

University of Florida Levin College of Law
COURSE SYLLABUS: GENERAL FIELD PLACEMENT EXTERNSHIP
LAW 6946 - 3B97(12874)
Fall.868❶

Professor Sarah H. Wolking

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Office Hours: Thursdays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. If this time doesn't work for you, please contact me to schedule a meeting at a more convenient time. Students are encouraged to reach out to me anytime to discuss legal issues or ask questions about their cases. You can email, text, call, or stop by my office.

CLASS DATES AND TIMES:

- Monday, September 8th, 6:30-8:30 pm
- Monday, October 6th, 6:30-8:30 pm - Student.Presentations.(Group.A)
- Monday, November 3rd, 6:30-8:30 pm - Student.Presentations.(Group.B)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Welcome to the externship seminar for students enrolled in the General Field Placement Program. 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 professional 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 grounded in the belief that learning from experience is most effective when combined with deliberate reflection. You are encouraged to bring your questions, insights, and challenges into our shared learning environment.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Reflect thoughtfully on their professional experiences in the field and clearly express the skills, values, and ethical considerations involved in legal work.
- Enhance their understanding of their developing professional identity and what it means to be a lawyer in various environments.
- Learn to handle workplace challenges through self-assessment, goal-setting, and constructive feedback from supervisors.

- Assess 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, with a focus on problem-solving and justice-oriented outcomes;
- Identify and respond to ethical dilemmas using the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and other frameworks;
- Engage in self-directed learning and seek out feedback for growth;
- Recognize inequities in law and legal systems, and explore how to challenge these dynamics effectively; and
- Articulate their professional identity and how it reflects the 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”)
- A BigLaw Partner’s Journey Through Clinical Depression: <https://www.abajournal.com/voice/article/a-big-law-partners-journey-through-clinical-depression>
- Judicial Wellness: The Ups and Downs of Sitting NY Judges (in Canvas under “files”)
- Four Things Resilient Lawyers Do Differently:
<https://www.lawpracticetoday.org/article/four-things-resilient/>
- 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/> [Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](https://cohcwcovidsupport.org/moral-distress)
<https://cohcwcovidsupport.org/moral-distress>
- Virtues and the Lawyer: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2414&context=tcl> [Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- 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 adheres to the Levin College of Law grading policies. To earn a satisfactory grade, students must attend every class, complete all reading and writing assignments, and successfully deliver a presentation during one of our final class meetings. The minimum expectations are that students will:

- Work the agreed-upon 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
- Act ethically and professionally in relation to their academic and professional tasks during the placement.

Please be sure to follow the above to avoid some or all credit being denied;

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Every two (2) weeks, you must upload a journal assignment to Canvas. The ABA and best practices require field placements to have a reflective component. This semester, you will be assigned seven reflective writing prompts. These prompts allow you to step back and learn something new and different about the legal profession, your placement, and yourself. I encourage you to use these prompts as a jumping-off point; if there is another topic/issue that interests you and you want to write about, please do. If you want to discuss your current placement in relation to your past summer employment, last placement, or prior work experience, please do so. These entries should be 250-500 words or 1-2 pages double-spaced. Memos are due on Sundays by midnight.

Each student will deliver one presentation to the class on a substantive professional responsibility or criminal justice topic of your choice that relates to your experience at your placement. The presentations should be 10 minutes long (including time for questions and discussion). The presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Organization. Is the presentation well organized, providing convincing evidence to support its conclusion?
- Content. Does the student present accurate and engaging content, and are the listeners likely to gain new insights about the topic?
- Delivery. Does the student appear comfortable, speak without undue reliance on notes, and interact effectively with listeners?

Students may utilize technology (e.g., PowerPoint) if they wish, but it is not required. Presentations will be delivered on our final two class nights, October 6th (Group A) and November 3rd (Group B).

1. August 24, 2025

Read:

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

Upload to Canvas:

- Supervisor’s and Student’s Externship Agreement (MOU)
- Reflective Memo #1. Prompt: Use this entry to introduce me to your placement, describe what you are currently doing, what you hope to do before the semester's end, and why you chose this placement. I would encourage you to provide some background on why you came to law school, what you hope to do after, and how this placement fits into your path. What are you looking forward to, and what challenges do you see potentially arising this semester? In 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, write your goals for this externship. This is a beneficial exercise. Be sure to review your goals with your supervisor.

2. September 7, 2025

Read:

- Judicial Wellness: The Ups and Downs of Sitting New York Judges
- A BigLaw Partner’s Journey Through Clinical Depression Interactive (in Canvas under “files”)

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 criminal law field placement?

