Law 6930, Section 69MT

Friday: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Holland Hall 355B

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| **Course Instructors** | |
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**I. Course Overview**

**A. Purpose**

“Foundations in Law” is not a substantive law course. Its purpose is to provide students with the foundational skills necessary for success in law school and on the bar exam.

**B. Materials**

To teach the legal skills on which the course is focused, students work with legal topics relating to Real Property and Civil Procedure. The electronic textbook containing this material is posted at the Canvas website for the course. In addition, students read assigned material posted at Canvas.

**C. Learning Outcomes**

Students will work with course materials designed to help them to improve their work in law school courses and to improve their process for preparing for the Florida Bar exam. They will regularly practice writing responses to essay exam questions. They will be introduced to information that will help them to understand how to improve the learning process and their performance in carrying out tasks required of law students and practitioners alike.

The following are the learning outcomes from diligent preparation and regular class attendance:

* Learning to articulate and objectively assess their current learning and class-preparation processes and to recognize their existing skills as well as their deficiencies.
* Learning techniques designed for students with a variety of learning styles to improve the following:

(a) Reading comprehension.

(b) Retention of learned information.

(c) Analysis and synthesis of legal topics.

(d) The ability to analyze a legal topic in an orderly and systematic manner.

* Learning to present a legal argument clearly and effectively through the use of tried organizational techniques.
* Learning to read closely and proactively (rather than passively and inattentively) in order to bring case law, statutes, and other primary source materials into focus.
* Learning to create study aids designed to fit the student’s individual learning style.
* Learning to manage stress and time in the course of preparing for and taking exams (including the Bar Exam).
* Learning to identify the habits that have interfered in the past with the student’s performance in order to replace them with more effective practices.
* Learning that long-term or continued success in law school requires a continuing commitment to learning and applying the material presented in this course and mastering the techniques introduced.
* Understanding that real improvement requires an ongoing commitment to objective self-assessment, application of useful strategies and techniques, and vigilance against beliefs and practices/habits that have undermined the student’s success in the past.

**II. Overview of Written Assignments**

Graded work must be timely completed and timely submitted as directed to Kaplan or to Canvas.

NOTE: Per law school policy, this course will be graded on a curve. The curve will not be applied until the end of the semester, after completion and grading of all work and in determining your final grade. Thus, the points received for each graded assignment represent your raw score only.

**A. Graded Essays**

**NOTE:** Some projects and in-class assignments are graded. These assignments include the following:

**(1) Graded Essays Other than the Final Exam**. To allow students to track their progress, students are from time to time assigned essays reflecting topics frequently tested on the Florida Bar Exam. Some of these essays will be designated as graded essay assignments. Graded essays are prepared during class under test conditions.

**(2) Final Graded Exam Essay Question.** The final graded exam consists of timed essay questions intended to demonstrate each student’s mastery of the assigned materials.

**(3) Other Graded Work as specified by the instructors.** The instructors at their option may assign supplementary **graded** exercises or quizzes designed to supplement a related assignment by reinforcing key principles or giving them preliminary practice applying a technique or principle. If such a supplementary graded assignment is not announced in the syllabus, the instructors may announce it in the immediately preceding class or in the posted instructions for the upcoming assignment.

**C. Non-Graded Work**

**NOTE:** Ungraded assignments affect your final grade. Failure to timely complete and submit any ungraded assigned exercise as directed may result (at the instructors’ discretion based on the circumstances) in the lowering of the student’s final course grade by one grade level.

**(1) Self-Assessments**. Accurate self-assessment is a very important component in building the skills taught in this course. Students will be provided with self-assessment worksheets that allow them to evaluate and track their skill proficiencies. Students will be asked to complete self-assessments throughout the course.

**(2) Ungraded in-class written assignments required by the instructors.** The instructors at their option may assign supplementary **ungraded** exercises or quizzes designed to supplement a related assignment by reinforcing key principles or giving them preliminary practice applying a technique or principle. If such a supplementary graded assignment is not announced in the syllabus, the instructors may announce it in the immediately preceding class or in the posted instructions for the upcoming assignment.

