**BRIDGE TO PRACTICE/SEMESTER IN PRACTICE CLASS COMPONENT**

**COURSE POLICIES & SYLLABUS**

*LAW 6930 - Section RRUF - Class #31786 (Bridge to Practice, 2 credits)*

*LAW 6946 - Section CRUF - Class #29330 & #31785 (Semester in Practice, credits vary)*

**Prof. Ruff—Spring 2021**

Welcome! I’m Professor Ruff, and I look forward to getting to know each of you. I will be your professor for the Bridge to Practice course and the Semester in Practice course (together both courses are referred to in this syllabus as “course”). This course provides an educational framework for your field placement which will help you identify and cultivate your professional goals. In this course, you will develop habits of reflective learning through engaging in written and oral analysis, and you will critically examine the role of the parties and your position in your field placement. You will also explore the efficacy of our legal system and identify opportunities for you to be agents of change.

**INSTRUCTOR’S CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Professor: *Betsy L. Ruff*

Office Phone: (352) 273-0883; Cell Phone: (352) 327-1051

Email: [ruff@law.ufl.edu](mailto:ruff@law.ufl.edu)

Office Location: 351 Holland Hall

**OFFICE HOURS:**Tuesdays 4:00pm – 6:00pm (Eastern Time) and by appointment.

All office hours will be held virtually by way of my Personal Meeting Room. To meet with me during my office hours, join my Personal Meeting Room at [https://ufl.zoom.us/j/2667329804 (Links to an external site.)](https://ufl.zoom.us/j/2667329804). You can simply login to e-learning, click on “Calendar” on the far-left navigation, click on my office hours the Tuesday afternoon you wish to meet, then click on the Zoom Meeting Room link and make note of the passcode you’ll need to enter. Students should feel free to contact me at any time to discuss matters pertaining to this course, including your field placement, or to ask questions. Students are welcome to contact me via email or phone.

**ZOOM CLASS MEETINGS:**

* Thursday, January 21, 6:00-8:00pm (Eastern Time)
* Thursday, April 15, 6:00-8:00pm (Eastern Time)

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS**:

(A) Mark Herman, The Curmudgeon’s Guide to Practicing Law, (American Bar Association 2d ed. 2019) (the “Text”).

(B) Additional Materials: Other necessary materials are available to you on the Canvas site as posted documents or links to documents, which you will access through the “Modules” tab on the Canvas site.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**:

* Florida Rules of Professional Conduct
* Rules of Professional Conduct governing the jurisdiction of your Semester in Practice

**COURSE WEBSITE (CANVAS)**:

You may access the course website by going to <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> . Once you log in using your GatorLink information, you will see the course, *Semester in Practice****,*** listed there. You should not have any trouble accessing the site or its materials but let me know if you do.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

This course allows you to step out of the classroom to work closely with practicing lawyers while earning academic credit. The work you will be assigned in your field placement should be intellectually challenging and it should contribute to your professional growth and development. You will learn by doing and observing, and in the process, garner essential skills for becoming an ethical and skilled lawyer. You will be monitored by an attorney field supervisor, and will be required to submit detailed time sheets every week.  This course includes assignments which consist of readings/viewing of videos and bi-weekly reflection journals. In addition, we will have two required online synchronous classes where we will discuss your work, experiences, and anything else that may be of interest to you related to your field placement. The specific course objectives are to:

* Enable students to develop their professional goals through practicing, and reflecting upon, their work at field placements;
* Improve students' lawyering skills, including research, writing, and oral advocacy by putting into action these skills and receiving detailed feedback from attorney supervisors;
* Enable students to develop lifelong habits of reflective learning and self-awareness to help students make good decisions regarding their professional growth in the future;
* Facilitate students’ learning the rules of professional responsibility and the importance of professionalism through their participating in, and observing, work in a legal setting;
* Expand students' substantive legal knowledge and analytic skills through their work at their placement sites as well as through course readings and discussions; and
* Foster initiative--encouraging students to judge what needs to be done and take action, especially without suggestion from others.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

These objectives are achieved by structured reflection and learning opportunities during this course, in which students will:

