

**HONORS SEMINAR V: IDH 3034 (FALL 2021) – Law School in a Nutshell**  
**Class Syllabus**

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

**Location:** GC 275A

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

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Peer Mentor:** TBD

---

**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, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Oxford University Press 2014) ISBN 0199341699 Law 101 \*\*NOTE: 4<sup>th</sup> Edition is acceptable as well)\*\*
- Ramo, 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 the 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 delivery 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), prepare their personal statement and how to be well positioned to be a successful applicant to law school

## V. Class Format:

Class meets one time per week in person. 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.

- All students are expected to attend class meetings in-person on Wednesdays at 10:00am – 12:30pm.
- If you are unable to attend a class meeting for any reason, I ask that you let me know beforehand via email at [angiepuentes@yahoo.com](mailto:angiepuentes@yahoo.com) (cc: to your Peer Mentor) and use “Class Attendance” at the beginning of the subject line.
- I expect active and involved course engagement and attendance. This entails showing up on Wednesdays at 10:00am – 12:30pm and sharing your ideas either through in-class conversation and discussions.
- In addition to the scheduled class meetings, the course includes readings, and assignments. Refer to the course schedule in this Syllabus and inside our Canvas course (always check both in the event there is a change in the schedule) for details and due dates.
- Assignment instructions and respective due dates are posted in the syllabus. Please refer to these specific places so that you can keep track of when assignments are due and how they are to be submitted.
- It is as important to have proper etiquette in our interactions. Please keep in mind the following ground rules for our time together: take turns while speaking, actively listen to others as they are speaking, be respectful of your classmates’ ideas and perspectives, and be considerate.

## VI. Grading and Evaluation:

Legal Writing, Research Assignments and other written 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. Students should also be prepared to participate in online discussions and chats via Canvas or other predetermined method given that the class will be taught remotely.

## **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 (after the BlueBooking Class is taught) will be taken into consideration when grading written assignments.

### **A. Briefing Cases**

Students will be expected to brief cases in anticipation of each class if a case has been assigned for the lecture. Furthermore, each brief shall be typed and turned-in to the professor on Canvas before the commencement 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" is on the syllabus but is subject to change. Any changes to this deadline will be announced in class or electronically on Canvas.

### **C. Writing Assignment: "Why I Want to be a Lawyer" (creative writing) \*\*RECOMMENDED FOR PORTFOLIO\*\***

On the first day of class, students will be provided a form that should be filled out and turned-in with this assignment. That form will be used to assist the professor

better assess each student's goals for law school and law school admission and, as a result, coordinate special topics and guest speakers for the class.

Students will prepare a typed, creative essay (no less than three pages, but not more than four pages) explaining the reasons you would like to attend law school. This assignment will be turned in on Canvas.

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

Students will be assigned various legal memos to complete during the semester. Students will prepare a typed, legal memorandum (no less than three pages, but not more than four pages) 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. Assignment: Weekly Observation**

Students will be asked to complete a weekly observation at the conclusion of each class session. The observation for each class, and the manner it will take, will be assigned to the students prior to the commencement of the class session or during class. These assignments will be turned in on Canvas. *The weekly observations count toward the student's participation grade.*

**F. Writing and Oral Assignment: Court Observation (creative writing and oral presentation) \*\*RECOMMENDED FOR PORTFOLIO\*\***

Students will be asked to visit the Court house (in any jurisdiction – with a sample list provided during class) and observe the workings of the courthouse. Due to Covid-19, not all courts are currently open for most in-person proceedings. Some Court proceedings are proceeding via Zoom. Students will be expected to research the schedule of the court to maximize the opportunity to observe meaningful proceedings and lawyers/judges "in action," and contact the court or judge to request permission to observe a proceeding via Zoom if the Courts are not currently open for in-person proceedings. Finally, students are expected to dress appropriately (and bring their school ID) for Court and follow all rules and requirements for visitors to the courthouse – even if it is a "virtual" observation.

Students will prepare a typed, printed written assignment (no less than three pages, but not more than four pages, double-spaced) regarding their experience and observations. In addition, students will be expected to make a 3–5-minute presentation regarding their experience and field questions from the professor and other classmates. There is no requirement for PowerPoints or other demonstratives, but students can use them if they so choose.

Students should dress professionally and appropriately for oral presentations.

**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**

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 [honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/](http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/)

**B. Community Service**

Honors College students must also complete 20 volunteer service hours. These hours DO NOT count toward the 20 engagement points discussed above. See <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/community-service/>

**C. 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/students/honors-advising-center/portfolio-for-graduating-seniors/>

**D. 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/>

**E. 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.

#### **F. Procedures and Penalties**

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.

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 Academic Misconduct Procedures available at <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/academic-integrity/index.php> . Please refer to the following documents for additional information: FIU Student Handbook: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php>

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

This is a Global Learning Foundations course that counts towards your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement" or "This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement.

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

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

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

#### **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. Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The global pandemic has changed our daily lives in unprecedented ways. It's understandable for us to experience fear and concern when facing immense change and adversity. To look for ways to cultivate calm and a clear perspective amidst the chaos, check out the [Guide to Well-Being During Coronavirus](#) from the University of California Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center.

- Check out applications that include meditation, sleep, and movement exercises, such as [Headspace](#).
- If you are interested in seeking support from a mental health professional, please call FIU's [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) at 305-348-2277 (MMC) or 305-919-5305 (BBC).

Don't forget to take breaks while working on assignments and studying. Taking a break while going over the course material is important because it gives your brain time to rest and recover, which leads to boosts in everything from your productivity to your wellbeing.