**III. Attendance Requirements and Graded Participation**

Each class consists of two class periods. Because this course requires students to learn and practice new skills, participation in class is crucial and has a direct bearing on your final grade. Students often work together on in-class discussion or assignments; a student’s failure to attend and contribute is therefore a serious matter.

Students are expected to attend every class period. If a student without good cause\* misses more than two class periods, the student’s (in the instructors’ discretion and depending on the circumstances) final grade may be lowered as much as one grade level for each missed class period.

\*Students who are entitled to miss class for a religious holiday should notify the instructors in advance.

**IV. Use of Electronic Devices**

Cell phones are not permitted. They should be kept out of sight and silent.

Laptops are permitted only as directed by the instructors. Use of laptops for internet browsing or other purposes will be noted by the instructor as failure to participate during that class period. If either instructor directs, laptops must be put away.

**V. Determination of Final Grade**

This class is a graded course. It is not blind-graded. The components considered in your

This class is a graded course. Because of the nature of the assignments, it is not blind-graded.

Per law school policy, this class will be graded on a curve. The weighted components for determining your final **raw grade** are listed below:

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| Graded Essays | 60% |
| Self-Assessments and Other Graded Work | 20% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

The curve will not be applied until the end of the semester, after completion and grading of all work. Thus, the grade you receive on the graded assignments are raw scores to which the curve has not been applied.

Your other course work and participation will determine what adjustments (such as a bump up or down) apply to your raw grade. Your final grade is your raw grade adjusted for your participation and timely and satisfactory submission of ungraded work.

**VI. Disclosures Regarding UF Policies**

**A. College of Law Grade Policy** (Final Grades)

Grades for this course will be in compliance with the College of Law’s posted grading policy, including the mandatory mean and grade distributions. Final letter grades for the course are determined in accordance with the following point equivalency:

Letter Grade Point Equivalent

A (Excellent) 4.00

A- 3.67

B+ 3.33

B (Average) 3.00

B- 2.67

C+ 2.33

C (Below average) 2.00

C- 1.67

D+ 1.33

D (Poor) 1.00

D- 0.67

E (Failure) 0.00

**B. University and College of Law Policy on Grade Points**

Information on the University policy as to assigning grade points is available at: <http://catalog>.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

Information on current College of Law grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at: [https://www.law.ufl.edu/lifeat-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current%20students/academic-policies](https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current%20students/academic-policies) and below:

**C. Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to Student Affairs (Dean Rachel Inman) when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**D. 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/.”](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.%E2%80%9D)

**E. UF Honesty Policy**

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 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.

For the University Honor Code, please see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

**Summary of Assignments\***

\*The instructors reserve the right to modify a syllabus assignment or to announce a graded in-class or out-of-class assignment not reflected below by an announcement in the preceding class period (and by posting the changed assignment).

The detailed course schedule is posted at Canvas.

NOTICE: CLASS PREPARATION WORKLOAD:

ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Foundations in Law has 2 “classroom hours” of instruction each week, requiring at least 4 hours of preparation outside of class.

Because the course includes a wide variety of skills-practice and other exercises, you should spend the bulk of your time outside of class on cultivating the techniques we discuss in class. When combined with your completion of the self-assessments, each activity spent outside of class should help reinforce memorization and legal rule application skills. The course is designed to help you improve your law school performance as well, so be liberal with your time investment. Always look to apply what you learn here in your other classes.

**NOTE: DETAILED** Instructions for each week’s assignment will be posted at CANVAS under the heading “Assignment Instructions.” You MUST refer to these instructions before doing an assignment.

**Week 1—Introduction to and Orientation for Foundations Course**

**Material to Prepare for Class Discussion**: Real Property (Adverse Possession material in textbook)

**Topics for Discussion:** Course objectives; expectations and policies; what this course teaches and how it can help you improve your performance in law school.

**Week 2: Discovering Your Own Learning Preferences and Existing Skills; Developing Strategies to Offset Deficiencies**

**Project (before class):** Take and submit a completed MBTI.

**Additional Material to Prepare for Class Discussion:** TBA

**Topics for Discussion:** What the MBTI tells you about your own current preferences and how you approach the learning process; designing type-based strategies for learning or set type-based goals for implementation this semester;

**Week 3: The Learning Cycle; Foundational Learning Skills, Goals, and Practices**

**Written Assignment to Complete Before Class:** Complete the first assigned essay for grading.

**Material to prepare for class discussion and in-class graded essay:** Video on jurisdiction;material in textbook on jurisdiction; supplementary material as assigned.

