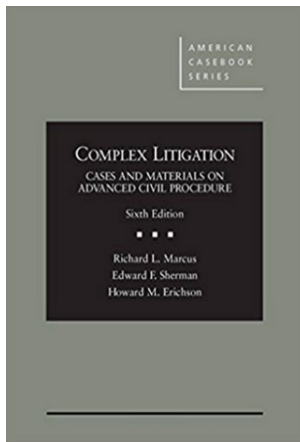
I recommend that you do not take word-for-word literal notes. This is not a court reporting class! Instead, focus on what is happening in class and jot down the key ideas. Handwriting your notes is better for you than typing notes. Check out this article: **Note-Taking: Writing vs. Typing Notes** at <https://studyskills.com/students/note-taking/>.

What are the assigned texts?

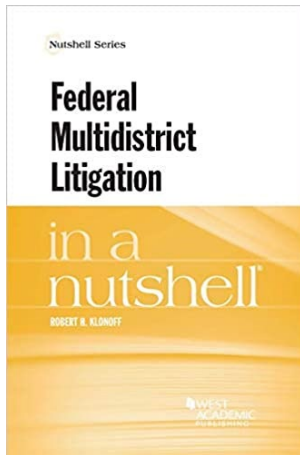
1. *Complex Litigation and Its Alternatives*, 2nd Edition, Jay Tidmarsh and Roger Trangsrud (2018).



2. *Complex Litigation: Cases and Materials on Advanced Civil Procedure, 7th Edition*, Marcus, Sherman, & Erichson, West Academic Publications (2021)



3. *Federal Multidistrict Litigation in a Nutshell*, Robert H. Klonoff (2019)



We will also be referring the following free resources:

- ***Manual For Complex Litigation, Fourth***, Federal Judicial Center 2004, <https://public.resource.org/scribd/8763868.pdf>.
- ***Coordinating Multijurisdiction Litigation, A Pocket Guide for Judges***, Federal Judicial Center and National Center for State Courts, 2013, <http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/civil/id/116>.
- ***The Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation***
<http://www.jpml.uscourts.gov/>

Workload/class preparation and the 2:1 out of class/in class requirement (ABA Standard 310):

ABA Standard 310 states that students should spend 120 minutes on out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Since this course has 3 “classroom hours” of instruction each week, students are expected to dedicate at least 6 hours outside of class to prepare. As a result, you will have approximately 60 pages of reading each week. Because the course includes statutory and regulatory excerpts that require careful reading, as well as discussion problems that demand thoughtful written preparation in advance, you should allocate at least one hour for every 10-15 pages of reading.

What Will We Be Doing Each Week?

The course's Canvas webpage contains our weekly topic, readings, resources, recorded lectures, assignments, and other reference materials. The Canvas web page is our "official" course home.

Below is a high-level overview of the topics the course will cover per week. Please refer to the course Canvas page for details.

Week 1: Complex Civil Litigation as Public Litigation
Week 2: Claims Against Different Parties in the Same Litigation
Week 3: Why and How to Become Part of an Ongoing Litigation
Week 4: Different Lawsuits in Different Jurisdictions with Similar Parties
Week 5: Multidistrict Courts and Due Process
Week 6: The Multidistrict Panel: Selection of the Transferee Court
Week 7: Multidistrict Case Management and Bellwether Trials
Week 8: Multidistrict Settlement, Common Funds, and Attorney Fees
Week 9: The Rationale for Class Action Litigation
Week 10: Different Types of Class Actions
Week 11: Damage Class Actions: Rule 23(b)(b) Cases
Week 12: The Class Action Fairness Act
Week 13: Class Action Settlements

Below is a detailed outline of the topics and assignments for each week. Please check the course Canvas page for details. The assignments and topics may be updated based on the class's progress, current events, case law, and rule changes.

Module 1: Why Would We Ever Want Litigation to Vindicate Broad Social Goods? Complex Civil Litigation as Public Litigation: An Overview

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the social policies of "public litigation"
- Understand the tension between public good v. private gains endemic to complex litigation
- Assess management issues associated with complex litigation

- Understand social benefits and costs of aggregate litigation
- Understand the drawbacks to aggregate litigation
- Understand the ethical issues raised by aggregate litigation

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 1-38;

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al., pp. 1-14

Federal Multidistrict Litigation, §§ 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

Module 2: Why Would A Plaintiff Want to Bring Claims Against Different Parties in the Same Litigation?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the requirements of permissive party joinder
- Understand the requirements of compulsory required party joinder
- Understand Interpleader
- Articulate multiparty litigation joinder strategies

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 39 – 74.