* Create a Professional Development Plan to identify and describe with specificity the primary professional development goals to be achieved at their field placements. (This document will satisfy the Statement of Goals required in the Memorandum of Understanding.);
* Identify innovative solutions to legal system challenges, including unprofessionalism, racism, and poverty;
* Develop or refine a professional identity that reflects the core values of the legal profession and embraces ethical problem-solving in the arena of your field placement.
* Enhance practical skills like communication, time management, and cultural competence;
* Conduct accurate legal research and write competent legal memoranda;
* Exemplify professionalism with unimpeachable ethical behavior;
* Explain the role of various actors in the legal arena of your field placement and the relationship between these various actors; and
* Reflect deeply on experiences through synchronous class discussions and other discussions with your faculty supervisor and bi-weekly Reflection Journals.

**GRADING POLICIES:**

This course is graded pass/fail (S/U). In order to obtain passing credits for your Externship, you are expected to:

1. Work the requisite number of hours at the field placement and report them weekly and in a professional manner to Debbie Vincent ([vincent@law.ufl.edu](mailto:vincent@law.ufl.edu)) and [externships@law.ufl.edu](http://externships@law.ufl.edu). If you know you will be absent, you must let your field supervisor know beforehand. Under no circumstances may you fail to appear at work without telling your supervisor;
2. Satisfactorily and timely complete all reading and other assignments;
3. Furnish bi-weekly journal entries to me on time and of professional quality;
4. Participate in, and be prepared for, all Zoom classes and phone or online meetings with your faculty supervisor;
5. Perform work in the field of professional quality;
6. Conduct yourself in an ethical and professional manner at all times during your Semester in Practice. This semester is a excellent opportunity for the attorneys at your field placement to see your work over an extended period of time--make the most of it!

**In addition, you must adhere to the following provisions:**

1. I will follow the rules and policies established by the Field Supervisor and the Levin College of Law, including but not limited to the rules for hours of office operation and absences, rules governing office procedures, requirements governing the submission of time sheets, and all other requirements established by my Field Supervisor and my Faculty Supervisor.
2. I will complete all of the work hours required for this Externship.
3. I will complete all documentation required by the Field Supervisor and the Levin College of Law, including a Memo of Understanding.
4. I understand that the Field Supervisor will supervise me while I am at the field placement site.
5. I understand that I must act professionally and ethically and that I must maintain the confidentiality of information provided to me through this Semester in Practice.
6. I will prepare for and participate in all meetings, including orientations, tutorials, and evaluation meetings scheduled by my Field Supervisor and my Faculty Supervisor.
7. I will participate with my Faculty Supervisor in an online course, or other form of guided reflection, related to my Semester in Practice and I will complete the written assignments necessary to satisfy this requirement.
8. I will prepare and submit weekly time sheets to Debbie Vincent ([vincent@law.ufl.edu](mailto:vincent@law.ufl.edu)) and [externships@law.ufl.edu](http://externships@law.ufl.edu).
9. I understand that I am responsible for my own health, accident, and automobile insurance.
10. I understand that I may not receive financial compensation for the work I perform during the course of this Externship without prior approval from Dean Menendez.
11. I understand that if I fail to complete and report all of my hours or fail to complete any work assigned by my Faculty and Field Supervisors, I may fail the Externship course.

**TIME SHEETS:**

Please use the time sheet template in posted on Canvas under “Modules” to log your hours worked. Time sheets should be typed and signed by you and your site supervisor. These should be submitted weekly to Debbie Vincent at [vincent@law.ufl.edu](mailto:vincent@law.ufl.edu) and externships@law.ufl.edu by the date and time stated at the bottom of the time sheet template. Please save and send the timesheet using the first day of the week (e.g., [your name] Time Sheet 1/11/21, [your name] Time Sheet 1/19/21, [your name Time Sheet 1/25/21, etc.).

**CLASSES AND ATTENDANCE:**

Our two synchronous classes will be conducted via Zoom and take place on the following dates and times:

* Thursday, January 21, 6-8:00pm
* Thursday, April 15, 6-8:00pm

Your synchronous Zoom class participation is mandatory in order to receive credit for your Semester in Practice. If you believe that because of a work or academic conflict, you will not be able to participate, please let me know as soon as possible, and I will try to work with you to accommodate your schedule.