Nobody signed up for this! Know that we are all in this together, so let's prioritize supporting each other as humans, finding simple solutions that make sense, and sharing resources and communicating clearly.

### **XV. Resources**

Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with [FIU's Panthers Care website](#).



Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Learn more about CAPS at [caps.fiu.edu](http://caps.fiu.edu). Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

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

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENT	READINGS: <sup>2</sup>
1	August 25	<p>Part 1: Course Introduction, Expectations, Preparation and Course Format.</p> <p>Part 2: Why Law School? And What IF Law School?</p> <p>Part 3: Introduction to the US Judiciary System and Basic Vocabulary</p>	<p>Ramy, Chapters 1 and 4</p> <p>Feinman, Chapter 1</p>
2	September 1	<p>Legal Writing and Research: Introduction to Legal Writing</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Lisa Davis Assistant Director, Library Services FIU Law Library</p> <p>NOTE: This class will take place at the FIU College of Law</p>	<p>Ramy, Chapters 3, 9 and 10</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>Source of American Law: An Introduction to Legal Research</i> (to be provided via email attachment)</p> <p><b>Writing Assignment:</b> Deadline for "Why I want to be a Lawyer" written assignment and Student Questionnaire</p>

<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.

<b>3</b>	September 8	<p>Legal Writing and Research: Introduction to Legal Writing</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> TBD</p>	<p>Ramy, Chapters 7 and 8</p> <p>Read and Brief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Registe v. Porter</i>, 557 So. 2d 214 (Fla. 2d DCA 1990)</li> <li>• <i>Noble v York</i>, 490 So. 2d 29 (Fla. 1986)</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florida Statute, § 767.04</li> </ul> <p>Osbeck, Mark. "What is "Good Legal Writing" and Why Does it Matter?" <i>Drexel L. Rev.</i> 4, no. 2 (2012): 417-66. (to be provided via Canvas)</p> <p><b>Writing Assignment:</b> Deadline for "Why I want to be a Lawyer" written assignment and Student Questionnaire</p>
<b>4</b>	September 15	<p>Advice from the Trenches: Going Home (Panel Discussion by In House lawyers)</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Guillermo Levy, Adjunct Professor, University of Miami School of Law (formerly Senior Corporate Counsel,</p>	<p>Ramy, Chapters 7 and 8</p>

		Caterpillar Industries)  Jorge Reynardus, Associate Director and Head of Travel Channels Americas, Legal Department, Amadeus	
5	September 22	Contracts	Feinman, Chapter 6  Read and Brief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Carlill v. Carbolic Smoke Ball Co.</i> (Queen's Bench 1893)</li> <li>• <i>Hadley v. Baxendale</i> (English Exchequer Court 1854)</li> </ul> <b>Writing Assignment:</b> Deadline for Legal Memorandum
6	September 29	Show me the Money: How do I get into law school and how do I pay for it? An analysis of the admissions process and financial aid availabilities.  <b>Guest Speakers:</b> Anthony Rionda, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, FIU (10-11am)  Sofia Scotti, 2021-2022 1L, Harvard University	Ramy, Chapter 5 and 6
7	October 6	Advice from the Trenches: Discussions of the 1L Experience.	Ramy, Chapters 3 and 6  <b>Writing Assignment:</b>

		<p><b>Guest Speakers:</b> Jennifer Vaquerano 3L, Florida State University</p> <p>Abdel Reyes-Torres 3L, University of Florida</p>	Deadline for of Legal Memorandum re-write
8	October 13	Civil Procedure	<p>Feinman, Chapter 4</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 USC §1331</li> <li>• 28 USC §1332</li> <li>• 28 USC §1441</li> <li>• 28 USC §1445</li> </ul> <p>Read and Brief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Louisville &amp; Mashville Railroad v. Mottley</i>, 211 U.S. 149 (1908)</li> <li>• <i>Daimler AG v. Bauman</i>, 134 S. Ct. 746 (2014)</li> <li>• <i>Walden v. Fiore</i>, 134 S. Ct. 1114 (2014)</li> </ul>
9	October 20	<p>Part 1: Review of Legal Writing Assignments and Review of Legal Writing Fundamentals</p> <p>Part 2 (1130-1230pm): Advice from the trenches: An analysis on business associations, estate planning and general financial decisions</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Ana Cela Harris, Ana C. Harris P.A. and Cela Advisors</p>	Ramy, Chapters 11 and 12

<b>10</b>	October 27	Court Observation Presentations	<b>Writing Assignment:</b> Deadline for Court Observations paper
<b>11</b>	November 3	Advice from the Trenches: Going at it Alone (Panel Discussion by Solo-Practitioners)  <b>Guest Speakers:</b> Carlos Gil, Esq. Carlos Gil, P.A.  Henry Hernandez, Esq. Henry Hernandez, P.A.  Krystina Jiron, Esq. Jiron Law	
<b>12</b>	November 10	The BlueBook? Friend of Foe?	Review the BlueBook
<b>13</b>	November 17	Constitutional Law  <b>Guest Speakers:</b> Justin Wales Shareholder, Carlton Fields, P.A.	<b>Writing Assignment:</b> Deadline for Class Outline (can be a group project)
<b>14</b>	November 24	Making Good Impressions: Etiquette and Other Important Life Skills	Ramy, Chapters 13 and 14
<b>15</b>	December 1	Review for Final Exam	
<b>16</b>	December 8	Final Exams Week (No meeting)	