3. September 21, 2025

Read:

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

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #3. Please reflect on your mistakes in law school or your current or previous work setting. Which mistakes did you handle well, and how do those differ from errors you could have handled better? Has anyone been instrumental in helping you resolve and learn from mistakes? What aspects of your field placement are you least confident in, and what strategies might help you anticipate mistakes, recognize and correct them, and learn from them moving forward? Have you

observed someone near you making a mistake, and if so, how did you (or could you) help them?

4. October 5, 2025

Read:

- Moral Distress - Posted in Canvas under "Files"

Upload to Canvas:

- Reflective Memo #4. The reading uses the terms “moral injury/distress” and “moral residue” in the context of healthcare providers to describe the effect of being unable to act or prevented from acting in accordance with one’s values, beliefs, and moral outlook. Please reflect on situations in which you have experienced or anticipate facing moral distress in your field placement or practice. Does the “4As” model resonate with you? Is there another approach that might help you mitigate moral injury, thereby reducing moral residue in your practice?
- Student Mid-term Self-Assessment

5. October 19, 2025

Read:

- [Virtues and the Lawyer Links to an external site.Links to an external site.](#)

Upload to Canvas:

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

6. November 2, 2025

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 are salient in your own life? Do you see people around you who are trying to fix broken systems? There are many different 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 markedly different ways? Look around your placement. How does your placement address or not address issues around perceived injustice? Do they have official statements or unofficial practices? You are welcome to write in-depth about a particular kind of injustice or address the issue of “difference” generally that you see at your placement, in the area of law in which you work, or in the legal profession as a whole. What would you do if you were creating the rules/practices at your placement?

7. November 16, 2025

Read:

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

Upload to Canvas:

- 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 upon 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 affected that vision.

SITE VISITS:

During the semester, the Director of Externships conducts virtual/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’ll use electronic timesheets developed by UF Law’s IT Team, which will be sent via email to your supervisor for approval. The timesheet you complete should be submitted to your supervisor each week. Please remember that you do not get credit for hours worked while you are on a lunch break, but we do understand that you may participate in a working lunch, and if so, please log those hours.

To set up your weekly time recording, simply log in here:

<https://apps.powerapps.com/play/e/a46b10d4-09c2-ebe1-bc4b-f301cdbfab0d/a/a73974a6-5c33-4c65-a2b7-009c7953728d?tenantId=0d4da0f8-4a31-4d76-ace6-0a62331e1b84&hint=cad577a3-1595-4464-ad08-16b87f066e7e&sourcetime=1707411763848&source=portal>Links to an external site. and follow the prompts. You’ll 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. Classes are mandatory and will be held on Zoom at the times listed in this syllabus. If you cannot attend, please let me know in advance (or afterward if there is an unexpected emergency). If you miss class, you must complete an alternative asynchronous assignment.

Students are expected to attend each class and submit written work by the due dates in accordance with the law school policy. Students who miss a class session without my approval, fail to participate meaningfully in class discussions, are late without prior notice on their written assignments, or produce superficial work on their written assignments, risk not receiving academic credit for their coursework. Students will be instructed to submit most externship assignments on Canvas.

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/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies#Links to an external site>.

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:

<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635/files?preview=98226140>

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 hours, you should plan for at least four 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.

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

Students must follow UF Law’s policy on GAI and plagiarism for their class work. However, they can use tools like Grammarly to correct grammar issues. For tasks 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 you permission. You must not check social media, email (including clinic- 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 goes against professional standards. If you have questions about this rule, please talk to me.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

This syllabus serves as a guide to the course's direction. Our pace will partly depend on the interest level and difficulty of each section and may change 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” allow 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 best parts of clinical legal education!

This is a full list of assignments and deadlines for the Fall 2025 semester (listed by due date):

Assignment Name	Due Date	How to submit
MOU and PDP	8/24/25	email to wolking@law.ufl.edu or upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 1	8/24/25	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 2	9/7/25	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 3	9/21/25	Upload to Canvas
Student Mid-term Self-Assessment	10/5/25	email to wolking@law.ufl.edu or upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 4	10/5/25	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 5	10/19/25	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 6	11/2/25	Upload to Canvas
Reflective Memo 7	11/16/25	Upload to Canvas
Supervisor’s Evaluation of Extern	11/17/25	Provide form to supervisor and ask them to return it via email to wolking@law.ufl.edu
Final Externship Evaluation	11/17/25	Upload to Canvas