

Professional Responsibility, Fall 2025
Law 6750
3 Credits
Professor John Stinneford

This course will give you an overview of the law governing lawyers and allow you to explore the ethical problems lawyers encounter in practice. The course also considers the various professional roles lawyers assume and the moral quandaries they face. The primary focus of the course will be ethical problem-solving. The ultimate goal is to give students the opportunity to begin to develop an informed, personalized, ethical problem-solving methodology as part of a developing individualized professional identity.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Read and understand the rules, commentary, statutes, and judicial opinions governing the ethical conduct of lawyers.
- Understand the ethical, moral, and policy concerns underlying the law regulating lawyers.
- Identify ethical issues in given fact patterns and work through their solutions using the relevant legal rules.

Required Texts

The required casebook for this course is Jefferson, Pearce, et al., PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH (5th edition 2023). Other handouts or materials may be assigned during the semester. The second required text is the ABA Model Rules of Professional Responsibility, located at:

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_table_of_contents/.

NOTE: WHENEVER YOUR CASEBOOK READING REFERENCES A RULE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, YOU SHOULD GO TO THE ABA MODEL RULES AND READ THE CORRESPONDING RULE.

I may also assign supplementary materials from time to time. You may access any supplemental materials and view other course related information on the course Canvas page.

Classes

Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. in Holland Hall. The final exam is tentatively scheduled for December 8 at 8:30 a.m..

Office Hours

My office hours are on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and by appointment. While you should feel free to stop by without an appointment during office hours, I recommend that you make an appointment to reserve the amount of time that you need and eliminate wait time. If you are unable to meet with me during my regularly scheduled office hours please send me an e-mail and I'll be happy to arrange another mutually convenient time.

Contact Information

My office is in Room 379 and the telephone number is (352) 273-0959. My e-mail address is jstinneford@law.ufl.edu. I encourage you to contact me regularly during the semester and to ask any questions that you may have about the course or even more generally about the practice of law.

Grading

Your final course grade will be based principally on a final exam (80%) and a series of short, in-class "pop" quizzes (20%). The grade will be subject to modification based upon course participation and attendance as described below.

After course grades have been posted, if you wish to review your exam I will make your exam available along with a model answer. If you wish to speak to me after you have reviewed your exam, you may do so in the fall semester. For further information on the University's grading policies and calculation of grade points please see <https://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Policy related to Make-up exams or other work

The law school policy on delay in taking exams can be found at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/forms-applications/exam-delays-accommodations-form>.

Accommodations For Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness Resources

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Basic Needs Assistance

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food or lacks a safe place to live is encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs. If you are comfortable doing so, you may also notify me so that I can direct you to further resources.

University Policy on 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 <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/additional-information/honor-code-and-committee/honor-code>.

Information on UF Law grading policies

Grade	Points	Grade	Point	Grade	Point
A (Excellent)	4.0	C+	2.33	D-	0.67
A-	3.67	C	2.00	E (Failure)	0.0
B+	3.33	C-	1.67		
B	3.00	D+	1.33		
B-	2.67	D (Poor)	1.00		

The law school grading policy is available at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies>.

Class Preparation, Participation, and Attendance

ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Professional Responsibility has 3 “classroom hours” of in-class instruction each week, requiring at least 6 hours of preparation outside of class.

Your grade may be significantly affected (up to one full letter grade) by your class participation. In evaluating your class participation, I take into account a number of considerations, including the professionalism and courtesy you display in class, your preparedness in class, and your class attendance. I do not reward students for being relatively talkative; nor do I punish students for being relatively quiet. I do, however, expect everyone to be familiar with the material assigned for a given day, and prepared to discuss it in class if called upon.

Students are expected to attend class, to be prepared, and to participate in class discussions. It is your responsibility to locate and initial the sign-in sheet for each class session. By signing your initials, you affirm that you are physically present in class during that class period. It will be considered a violation of the course rules and the Honor Code to falsely indicate that you were present in class, or to assist a classmate in such misrepresentation.

