

**HONORS SEMINAR V: IDH 3035 (Spring 2019) – Law School in a Nutshell**  
**Class Syllabus**

**Class Time:** Wednesdays 10:00am to 12:30pm

**Location:** SASC 352

**Professor:** Angela T. Puentes-Leon  
Adjunct Professor  
[angiepuentes@yahoo.com](mailto:angiepuentes@yahoo.com)

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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**I. Course Description:**

The course is designed to introduce students to a learning experience mirroring the 1<sup>st</sup> year of law school. Structured around lectures on core law school subjects (Constitutional Law, Contracts, Property & Torts), guest lectures by law faculty, and experiential learning opportunities, the course will prepare students for law school and teach with an emphasis on recreating the law school environment. The course will use the Socratic Method, law school-style exams, and place emphasis on legal research, writing and advocacy.

**II. Required Books**

- Feinman, Jay. Law 101: Everything You Need to Know About American Law, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Oxford University Press 2014) ISBN 0199341699
- Law 101, Ramy, Herbert. Succeeding in Law School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Carolina Academic Press 2010) ISBN 9781594607400
- The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, 20th Ed. (Harvard Law Review 2015). ISBN13: 978-0692400197
- Other Materials and Cases will be provided in class or electronically. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard regularly.

**III. Course Goals:**

The goal of this course is to assist students in selecting a career in the legal profession and preparing those students for the rigors of law school. Specifically, the course aims to improve student preparedness for a career in law, including acquiring competencies basic to the success of a law student and lawyer.

The course will assist students acquire advanced knowledge and understanding of U.S. law. The course will explore major topics in American jurisprudence and tackle a curriculum similar to that of first year law students in U.S. Students will receive an introduction to Legal Research and Writing, Contracts, Torts, Constitutional Law, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law, Property and Professional Responsibility and Ethics.

Students will help hone their legal research and writing skills and will be expected to produce work-product in pursuit of their professional understanding of the American legal tradition and system, as well as their development of successful law student skills.

Students will also begin to explore their oral advocacy skills and will be expected to participate in class weekly, as well as periodically prepare and deliver oral reports on assignment cases or hypotheticals.

Finally, this course will provide opportunities for mentorship and guidance by College of Law Faculty, alumni, students and distinguished members of bar.

#### **IV. Course Objectives:**

- Be able to evaluate and assess their own commitment and aptitude for entry into and success in law school
- Develop their interest and skills in service, leadership, communication, analysis and organization
- Develop essential learning skills and strategies for time management, preparation, writing, research, and test taking needed for success in professional schools and careers.
- Be able to apply their knowledge to solve problems that require logical reasoning
  
- Have acquired habits of thought that will prepare them for careers in law
- Understand the expectations and rigors of achieving the JD degree
- Understand the basic history, structure and impact of the judiciary system and the legal profession
- Have developed skills to work collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary manner
- Have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for the LSAT (or corollary exam), and how to be well positioned to be a successful applicant to law school

#### **V. Class Format:**

Class meets one time per week. Class sessions may be subdivided to accommodate guest speakers, lecturers and other activities. Preparation for, and participation in, class is critical to success in this course.

Class will be supplemented by readings or videos to be assigned by the course instructor or visiting lecturers.

Use of laptops or other electronic devices is not allowed during the class time unless approved in advance by the professor or otherwise announced at the beginning of class.

## **VI. Grading and Evaluation:**

Legal Writing and Research Assignments	40%
Oral Advocacy and Presentations	20%
Participation and Class Preparedness	20%
Final Exam	20%

## **VII. Attendance**

Because this class meets once per week, students must regularly and punctually attend class. A student who is absent for more than two classes (excused or unexcused) shall be deemed not to have regularly attended class, and shall receive a reduction of a letter grade (e.g., A- to B+) for every absence beyond two classes. Therefore, three (3) absences will result in a decrease of one letter grade. Four or more absences will result in a course grade of "F."

