

# Advanced Legal Analysis and Strategies

Law 639  
Spring 2019

**Professor Heidi Ramos**

## **Class:**

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM (Section 1)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00 PM to 4:15 PM (Section 4)

## **Office Hours\*:**

Monday and Wednesdays, 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

\* I have an open door policy, but suggest setting an appointment to guarantee no scheduling conflict.

## **Required Textbook:**

Wanda M. Temm, *CLEARING THE LAST HURDLE* (2d. ed. 2017)

## **Description of the Course:**

Advanced Legal Analysis and Strategies (ALAS) will introduce and reinforce study and test taking skills through an in-depth exploration of each part of the bar exam:

1. the multiple choice (MBE);
2. the essay (MEE); and
3. the multi state performance exam (MPT).

In addition, ALAS seeks to strengthen those ancillary skills--analyzing, studying and memorizing the substantive information--that positively influence student success on the bar exam.

**ALAS is not a replacement for a traditional commercial bar preparation course containing all the necessary substantive information.** Rather, it is a course meant to perfect the skills necessary for bar exam success.

## **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students will:

- understand the components of their bar exam;
- gain experience completing all portions of the bar exam in a timed setting;
- know how to write clear and well formatted answers for the MEE and MPT;
- learn how to accurately self-critique their work;

- grasp proactive studying for the bar exam;
- appreciate the time and effort necessary to pass the bar exam;
- formulate and draft a workable study schedule for the bar exam; and
- feel more comfortable and confident going into their commercial bar study.

### **General Grading Criteria:**

Students completing ALAS will receive either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The purpose of this course is to hone the skills necessary to pass the bar exam and not frustrate earnest students. As long as you put forth a good-faith effort to master the skills covered in the course and complete all of the assigned tasks, you will likely pass this class. The students that will gain the most from this class are those individuals that continue to be actively engaged in improving their test taking skills, even after the completion of this course.

The completion of every task includes submitting and succeeding on every assignment. As the professor, I will determine whether a submission meets the quality and mechanics required for the assignment. I will return any submission not meeting this minimum criterion. The student will then have the opportunity to re-write and re-submit these returned assignments.

Some assignments will be in-class timed simulation exercises. If you have to miss a class, where a simulation exercise is given, **you** will be responsible for making arrangements to complete the assignment either in advance of the class session (when absence is scheduled) or before the next class session (for an unplanned absence). There will also be at least three mandatory one-on-one meetings, which will take the place of some class sessions. You will be able to select the time and date to meet from a sign-up sheet. Attendance at each of these conferences is required to pass the course.

### **Professional Expectations:**

As you know, your professional legal career began when you started law school. As you look to completing law school and becoming practicing attorneys, I want you to continue learning and practicing the professional behavior expected of you as attorneys. To that end, please read and familiarize yourself with the following specifics:

### **Assignments, Deadlines and Extensions:**

Except when otherwise set out, all assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on the date specified. All assignments (including simulations) are due electronically, via TWEN. Handwritten work product can be submitted in person. A student may only request an extension before an assignment's deadline and only in the case of an unforeseeable emergency.

If you know you will be given accommodations on the bar exam and would like to tackle the simulation exercises in a similar manner, please advise me of this request in a private setting. I will try my best to provide bar type accommodations for your in-class simulation exercises.

## **Attendance, Preparation and Participation:**

*Attendance:* Class attendance is mandatory. As a professional courtesy, please notify me in advance if you must miss class. You may take up to three absences in this class. If you miss three classes, I will contact the Associate Dean regarding your absences; inform him of the potential result if you miss an additional class and the resultant effect on your grade. If you miss class four times, you will receive an UNSATISFACTORY for this course.

The School of Law's attendance policies, influenced by the Standards of Accreditation of the American Bar Association, require regular and punctual class attendance by all students. At the beginning of each class, I will pass around a class list for initialing. No one may initial for another student.

*Tardiness:* Please arrive on time to get credit for your attendance and to avoid disrupting the class in progress. If you enter class after I begin, do not sign the attendance sheet as you will be counted absent.

*Preparation:* I expect you to attend and be prepared to participate in every class. The format of each class will consist of an overview of the day, review of the previous week's assignment, and lecture/discussion/or videos related to the materials read for homework as well as new topics. There will also be discussion and practice of the different bar exam components and test taking skills. The readings and exercises are essential for learning how to best prepare for the bar exam.

*Workload Expectations:* The American Bar Association standards for accrediting law schools contain a formula for calculating the amount of work that constitutes one credit hour. According to ABA Standard 310(b)(1), "a "credit hour" is an amount of work that reasonably approximates: (1) not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time." This is a 2-credit hour class, meeting twice a week, but for 75 minutes each class period. Therefore, the amount of assigned reading and out of class preparation should be slightly less than a typical two credit hour class or approximately 3.5 hours total for each week.

