**University of Florida Levin College of Law**

**BRIDGE-TO-PRACTICE**

**LAW 6930**

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Professor Silvia Menendez** **Menendezs@law.ufl.edu**

**Room 351 Holland Hall 352-273-0740**

**University of Florida Levin College of Law**

**Gainesville, FL 32611-7624**

**This document**contains our Course Policies. Our course assignments are found on our Canvas website. Please let me know if you experience any broken links on the website. Our course begins the first DAY of the SEMESTER, whether or not your externship has started.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Welcome! Our Semester in Practice Program allows you to step out of the classroom and to work closely with practicing attorneys while earning academic credit. You’ll learn by doing and observing, and in the process, you’ll further develop essential research and writing skills, communication abilities, and problem-solving techniques. By working in “real world” situations, you’ll learn how to engage in thoughtful lawyering as you become more aware of developing your professional identity.**

***Program structure:* Our program includes a required, co-requisite 2 credit Bridge-to-Practice course (this one). I’m your professor for this 2-credit academic class, as well as your faculty supervisor for your externship. Your Semester in Practice experience will also include regular communication with your on-site attorney “Field Supervisor.” Further, as part of the externship part of the Semester in Practice program, you’ll also be required to send in on a regular basis the hours you’ve worked. We will provide you with further instructions regarding this “time-sheet” component of the course.**

**So to recap, I serve as your professor *and* faculty supervisor for the Academic Component of the Semester in Practice Program: The Bridge-to-Practice Course. Each week, you’ll send me written assignments (discussed below) containing your impressions of the assigned readings/videos for the week as well as your “field” impressions in the form of journaling. You’ll also submit time-sheets reporting the hours you’ve worked, and will be given instructions how to do so.**

**IMPORTANT: Even if you have NOT yet begun your actual externship by the first week of the Semester, you MUST STILL submit your written assignments to me because the first assignment is due the first Sunday of the Semester. You can add in the “journal” segment of your assignment when your actual field experience begins.**

**This Bridge-to-Practice course serves as the academic component of your experience and is designed to supplement and enhance your field placement.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course length:** | 14 Weeks |
| **Credit Value, Grading re Bridge to Practice Course:** | 2 credits, graded on a pass/fail basis as discussed in more detail below, no exam plus 6 to 10 credits field placement credits, graded on a pass/fail basis as discussed in more detail below, no exam |
| **Required Text:** | *The Curmudgeon’s Guide to Practicing Law, by* Mark Herrmann (copies are available on Amazon and via the ABA) ISBN-13: 978-1-59031-676-4 |
| **Access to Canvas:** | Our assignments are posted on Canvas, and our Canvas site provides our Syllabus for the course.  |

**Bridge-to-Practice and Semester in Practice Program Learning Outcomes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **#1: Operation** | Students will be exposed to the practice of law and able to tie the field experience and academic component to the study of law. |
| **#2: Evaluation** | The Faculty Supervisor and the Field Supervisor will evaluate students based on performance in the field placement and work in the course. The faculty supervisor will evaluate students based on their performance in the academic component and field placement. |
| **#3: Experiential Quality** | The Faculty Supervisor will determine the overall quality of the placement and the student's experience based on the type of work given to the student, the opportunities provided by the placement, and the assignments completed by the student. |
| **#4: Contemporaneous Reflection** | Students will reflect on their experiences and goals through regularly scheduled online classroom assignments and reflections on the material assigned in the Bride-to-Practice course and the students’ field experiences.  |
| **#5: Application of Laws, Policies, Procedures, and Operational Techniques** | Students will recognize the purposes for, and be able to ethically apply, laws, policies, procedures, and operational techniques to law. They will also have a better grasp of their professional identity and of the human side to lawyering. |
| **#6: Legal Research and Analysis** | Students' research and analysis skills will be refreshed and used effectively in their placements. |
| **#7: Utilization of Information** | Students will use practice area or subject matter information to write briefs, orders, and other documents for the field placement. They will also reflect, via weekly writings in the Bridge-to-Practice course, on the more human side of lawyering.  |

**Course Objectives**

The work you will be assigned in your field placement and Bridge-to-Practice course work should be the type typically handled by a lawyer, intellectually challenging, and contribute to your professional growth and development. To promote these objectives, throughout your field placement and this Bridge-to-Practice course, you will:

1. Examine the purpose and function of your role in legal professionalism in a (court / private practice / government office / public interest organizational) setting.

2. Engage in legal research and produce legal writings.

3. Read/view all assigned Bridge-to-Practice materials, verify in writing that you have done so, and produce reflective writings based on what you have learned and on what you are experiencing in your field placement.

4. Demonstrate a greater understanding of the technical and human aspects of the practice of law.

5. Understand the links between the study of law and the practice of law, and your role in both.

6. Examine various laws, regulations, and other legal sources and develop a better understanding of their practical application.

