

Course Syllabus

Mindfulness and the Legal Profession Course 6930 | Holland Hall 283

Scott L. Rogers

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E-mail: srogers@law.miami.edu

CLASS SYLLABUS AND POLICIES:

Required Course Materials: No textbook is required. Reading materials will be made available in advance of the start of class in PDF format or via website links to access the materials. Additional readings may be distributed in class.

App: The App, “Insight Timer” will be used in class. Prior to our first meeting, please download the app, become a member, and join the “Mindfulness in Law” group. Upon doing so, please text me (786-239-9318) your Insight Timer username. In your text, please include your name, e.g., “Scott Rogers. My username is Scott.” If you run into any difficulties, please let me know. The app is the free version and you need not pay for the subscription service.

Guided Practices: We will listen to various guided recordings with lessons and mindfulness practices. A link with access to these recordings will be made available on Canvas.

Class Time:

Monday	10:00 AM to 11:45 AM; 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
Tuesday	10:00 AM to 11:45 AM; 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
Wednesday	10:00 AM to 11:45 AM; 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
Thursday	10:00 AM to 11:45 AM; 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
Friday	11:00 AM to 1:30 PM; Group Lunch 12:00-1:00PM
	Note: On Monday, students will select a time convenient for them meet with me in smaller groups after class on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday--from 3:00-3:45 or 4:00-4:45.

Description of the Course: This course is one credit hour. Please note that ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in class instruction. Please be prepared to spend two hours preparing for every hour of in class instruction.

The role of mindfulness in law has become relevant not just to lawyers and judges personally, but to them as a matter of professional practice. National conferences have been held in the last fifteen years exploring the role of mindfulness in legal practice and education. For a decade the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar Association and numerous state and local bars have been offering lawyers, judges, law professors and law students programs that explore mindfulness and its relationship to practice forms, including trial practice, mediation, negotiation, oral advocacy, and collaboration, as well as fundamental tools for effective practice that include attention skills, listening skills, reflective capacity, empathy, emotional regulation, and ultimately, decision-making.

This course explores the ways that mindfulness may enrich one’s skill set in relationship to the many stimulating and challenging aspects of legal practice. Over the course of our week together, you will acquire a foundation level understanding of mindfulness practice, develop foundational tools to integrate mindfulness into your professional and personal lives, and appreciate the role of mindful awareness in the deliberative and creative process of decision-making. Review of neuroscience research findings offer deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms of decision-making and behavior.

I have been a student of mindfulness for almost three decades, having been first introduced to contemplative practices while at the University of Florida School of Law. I regard my time at UF to be among the most rewarding in my life, and have found the study and practice of mindfulness to deeply enrich my life and love of the law, and look forward to sharing it with you and exploring it together.

Student Learning Objectives: After completing this course, students should:

1. Appreciate the connection between the cultivation of greater mindful awareness and the various ways it can enrich the study and practice of law.
2. Have a foundation level understanding of what constitutes mindfulness and the ways it relates to mindfulness practice, relaxation, concentration, compassion, and self-care.
3. Understand the science and research findings that report on the efficacy of mindfulness practices in areas that connect to a life in the law.
4. Acquire a basic understanding of the ways that mindfulness, both as a practice and set of insights, may facilitate greater self-awareness and focus, and the ability to more skillfully regulate emotions.
5. Have acquired the tools and experience to establish a regular personal practice that they can carry into the future in ways, and at times, that are meaningful and useful to them.

Instructional Methods: Class will consist of interactive lectures and discussions and in-class practice.

Office Hours: Monday and Thursday from 12:00 and 1:00, and by appointment. My email is srogers@law.miami.edu and my cell phone number is 786-239-9318.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: This is a compressed course. Attendance during all of the class hours is mandatory and your presence is important to meaningfully cultivate a practical and experiential understanding of the interrelationship between the study and practice of law and of mindfulness. If there is a reason why you must miss class, please contact me in advance via telephone or email and ask for an excused absence. Should you arrive late to class, you are responsible for ensuring that you are not recorded as absent. Depending on the circumstance, a student may be permitted to have an excused absence for 1 hour of class time. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and obtaining any handouts or assignments. If for any reason you anticipate missing more than 20% of the class time, you are advised to withdraw before it is too late to do so. Please review the Student Handbook for further information regarding the attendance policy. The law school's policy on attendance can be found at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/academic-policies#3>.

Attention to Detail:

As you will learn, mindfulness involves paying attention. Along with what you learn in class from the readings, your participation and practice, and class discussion, you may begin to develop your attentional skills by attending carefully to the content of this syllabus.

Class Assignments: A set of introductory readings is assigned for our first class with additional readings designated for each class that connect more directly to that class' specific subject matter. On two days, students will craft two-page reflections. Please be prepared to allocate a portion of each day for practice, both ormal (e.g., 10-15 minutes, 2x a day) and short punctuated moments throughout the day. Such engagement will enrich the learning experience, intellectually and experientially.

Laptop Policy: Unless instructed otherwise in advance, you may not use laptops, tablets, or cell phones during class as their use may distract your classmates. Laptops are only permitted if needed for an assigned in-class presentation. Any in class lecture notes are expected to be taken by hand.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities should register first with the Office of the Dean of Students (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Office of the Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Because accommodations are not retroactive, students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible in the semester for which they are seeking accommodation.

Etiquette: Communication Courtesy: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all forms of communication, electronic and analog.

<http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

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>.

Online 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 in a professional and respectful manner 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.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

--*UMatter, We Care:* If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

--*Counseling and Wellness Center:* <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

--*Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)*
Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

GRADING POLICIES

Grading: This class is graded. The primary areas upon which grading is based, and their respective weightings are: class participation (35%), written assignments and practice observations (15%), and final paper (50%). Written reflections will be between 1-2 pages, daily practice will be between 5-15 minutes, and the final paper will be 10 pages (12 point, double spaced with 1/2 inch margins).

GRADING INFORMATION

The Levin College of Law's mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College's website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The following chart describes the letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

Letter Grade	Point Equivalent
A (Excellent)	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C (Satisfactory)	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D (Poor)	1.00
D-	0.67
E (Failure)	0.00

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

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topic	Assignment For That Day
Monday 1/6	Introduction to Mindfulness and Mindfulness Practice; Foundations of Attention—Relaxation & Concentration; The Science of Mindfulness	Readings; Daily Practice
Tuesday 1/7	Mindfulness, Self-Leadership, Communication, and Clients Relations	Readings; Writing Assignment; and Daily Practice
Wednesday 1/8	Mindfulness and Law: Application to Negotiation, Trial Practice, and Ethical Behavior.	Readings; Daily Practice
Thursday 1/9	Mindfulness, Mental Health and Wellness: Stress-Reduction, Self-Compassion, Creativity, and Self-Care	Readings; Daily Practice
Friday 1/10	Mindfulness, Decision-Making, and Non-Judgmental Awareness	Readings; Writing Assignment; and Daily Practice

*This syllabus is subject to change, moment by moment – a reminder of the nature of life.