*Participation:* Being prepared means completing any assigned readings and exercises, taking the time to understand them and being able to engage in class discussion regarding the materials. To facilitate class discussion, I will primarily seek volunteers, but reserve the right to call on students.

**In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders or gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may, in some way, isolate you from our community, or if you have need for specific accommodations, please speak with me early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active engaged member of our class and community. Please respect your fellow students' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind.**

*Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices:*

During class, you may not use laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices in any manner that is likely to interfere with your class participation or that of other students. This is a small section, specifically designed to provide you with the attention and focus necessary to learn bar skills. I reserve the right to ban all electronic devices (e.g. laptops and smartphones), if I believe anyone is misusing them during class.

## **Notice of Recording Policies:**

As noted above, I strongly encourage you to attend all class sessions. If you must miss a class, **you may contact me in advance** and ask that SIU record the session for your use, but you will still be counted as absent for the day. Some class sessions, consisting primarily of outside materials, will not be available to record. Arrangements may be made to watch those materials at a later date. You are prohibited from personally recording the class in any manner and doing so is a violation of the Honor Code.

## **Communication:**

### *TWEN:*

I will contact you frequently using TWEN – a Westlaw application. Please register for TWEN as soon as possible. You need to provide your email address as part of the registration process. You can reach the TWEN website by going to [www.lawschool.westlaw.com](http://www.lawschool.westlaw.com), signing in and selecting the course entitled **Advanced Legal Analysis and Strategies – Spring 2019 – Professor Ramos**. Please note that TWEN can direct your e-mail to junk or spam folders. Make sure you adjust your email settings so that you receive your messages.

### *Email:*

I may communicate with you through your “siu.edu” email accounts. Therefore, you should check your SIU mail regularly. If you use a different e-mail address, you should have your SIU mail forwarded to that address. If, during the course of the semester, you think you have not received group messages sent to your classmates (through TWEN or SIU mail), please consult with IT to solve the problem.

### *Communicating with the Professor via Email:*

While I prefer face-to-face communication, you may contact me with your questions via email ([hramos@siu.edu](mailto:hramos@siu.edu)). While response times will vary, I will make every effort to respond quickly to your messages. On occasion, you may ask a question that requires a face-to-face answer. If that is the case, I may request that you see me in person so we can fully discuss your question.

## **Independent Work/Ban on Collaboration:**

You may not obtain help from any other person (including any other student) unless your professor expressly authorizes such assistance and then only to the extent expressly authorized. This ban on collaboration includes obtaining written materials from another student or communicating with another student about an assignment. This ban on collaboration applies to both graded and ungraded exercises. Permission to get help from someone else on one exercise does not necessarily give you permission to do so on another exercise. If you fail to comply with this requirement for independent work, you risk violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. The school must report any Honor Code investigation to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. When in doubt about how to proceed, ask your professor.

Plagiarizing another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Honor Code and can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. The Honor Code defines plagiarism as:

*passing off another's ideas, words, or work as one's own, including written, oral,*

*multimedia, or other work, either word for word or in substance, unless the student author credits the original author and identifies the original author's work with quotation marks, footnotes, or other appropriate designation in such a way as to make clear the true author of the work.*

### **Emergency Procedures:**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT's website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Safety's website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will assist your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

If you find yourself or another student struggling to cope with school or life know that.....

### **SALUKI CARES.**

*The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-5714, or [siucares@siu.edu](mailto:siucares@siu.edu), <http://salukicare.siu.edu/index.html>. At the School of Law, Assistant Dean Judi Ray is also available to help students access university resources. Her email is [judiray@siu.edu](mailto:judiray@siu.edu), and her phone number is 618-453-3135.*

### ***FINAL NOTE FROM YOUR PROFESSOR***

The goal of this course is to fill in the gap left by the commercial bar course provider and to instill, in you, the skills and confidence necessary to undertake bar study and ultimately be successful on the bar exam. As such, this course will not undertake to provide a review of all the substantive material typically studied in preparation for a bar exam. While some of that substantive material may be used during the course, it will be used as a vehicle for reviewing, learning and instilling the skills necessary for bar exam success. I hope to introduce you to this process of bar study in a way that is engaging and stimulating for you. Still, it will take a great deal of work to understand all of the concepts associated with studying for the bar, but your diligence and commitment to learning will propel you through it. I look forward to exploring the process with you in the coming weeks!

*Professor Heidi Ramos*