**Topics for Discussion:** Understanding the learning cycle and applying your understanding to your own work in law school; why “pretesting” is a fundamental tool in improving your grasp of difficult subject-matter; the process and application of “critical thinking” (and how to know whether you are doing it).

**Week 4: The Connection between Comprehension of Content and Effective Organization**

**Project:** Complete and submit an outline aid for (a) adverse possession, and (2) subject-matter jurisdiction.

**Material to prepare:** Adverse possession and subject-matter jurisdiction materials in textbook; supplementary material as directed.

**Topics:** Techniques for organizing content; techniques for memorization and retention of content

**Week 5—Reading Comprehension; IRAC as a tool for analysis and presentation of legal topics**

**Project:** Submit assigned essay for grading on easements.

**Material to prepare:** Review substantive law on easements; watch video; supplementary reading as directed.

**Topics:** Reading strategies; IRAC as an essential tool for analyzing a legal issue and coherently setting out the analysis; elements of IRAC used in analysis.

**Week 6—Essay Writing--Issue Spotting; Identifying Rules and Writing Rule Statements**

**Project:** Complete issue spotting and rule statement; IRAC outline, and writing exercises for 5 MCQs.

**Material for preparation:** Materials on civil procedure (subject-matter jurisdiction); supplementary reading as directed.

**Topic:** Effective issue spotting; identifying and effectively stating the rule.

**Week 7--**

**Week 7—Responding to Essay Questions Under Test-Taking Conditions (IN-CLASS TIMED ESSAY ASSIGNMENT 1)**

**Project:** Two closed-book essays written in class and submitted for grading.

**Materials for Preparation:** Materials in textbook or created by yourself on adverse possession, easements, and jurisdiction.

**Purpose:** To write two responses to essay questions to reflect the principles addressed so far on test-taking conditions; to reflect on how test-taking conditions affect your application of the skills we have learned and your mastery of the material.

**Week 8—CONTINUED: Foundational Requirements for Effective Legal Analysis and Effective Presentation**

**Project:** (1) TBA; (2) Brief Self-Assessment Questionnaire Regarding the Timed Essay

**Preparation for class:** Materials in textbook or created by yourself on adverse possession, easements, and jurisdiction; supplementary reading as directed.

**Topics:** The fundamental requirements for legal analysis; deductive logic and propositional statements; presenting your analysis effectively (continued!)

**Week 9—Strategies for Preparing for an Essay Test; Creating Study Tools**

**Project:** Complete assigned essay and submit for grading.

**Preparation for class:** Materials in textbook or created by yourself on adverse possession, easements, and jurisdiction; supplementary reading as directed.

**Topics:** How to create answer templates to improve your writing during the test; types of study tools (in addition to outlining); the benefit of creating study tools adapted to your personal learning preferences and tendencies

**Week 10—Practicum—Assessing the Effectiveness of an Essay**

**Project:** Short-answer assignment.

**Preparation for class:** Materials in textbook or created by yourself on adverse possession, easements, and jurisdiction; supplementary reading as directed.

**Topics:** practice evaluating sample essay responses to test your understanding of the principles for effective organization and analysis; your ability to assess effectiveness of their application; and to assess/identify/provide feedback regarding ways for improving effectiveness.

**Week 11—Strategies for Test-Taking; Preparation for Essay Exam in Meeting 12**

**Project:** None other than preparing for next week’s graded essay-writing exam.

**Preparation for class:** See above.

**Topics:** skills for maximizing success; strategy for approaching multiple choice questions

**Week 12—Graded Essay Exam**

In class, students will write answers to essays under simulated test conditions and submit them

for grading.

**Week 13—Preparation for Other Law School Exams; Submission of Graded Project or Exercise**

**Project:** Students will submit the assigned project or exercise.

**Discussion topics:** techniques for preparing for finals; stress management; and time management; creation of study plan for each exam.