7. Become more aware of your power, responsibility, and professional identity as a lawyer.

8. Become more aware of the critical importance of acting ethically and professionally in all settings.

**Grading Policies**

This two-credit Bridge-to-Practice course is pass/fail, and there is no exam. To pass, students must complete all of the Bridge-to-Practice assignments **on time** and **professionally**. They must also timely respond to any emails from me and to any posted changes in the assigned material. This course was designed to have the material be interesting, thought-provoking, insightful, and fun. Assignments involve material such as TedTalks, youtube *videos*, and other interesting (and not fatiguing) articlesare intended to help you in your transition to pracitice

Please note: **ABA Standard 310** requires “that a ‘credit hour’ is an amount of work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks (including one week for final exams) or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.” In terms of total time, 42.5 hours per credit is required: 15 “hours” in class (50 minute “hours”) and twice that – 30 hours – out of class (60 minute hours).

To get passing credits for the Externship portion of Semester in Practice, you must do the following:

1. Work the requisite number of hours at the field placement in a timely and professionally manner. If you know you’ll be absent, you must let your field supervisor know ahead of time. Of course, under no circumstances do you just not show up to work without telling your supervisor. You also must maintain all confidentiality. If your supervisor does not tell you about confidentiality, please ask.

2. Submit your time sheets professionally completed and on time. (a copy of the time sheet was attached to the SIP Welcome Email)

3. Furnish weekly journal entries (these are included as part of the required writing weekly writing assignment) to me timely and professionally.

4. Please timely return all emails or phone calls from me.

5. Perform field work timely and professionally. You will be evaluated in writing by your supervisor at the end of your externship so you should aim to establish from the start great communication and understanding between the two of you.

6. Behave in an ethical and professional manner at all times during the entire externship process. Please consider your entire externship as an extended interview. This is your opportunity to shine.

7. Comply with *all* ofthe provisions contained in the MOU you will sign as required for this course.

**Special Concerns re Email**

Under Florida law, emails to state employees may be public record subject to public disclosure. Although there are exceptions to this, I’d rather not deal with grades or confidential matters via email. If you have something that is confidential to discuss, please mark CONFIDENTIAL on your email to me.

Further, when you send me an email message, please write **“Bridge-to-Practice**” in the subject line along with whatever else you wish to include.

# Student Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by participating in 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 results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

**Statement Related to Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting special accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Resources.  The UF Office of Disability Resources will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Law School Office of Student Affairs when requesting accommodation.

**Honor Code**

Our course is subject to all Levin College of Law and University of Florida grade, honor code, and other policies. As stated in our College’s policies, academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community, and our Honor Code “represents a commitment by students to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity. Each student who joins the College of Law community is assumed to be trustworthy unless and until proven otherwise.” Moreover, “[s]tudents at the College of Law benefit from the Honor Code because teaching and learning flourish best in an environment where mutual trust and respect form the bedrock of relationships within the community. The Honor Code helps create a community in which students can maximize their intellectual and academic potential.” Further, “[t]he Honor Code furthers the goal of the College of Law to serve the public and the profession by producing attorneys dedicated to promoting justice, excellence, and respect for the law. The success of the Honor Code depends upon the diligence with which members of the College of Law community ensure that they, as well as others, uphold the letter and spirit of the Honor Code.” Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php> and the law school’s policy (quoted in part, above) at <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/additional-information/honor-code-and-committee/honor-code>.

**Assignments**

Your assignments are set forth in detail on our Canvas site. As you’ll see, each week you’ll submit a written assignment to me via Canvas. Please make every effort to submit your work in a timely and professional manner. If you know that your assignment will be late, please email me and let me know. I understand that you don’t have complete control of your schedules. In a professional setting, if you’re going to be late in submitting your work, you would (of course) promptly notify your supervisor. Please do the same for me. All assignments must be completed for you to receive a passing grade in this course.

**Communicating**

The easiest way to reach me will be to use the canvas email function or call my work number. Please feel free to call me! If I do not answer, please leave a message and I will return your call. Please be sure to use your UF email- the canvas system has that as your email address, not your personal email.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, problems or concern that you have about your field placement. I am happy to provide an outsider’s perspective on anything that is going on at your placement, and to answer all of those “stupid” questions that you may have. Chances are, I had them too!

**I’m looking forward to a GREAT SEMESTER with YOU!**

**Instructions for Completing Your Weekly Writing Submission**

On each assignment you complete, please include the following:

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Field Placement:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Assignment number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Each week’s assignment is due on the following Sunday no later than 5pm (Eastern Standard Time. In other words, assignment 1 is due Sunday January 14.*

Next, in a concise, yet informative manner, please answer the question asked. Your entry should not exceed 500 words. Use 12 point font and do not right justify your margins. If you single space, please be sure to put an additional space between paragraphs. Submit short paragraphs (no wall of words, please). Please proofread your work. **You will not receive credit for work that does not follow these format requirements so please take care to adjust your font, margins, paragraphs, line-spacing, etc. correctly. Further, to receive credit, you must submit your assignment to our Canvas site.** I’m looking for your insights regarding your field experience and the assigned information you have read, reviewed, and watched. Did anything you learned surprise you? Because of the brevity of the writing assignment, I don’t expect you to cover every aspect of what you did each week or what you were assigned to review. I’d like you to focus on what caught your attention and interested you the most. Challenge yourself to write clearly, succinctly, and thoughtfully.

**How does what you’ve learned via this week’s assignment apply to your field experience and how mightl it help make you a better lawyer?**

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­