Pursuant to ABA guidelines, students who have four (4) or more absences will be barred from taking the final exam and will automatically fail this course. Two or three absences may result in a reduction of your grade as described above, in the section describing grade adjustments for course participation. Absences necessitated by religious holidays are exempted by this policy, so long as you give me advance notice of your absence. More generally, if you are concerned that you may come close to the limit on absences, it is a good idea to keep me informed as to what's going on, so that we can explore whether some accommodation is possible.

Recording Devices and Cell Phones

Cellular telephones should not be used during class and ringers should be silenced.

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.

Computer Usage: You may use a laptop to take notes, prepare your outline, and take exams. Please do not surf the web, send emails or IMs, look up old crushes on Facebook, shop for autographed Tim Tebow photos on EBay, or generally mess around on your computer. Such

conduct is unprofessional and shows a lack of respect for your classmates and me. Such conduct may result in a grade reduction as discussed in the “class participation” section, above.

Study Aids and Supplemental Materials. Many supplements and study aids are available to assist you in mastering the material for Professional Responsibility and the MPRE. You do not need to use or purchase any of them to do well in this course. You may, however, find them helpful. If so, I would recommend two types of supplemental aids: (1) those that give you a narrative overview of the subject and explain how the concepts fit together (e.g., Freedman and Smith, *Understanding Legal Ethics*); and (2) those that help you to apply the Model Rules precisely (e.g., Wendel, *Examples & Explanations: Professional Responsibility* (Most Recent Edition)). You might be able to find recent editions of these books in the library, but be careful about using older editions—the law governing lawyers is a rapidly changing area of law! Also, be careful not to overwhelm yourself with materials specifically designed to prepare you for the MPRE—they often discuss material we do not cover in class.

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. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may 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 [here](#).

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](#).

Assignments

Below are the expected reading assignments. We will cover roughly one assignment per class – sometimes a little more and sometimes a little less. Please note that this plan is subject to change. I reserve the right to modify the assignments from time to time, and to utilize additional handouts and materials. All assignments are from the required texts, unless otherwise noted.

1. Introduction. CB pp. 1-12, 19-24; Florida Bar admission requirements: <https://www.floridabarexam.org/web/website.nsf/52286AE9AD5D845185257C07005C3FE1/F8FE824E0EECACE885257C0B00672021>
2. Unlicensed practice of law CB pp. 25-46
3. Unlicensed practice pt. 2 CB pp. 46-70
4. Creating the lawyer-client relationship CB pp. 71-94
5. Ending the lawyer-client relationship; competence CB pp. 94-116

6. Competence; allocation of decisionmaking; CB pp. 116-134
7. Allocation of decisionmaking; other principles CB pp. 134-152
8. Solicitation CB pp. 172-189
9. Advertising; billing CB pp. 190-210
10. Billing CB pp. 210-229
11. Attorney-Client Privilege CB pp. 245-270
12. Attorney-Client Privilege CB pp. 270-290
13. Attorney-Client Privilege CB pp. 290-310
14. Duty of Confidentiality pp. 310-335
15. Conflicts of Interest CB pp. 337-356
16. Conflicts of Interest CB pp. 356-369
17. Conflicts of Interest CB pp. 337-356
18. Conflicts of Interest CB pp. 393-408
19. Duties to the Legal System and Nonclients CB pp. 409-431
20. Duties to the Legal System and Nonclients CB pp. 431-461
21. Duties to the Legal System and Nonclients CB pp. 461-477
22. Duties to the Legal System and Nonclients CB pp. 477-496
23. Duties to the Legal System and Nonclients CB pp. 496-508
24. Prosecutorial Ethics CB pp. 509-541
25. Prosecutorial Ethics CB pp. 541-561
26. Judicial Ethics CB pp. 561-600