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

Mosley v. General Motors, pp. 15 – 19

In Re Stand’N Seal Products, pp. 24-28

Stanford v. Tennessee Valley, pp. 28-31

Hall v. E.I. Du Point, pp. 33-37

Eldredge v. Carpenters Northern, pp. 40-43

Module 3: Why and How Would Anyone want to Become Part of an Ongoing Litigation?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Assess the benefits and risks of case intervention
- Determine when intervention is a viable strategy and weigh other potential strategies.
- Understand consolidation, transfer, and removal.

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 75 – 82

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

Animal Protection Institute v. Merriam, pp. 57-61
Martin v. Wilks, pp. 68- 81

Module 4: How Should We Coordinate Lawsuits in Different Federal and State Jurisdictions Involving Similar or Identical Parties and Issues?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Seeking stays, transfers, and injunctions
- Avoiding issue preclusion

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 101 – 138

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

William Gluck & Co. v. International Playtex, pp. 88-93

Semmes Motors v. Ford Motor, pp. 93-99

Katz v. Realty Equities Corp., pp. 101-109

Ginsey Industries, Inc. v. L.T.K. Plastics, pp. 112-114

DeMelo v. Lederle Laboratories, pp. 117 -124

Module 5: Should Cases from Around the Nation be Consolidated into a Single Case before One Judge?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the role of the multidistrict panel
- Assess the factors bearing on the transfer decision
- Invoking and utilizing powers of the transferee court

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 83 – 92.

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

In Re Shoulder Pain Pump, pp. 136 – 137

In Re Aviation Products, pp.137-143

Stanley A. Weigel, article, pp. 147- 148

In Re Factor VIII, pp.148-151

In Re Vioxx Products, pp. 163 – 167

BP Oil Spill Litigation, article, pp. 171 -175

Federal Multidistrict Litigation, Chapter 3.

Module 6: Can the Multidistrict Court Preserve the Rights of all the Parties and Still Get Fair Results?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Evaluate the twin goals of efficiency and fairness in MDL proceeding
- Assess whether public policy should bear on MDL proceedings
- Manage coordination between dual federal state proceedings through abstention, stays, and injunctions

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al., pp. 158 – 197

Abstention, pp 176-178

Burford Abstention, pp. 178 – 179

Younger Abstention, pp. 179-181

Life-Link International v. Lalla, pp. 181-183

Standard Microsystems Corp. v. Texas Instr., pp. 187-192

Federal Multidistrict Litigation, Chapter 7.

Module 7: How Can We Handle Legal Wrongs Not Worth Litigating Individually?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the class action elements and the rationale for class actions
- Assess and implement an appropriate class definition and establish numerosity

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 139 – 170

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

Hansberry v. Lee, pp. 202 -205

Kline v. Coldwell, Banker & Co., pp. 205 -208
Simer v. Rios, pp. 214 -219
Opichenski v. Parfums Givenchy, Inc., pp 223 -231

Module 8: Should Some Cases Be Excluded from Class Treatment?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Identify the commonality requirements of class certification
- Defend and challenge the adequacy of class representation
- Identify the kinds of class actions that can be maintained

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 170 – 199
Complex Litigation, Marcus et al., pp. 236 – 266
Wal-Mart Stores v. Dukes, pp. 236 – 247
Peil v. National Semiconductor Corp. pp. 256 – 258
Rodriguez v. West Publishing Corp., pp. 258 – 261

Module 9: What Class Action Types and Remedies are Available?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand Injunctive relief and when injunctive relief is appropriate and the correct strategic choice
- When to seek declaratory relief and its benefits
- Understand jurisdictional issues related to class actions

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 199 – 212
Complex Litigation, Marcus et al., pp. 266 – 299
Ortiz v. Fibreboard Corp., pp. 267 – 279
Parsons v. Ryan, pp. 286 – 290
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes, pp. 290 – 295
Amgen Inc. v. Connecticut Retirement, pp. 302 – 311
Smilow v. Southwestern Bell, pp. 316 – 322
Castano v. The American Tobacco Co., pp. 330 – 343
In Re Nassau County Strip Search Cases, pp. 348 - 356

