

# MASTERING LEGAL EDUCATION § 2 – FALL 2019

INSTRUCTOR: REBECCA L. WARREN

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OFFICE LOCATION: Room 228 (office) or Room 224 (resource room)

OFFICE HOURS: Monday & Wednesday 12:15-1:30 pm (unless otherwise posted)  
Friday 9:00-10:00 am and 12:00-1:00 pm (unless otherwise posted)  
OR other times by appointment (please email)

REQUIRED TEXT: No text is required for the fall semester

MEETING TIMES: **TUESDAYS FROM 3:00-4:00 IN ROOM 204**

**Welcome!** As part of the Academic Success Program, this year long class focuses on developing skills that are critical to your success in law school. This fall we will work in particular on (1) case reading and briefing; (2) synthesizing and summarizing material; (3) creating a framework for course content (i.e. outlining); (4) enhancing your skills in legal analysis; (5) improving your time management and making study time more efficient; and (6) improving your skills in exam-writing. A tentative schedule for the first nine (9) weeks of class is attached at the end of this syllabus.

The Academic Success Program is comprised of three faculty members: Professor Cox, Director; Professor Ramos, Bar Preparation Coordinator; and myself, Rebecca Warren, Academic Success Specialist. While I will be primarily responsible for guiding the Tuesday section of the class and coordinating individual study plans for all Section 2 students, other members of the Program will be available to assist you and will likely participate in class activities from time to time.

**Successful completion of the Mastery class is a graduation requirement.** You must demonstrate mastery of the foundational skills as listed below to satisfy this requirement. We will work with you as needed throughout the year on each skill until you develop mastery.

## **Foundational Skills you must master:**

1) Being able to brief a case or prepare assigned materials *prior* to the case or materials being discussed in class. This includes, at a minimum, identifying the insight(s) into the rule(s) that are the main take-aways from the case, and being able to explain how facts from the case reinforce or aid in understanding this rule/ these rules. You may need to correct and/or re-write several briefs as part of the skill-building process. You will need to demonstrate competency by submitting at least two briefs that do not require corrections before you will be considered to have developed competence in briefing.

2) Outlining/ synthesizing material from courses throughout the semester. This includes regularly processing material so as to get it into long term memory while accurately self-assessing, during outline building, how well you currently know information so that you can fix errors and keep the rules you do know fresh in your mind. This requires you to turn in portions of in-process outlines (or mind-maps, charts, flowcharts, etc.). We (with the help of your doctrinal professors) will evaluate the accuracy of your rule statements and make suggestions for improvement to organization and content. You may again need to revise and resubmit as you develop this skill. You will need to demonstrate competency on outlines for significant portions of at least two courses to be considered to have developed competence in outlining.

3) Time management. This includes developing, implementing, monitoring, and modifying your individual plan for course study so that you stay on track in all courses throughout the semester. This requires you to submit, very early in each semester, a plan for your individual study that includes short-term and long-term goals. This skill requires that you accurately gauge and predict what you need to do and when you need to do it, in order to successfully meet deadlines, especially when there are multiple projects with deadlines that overlap. You will periodically report whether you are on track with your study plan and how you are tweaking your plan so as to be more on track. If we determine, by way of attendance data or by late submissions of assignments, that a student has issues with time management, we will require additional individual meetings to discuss a plan for improvement.

4) Rule application and legal analysis. You cannot score well on law school exams or bar questions without being able to apply rules to facts and analyze legal problems. Competency of this skill requires you to demonstrate that you can write essay answers and answer multiple choice questions at the equivalent of a B or B+ grade. We will have several exercises as part of class that will help build this skill. Along the way, you may be required to rewrite essays after receiving feedback. We will also practice analysis for multiple choice questions. You will need to submit at least two written essays of sufficient quality before you will be considered to have developed competency.

**Workload Expectations:** This class is roughly the equivalent of a one credit-hour course, and you will complete assignments for this class outside of class time. However, each assignment is tailored to complement the content from your doctrinal courses. For example, we may use cases from your Property class to practice briefing, Torts content to practice outlining, or your Contracts class for a practice essay. Everything you do for the Mastery class is designed to help you master the skills necessary for law school success and eventually pass the bar exam. With that said, each student will develop mastery in his or her own time. Some may need to do more work than others to achieve mastery.

**Regular attendance is part of successful completion of the Mastery class.** You need to attend all class meetings and conferences in order to be in a position to achieve mastery. Under SIU attendance rules (see Article III, 5 f&g), if you miss more than two sessions, you will presumptively have failed this course and be required to repeat the program prior to graduation.

**The use of electronic devices is prohibited in class.** I will announce in advance if you will need a laptop or smartphone for in-class activities. Students who use electronic devices as part of a disability accommodation should contact me as soon as possible if they are unable to participate in class without a device.

**I expect you to arrive on time to class.** Please notify me in advance if you know you will need to be late. Tardiness without advance notice and approval is unprofessional. If you do need to enter the room after class begins, please do so quietly so as not to disturb the activities of the class. You may be counted as absent when entering the room late.

This class is not recorded on a regular basis. If you know you will need to miss a class for a very good reason, you may email me to ask to have the class recorded. You are prohibited from recording the class yourself in any manner: doing so is a violation of the Honor Code.

**Course TWEN page:** Be sure to add our course TWEN page entitled "Mastering Legal Education – Section 2," and pay attention to announcements in class regarding materials posted and assignments required to be submitted there.

**Individual Conferences:** Individual meetings are required for successful completion of this class. This semester, our first round of mandatory meetings will be scheduled for Week 3. We will likely have a second round after you have reviewed your midterm exams. Additional meetings may be called on a case-by-case basis, and if called, your attendance is mandatory. You are ALWAYS welcomed to schedule additional conferences, which is desirable.

It is my firm belief that each of you is fully capable of succeeding in law school. It is my hope that you will trust me to facilitate that success through our skill-building work in this class.

## **Additional course policies and procedures:**

**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.

**Disability Support:** Disability Support Services (DSS) provides the required academic and programmatic support services to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. DSS provides centralized coordination and referral services. To utilize DSS services, students must come to the DSS to open cases. The process involves interviews, reviews of student-supplied documentation, and completion of Disability Accommodation Agreements. See: <http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/>. Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreement to the School of Law Registrar's Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations.

**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.

**Tentative Schedule:**

<b>WEEK/DAY</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT DUE (prior to class)</b>
Week 1 – Aug. 20	Reading & Briefing Cases Note-taking Time Management	Upload Case Brief for ___ case (tbd)
Week 2 – Aug. 27	Rule Synthesis & Outlining Study Strategies for Long-term Memory	Rule Synthesis Exercise (tbd) Upload reflection exercise at least one day prior to individual conference
Week 3 – Sept. 3	Individual Conferences	Upload outline for Property (or course tbd?) by Thursday, Sept. 5
Week 4 – Sept. 10	Rule Mastery/Retention Issue Spotting & Rule Statements	Upload revised weekly plan Upload Issue & Rule Statement for hypo posted on TWEN
Week 5 – Sept. 17	IRAC-style Analysis Application of Rule to Facts Self-assessing and creating desirable difficulties as part of study strategies	Upload Application section for hypo provided in class on 9/10
Week 6 – Sept. 24	Answering Multiple Choice Questions Answering Essay Questions	Multiple Choice Question Exercise Due
Week 7 – Oct 1	Preparing for Exams	Essay answer due
Week 8 – Oct. 8	Mid-Term Exam Week	
Week 9 – Oct 15	Exam Review Revising study plans for second half of semester	Reflection exercise due