Notwithstanding these scheduled classes, please feel free to contact me during office hours or via email or telephone at any time during the semester to talk about issues which arise during your Semester in Practice. This is an outstanding learning experience and opportunity to explore a time-honored, deeply respected profession. I’m eager to support you in whatever ways I can during your field placement.

**CLASS PREPARATION:**

Students should expect to spend, on average, approximately two hours preparing for every hour of class. This course has 4 “classroom hours.” Reading and viewing assignments will be posted on Canvas prior to the start of spring semester classes and other materials might be added to your assignments periodically throughout the semester.

**ZOOM PROTOCOLS:**

When you join a Zoom meeting, please use the following rules of video conferencing etiquette:

* Use a desktop or laptop computer, if possible. While several tablets and smartphones are supported (see the Zoom web site for a list of supported devices), I do not recommend them. (Be aware that participating in a Zoom session using cellular service will consume considerable amounts of data.);
* Use your own name (preferred first name, last name) and do not change it;
* Choose a stationary location;
* Choose a location where there are no disruptions;
* Do not change your background;
* Dress appropriately for video conferencing;
* I will mute you upon entry to the class, but it is your responsibility to be “present” for the class to be counted for attendance purposes. You must “show video” and yourself to be counted as present;
* Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices;
* Close any other computer programs, websites, and email to give you classmates and speakers your full attention;
* Do not Zoom in the same room as someone else in the class as this creates feedback; and
* To ask a question on Zoom, use the “participant view” to click the “raise your hand” button. You can also send me questions through the “chat” function, but I may answer those after class.

Other helpful tools to help you master Zoom technology and get IT support:

Zoom Student Quick Start Guide: https://video.ufl.edu/conferencing/zoom/

Zoom tutorials and help desk: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us

e-Learning support: 352-392-4357 and UF Law IT support: 352-273-0760.

Please follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. See <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

**PROHIBITION ON STUDENT RECORDING, PHOTOGRAPHY & SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING:**

Students may not take, circulate, or post photos or videos of classroom discussions, whether they are in-person, hybrid, or completely online.  Students failing to follow this rule will be referred to the UF Law Honor Code Council and UF’s Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. We will have frank discussions about important, and sometimes difficult or uncomfortable, issues in every class session, and therefore cannot permit recording.

**BI-WEEKLY REFLECTION JOURNALS:**

Beginning week 2 of this semester, you must submit a paper reflecting on your experiences at your field placement over the previous weeks or on the legal system or law practice more broadly. Reflection papers are due before 9:00pm on six (6) Sundays throughout the semester identified in the Course Schedule below. Upload these journals via Canvas.  It is helpful—but not required—to begin these papers with a brief description of what you did or saw in the previous weeks. Please do not merely recite events, however. The purpose of these papers is to encourage you to comment on your work or the legal system or practice of law as you see it. Ask yourselves what are the positive aspects and challenges you observed or encountered with respect to the representation of clients or the administration of justice? Do you like your role? What did you learn from the assigned reading or video viewing materials that you plan to incorporate into your semester in practice or post-graduation practice of law?

If it’s been uneventful at the office or if something else in the news or in the class readings or in your life experience has grabbed your attention, please feel free to discuss these other matters. Again, the aim is to reflect on your work or on the legal system. Within that realm you are free to explore widely. These papers also may serve as a forum for you to air concerns or suggestions about your Semester in Practice or its classroom component. There is no upper page restriction on these papers, but they should be no less than three (3) double-spaced pages. Please be sure to include your name and indicate the dates covered in your reflection. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding your bi-weekly reflection assignments.

**UF LAW HONOR CODE:**

The University of Florida College of Law Honor Code represents a commitment by students to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity. Teaching and learning flourish best in an environment where mutual trust and respect form the bedrock of relationships. The Honor Code helps create a community in which students can maximize their intellectual and academic potential. Further information may be found here: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/additional-information/honor-code-and-committee/honor-code>.

**STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center  (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Brian Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure and share their accommodation letter with their instructor as early as possible in the semester.

**STATEMENT REGARDING ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION:**

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/>.