It will not be possible to make up grades for missed presentations, class participation or missed exams. Preparation for, and participation in, class is critical to success in this course.

## **VIII. Participation**

This course is designed to mirror the expectations of Professors in Law School. Reading must be completed before class and students are expected to be prepared to discuss the readings. Consistent with the Socratic Method, students should be prepared to be called on in class.

A seating chart may be developed and students may be expected to sit in the same seats selected on the first day.

## **IX. Assignments**

Regular writing or oral assignments to be given before class or in class. Students are expected integrate their class work into their assignments as instructed. Proper use of grammar and blue book citations will be taken into consideration when grading written assignments.

**A. Briefing Cases**

Students will be expected to brief cases in anticipation of each class. Furthermore, each brief shall be typed, printed and turned-in to the professor at the beginning of each class session.

**B. Outlines**

Students will also be expected to take class notes and prepare an "outline" of the class which they will need to periodically submit to the professor for review. Deadlines for providing the "outlines" will be announced in class or electronically.

**C. Assignment: Supreme Court Justice (research assignment)**

Students will be assigned a US Supreme Court Justice. Each student will be assigned a unique name and selections will be randomly assignment to students in class from a list of justices to be compiled by the professor.

Students will prepare a typed, printed research assignment (no less than three pages, but not more than 5 pages, double spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font) regarding their assigned Justice. While students are certainly encouraged to research, and report on, the personal biographically background of their assigned Justice (early life, education, etc.), student should concentrate their efforts on important or historically significant decisions by their assigned Justice.

**D. Assignment: Legal Memorandum (at least two)**

Students will be assigned various legal memos to complete during the semester. Students will prepare a typed, printed legal memorandum (no less than three pages, but not more than 5 pages, double spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font) regarding their assigned issue, using the fact patterns provided.

Formatting, spelling, grammar and proper "Bluebooking" and legal citations are expected and will be part of the grade.

**E. Closing Arguments**

Students will be asked to prepare a closing argument to a "jury" on the Torts fact pattern that will be provided. Students will work in teams of two and will have a total of 10-minutes to give their argument. The teams can share the 10-minutes whoever they like, including having only one presenter. However, both students are expected to prepare for the argument. Student must dress accordingly. No written report is necessary and no legal research is required.

## **X. Honors College Requirements:**

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity.

### **A. Honors Engagement Requirements (Formerly Citizenship Requirements)**

Beginning in Fall 2014, Honors College students are required to accumulate at least **20 engagement points** each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate **10 engagement points**.

See <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/>.

### **B. Student Portfolios**

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience.

See <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>.

### **C. Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS)**

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to "explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See

<http://honors.fiu.edu/hearts/>.

### **D. Honors College Academic Misconduct Statement**

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

### **E. Procedures and Penalties**

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of

academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Honors College website (<http://honors.fiu.edu/academics/policies/>), and the Academic Misconduct Procedures, available at <http://integrity.fiu.edu/misconducts.html>

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

- FIU Code of Academic Integrity – <http://integrity.fiu.edu/>
- FIU Student Handbook – <http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/>
- FIU Honors College Policies – <http://honors.fiu.edu/students/policies/>

## **XI. Global Learning Outcomes for IDH3034 and 3035**

Upper Division classes have been designated as Global Learning courses.

**A. Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.

**B. Course Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.

**C. Global Perspectives:** Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

· Course Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

**D. Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

**E. Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems related to aesthetics, values, and authority.

## **XII. Religious Holidays**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work."

## **XIII. Physical, mental and sensory challenges**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#), if you have not done so already.”