Module 10: Once a Class Action Starts Can It Be Settled Short of Full litigation?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the settlement negotiation process
- Articulate the elements of a settlement
- Implement the conditional settlement process
- Avoid the challenges to a conditional settlement

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 212 – 215

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

Amchem Products, Inc. v. Windsor, pp. 363 - 378

Module 11: How Can Courts Manage All the Conflicting Claims and Interests? What if I Want to go it Alone?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Direct class action motion practice, hearings, and experts
- Understand the scope of class action subject matter jurisdiction
- Manage class notices, opt-out, and class communications
- Selecting class counsel
- Group representation ethical issues

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 291-313

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.,

In Re Hydrogen Peroxide Antitrust Lit., pp. 383 – 394

Notice, Opt-Out and Class Communications, pp. 454- 460

Module 12: Who Says A Class Action Settlement is Fair and What Happens When Not Everyone is Happy with a Proposed Settlement?

After completion of this module you will be able to:

- Understand the basic principles of fairness in class action approvals, objectors, and fairness hearings

- Handle settlement funds distribution and negotiations
- Determine appropriate fees and costs for class counsel Determine settlement subclasses and relief
- Implement or resist settlement objectors

Complex Litigation, Tidmarsh & Trangsrud, pp. 215 – 225

Complex Litigation, Marcus et al.

Parker v. Anderson, pp. 610 -613

In Re Prudential Insurance Co., pp. 615 -629

Dennis v. Kellogg Co., pp. 642 -648

In Re UnitedHealth Group, Inc., pp. 652 -654

Federal Multidistrict Litigation, Chapter 10

Module 13: Final Examination Review and Preparation

Weekly reading assignments may be supplemented to include new and important case law, events, and public policy debates. We will have jurists and practitioners visiting the class. The syllabus may be adjusted to reflect class progress and interests.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY AND LAW SCHOOL POLICY STATEMENTS

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Students requesting an accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Dean Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Religious Holidays:

UF Law respects students' observance of religious holidays.

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the

material or activities covered in their absence.

- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances

Preferred Name and Pronouns:

Creating a welcoming and safe learning environment is important; feeling comfortable participating in class discussions and communicating with me about any class-related issues is essential. If your preferred name is not listed on the official UF roster, please inform me as soon as possible via email or another method. I want to acknowledge your preferred name and pronouns that reflect your identity. If your name and pronouns differ from your UF-rostered name, please tell me how you would like to be addressed in class. I welcome you to the class and look forward to a rewarding learning experience together.

You may also change your "Display Name" in Canvas. Canvas uses the "Display Name" as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as "Ally" instead of "Allison." To update your display name, go to one.ufl.edu, click on the dropdown at the top right, and select "Directory Profile." Click "Edit" on the right of the name panel, uncheck "Use my legal name" under "Display Name," update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click "Submit" at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records

Make-Up Examination, Quiz, and Assignment Policy:

The law school policy on delays and accommodations can be found [here](#).

Discourse, Inclusion, and the Classroom Ethos:

As a law student and future lawyer, it is important that you be able to engage in rigorous discourse and critical evaluation while also demonstrating civility and respect for others. This is even more important in the case of controversial issues and other topics that may elicit strong emotions.

As a group, we are likely diverse across racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic, religious, and political lines. As we enter one of the great learning spaces in the world—the law school classroom—and develop our unique personality as a class section, I encourage each of us to:

- commit to self-examination of our values and assumptions
- speak honestly, thoughtfully, and respectfully

- listen carefully and respectfully
- reserve the right to change our mind and allow for others to do the same
- allow ourselves and each other to verbalize ideas and to push the boundaries of logic and reasoning both as a means of exploring our beliefs as well as a method of sharpening our skills as lawyers.

Class Recordings:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

UF Law grading policies:

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

The law school grading policy is available at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/academic-policies#9>.

Student Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results>.

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>.

Getting help:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Getting technical help with Canvas:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please get in touch with the UF Help Desk at:

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- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

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- Library Help Desk support

UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW STANDARD SYLLABUS POLICIES:

Other 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](#).

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents the current course plans and objectives. As the semester proceeds, these plans may be changed to enhance the class learning experience. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.