**COVID PROTOCOLS**:

In general, follow the COVID-19 protocols of your field placement site. If you are not working remotely, but rather in person at your field placement site, and you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), please do not come to the field placement site or campus or, if you are already on site at either of those places, please immediately leave. Use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions about when you are able to return to campus. (See <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect/covid-19-exposure-and-symptoms-who-do-i-call-if/> ). You will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. (See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> ).

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

A summary of the reading, viewing, and writing assignments are listed below and may be modified periodically during the semester. Assignments for each week of the semester are also posted on the Canvas “Modules” page. There are reading assignments for most of the modules, and for some modules there are video viewing and writing assignments. When an assignment says “Text,” it means the Herrmann *The Curmudgeon’s Guide to Practicing Law*book***.*** Some reading assignments include documents posted on the Canvas site or accessible by the electronic links.

Week 1: Professional Development Plan

**Read**: The Syllabus, Memorandum of Understanding, Time Sheet Template, Professional Development Plan Guidelines (all on Canvas site)

**Turn in**: Signed Memorandum of Understanding, Professional Development Plan

**Attend**: Zoom Class

Week 2: Presenting Yourself Well: Research, Writing, and Speaking

**Read**: Chapter 1 in Text “How to Write: A Memorandum from Curmudgeon”; Chapter 2 in Text “The Curmudgeon Argues”; “Is Your Pronunciation on Point? Take this Quiz to Find Out” (on Canvas site); **Watch**: “Managing Assignments,” “How to Have a Better Conversation” (on Canvas site)

**Review**: List of Legal Information Center Legal Research Guides at <https://guides.law.ufl.edu/guide-list>

**Turn in**: Bi-weekly Reflection Journal

Week 3: Professionalism, Ethics, and Confidentiality

**Read**: Chapters 11 in Text, “The Curmudgeon on Clients”; “Practical Pointers for Effective Client Communications,*”* “Twelve Tips to Help You Avoid Disciplinary Proceedings*”* (on Canvas site).

Week 4: Steadying Yourself for the Unknown

**Read**: Chapter 2 in Text “How to Fail as an Associate”; **Watch**: “How you Can Use the Imposter Syndrome to Your Benefit,” “Avoiding Disasters” (on Canvas site);

**Turn in**: Bi-weekly Reflection Journal

Week 5: Dealing with Others

**Read**: Chapter 4 in Text “The Curmudgeonly Assistant”; **Watch**: “Dealing with Colleagues,” “Defusing Difficult People,” “Working with Partners or Judges” (on Canvas site)

Week 6: Listening and Observing Skills

**Watch**: “Five Ways to Listen Better,” Amy Cuddy "Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are," “Lie Spotting” (on Canvas site)

**Turn in**: Bi-weekly Reflection Journal

Week 7:     Thinking Back and Ahead

**Read**: Chapter 12 in Text “The Curmudgeon’s Guide to Building a Practice”; **Watch**: “Increasing Odds of an Offer” (on Canvas)

Week 8:    Some Realities of Practice

**Read**: Chapter 3 in Text “What They Didn’t Tell You in Law School,” Chapter 6 in Text “Seven Hours Locked in a Room,” “How to Enter Time so that Clients Will Pay for It”

**Turn in**: Bi-weekly Reflection Journal

Week 9:     Business Etiquette

**Read**: Chapter 10 in Text “The Curmudgeon on Couth”; “Business Etiquette” (on Canvas)

Week 10: Cultural Competence for Successful Lawyering

**Read**: “Multicultural Intelligence for Lawyers,” “Habits of Cross-Cultural Lawyering” (on Canvas)

**Turn in**: Bi-weekly Reflection Journal

Week 11: Pitfalls to Avoid

**Read**: “How to Avoid 10 Common Ethics Pitfalls,” “Ethical Pitfalls and Practical Pointers for Attorneys Promoting Themselves on Social Media” (on Canvas);

Week 12: Lawyer Wellness

**Read**: “On Being a Happy, Healthy, and Ethical Member of an Unhappy, Unhealthy, and Unethical Profession”; **Read or Watch**: “How Lawyers Can Bring Mindfulness into Their Practice (podcast with transcript)” (on Canvas)

Turn in: Final Journal Assignment Reflecting on Your Semester in Practice

Week 13:   Reflecting on Your Semester in Practice

**Attend**: Zoom Class