#### XIV. Course Outline<sup>1</sup>

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENT	READINGS: <sup>2</sup>
1	January 9	Review of Final Exam  Review of Spring 2019 Syllabus, including class expectations, grading and final exam protocol	Not Applicable
2	January 16	Property  I	TBD
3	January 23	Advice from the Trenches: Building your Law Practice through <i>Pro Bono</i> work  <b>Guest Speaker:</b> Cristina Alonso, Alonso Appeals	Not Applicable
4	January 30	<i>TENTATIVE:</i> Making Good Impressions: Interview Skills, Etiquette and Other Important Life Skills	
5	February 6	Torts I	<b>READ</b> the following and be prepared to discuss the following cases:

<sup>1</sup> This syllabus is subject to change in light of the schedules of invited guest lecturers. Students are responsible for being aware of, and complying with, any changes in the syllabus. Changes will be announced in class or electronically.

<sup>2</sup> Additional reading, including cases to be briefed in anticipation of class, will be announced in class or electronically.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Palsgraf v. Long Island R. Co.</i>, 248 N.Y. 339 (N.Y. 1928)</li> <li>• <i>MacPherson v. Buick Motor Co.</i>, 111 N.E. 1050 (N.Y. 1916)</li> <li>• <i>Garratt v. Dailey</i>, 46 Wash. 2d 197 (Wash. 1956)</li> <li>• <i>Summers v. Tice</i>, 199 P. 2d 1 (Cal. 1948)</li> <li>• <i>Larsen v. General Motors Corporation</i>, 391 F. 2d 495 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1968)</li> <li>• <i>BMW of North America v. Gore</i>, 116 S. Ct. 1589 (1995)</li> <li>• <i>State Farm Mutual Automobile Ins. v. Campbell</i>, 123 S. Ct. 1513 (2003)</li> </ul>
6	February 13	Torts II and The Litigation Process	<p><b>DEADLINE</b> to turn-in 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of legal memorandum re: Subject Matter Jurisdiction</p> <p><b>READ</b> the following and be prepared to discuss the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Palsgraf v. Long Island R. Co.</i>, 248 N.Y. 339 (N.Y. 1928)</li> <li>• <i>MacPherson v. Buick Motor Co.</i>, 111 N.E. 1050 (N.Y. 1916)</li> <li>• <i>Garratt v. Dailey</i>, 46 Wash. 2d 197 (Wash. 1956)</li> </ul>

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<b>7</b>	February 20	<p>Advice from the Trenches: The Art of the Trial</p> <p><b>Guest Speakers:</b> Patrick Montoya, Partner at Colson Hicks Eidson</p> <p>And</p> <p>Denise Georges, Associate at Colson Hicks Eidson</p>	TBD
<b>8</b>	February 27	<p>Constitutional Law</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Justin Wales, Carlton Fields PA</p>	<p>TBD</p> <p><b>DEADLINE</b> to turn your Research Assignments re: Supreme Court</p>
<b>9</b>	March 6	<i>TENTATIVE:</i> The Litigation Process	TBD
<b>10</b>	March 13	NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK	Not Applicable
<b>11</b>	March 20	<p><i>TENTATIVE:</i> Criminal Law</p> <p>Advice from the Trenches: TBD</p>	<b>DEADLINE</b> to prepare your Closing Arguments –

			with presentations TODAY
<b>12</b>	March 27	Oral Presentations: Closing Arguments	TBD
<b>13</b>	April 3	<p>Advice from the Trenches: The Road to Clerkships</p> <p><b>Guest Speakers:</b>  Jorge Perez-Santiago, Attorney at Stumphauzer &amp; Sloman</p> <p>Alina Alonso-Rodriguez, Partner at Bowman &amp; Brooke</p> <p>Mirels Davila, Attorney at Law</p>	<b>DEADLINE</b> to turn in class "outlines"
<b>14</b>	April 11	<p>The Most Important Lecture You'll Have: The Psychology of Law Students and Lawyers: Dealing with Stress and the Impostor Syndrome</p> <p>Guest Speakers: Dr. Lissette Perez-Lima, Ph. D.</p> <p>And</p> <p>Kelly R. Melchiondo, Partner at Stearns Weaver Miller</p>	Ramy, Chapter 2
<b>15</b>	April 18	Review for Final Exam	Not Applicable
<b>16</b>	April 25	Final Exam	Not Applicable

