

**Law Practice Management**  
**Law 587: Sections 951 & 953**  
**Fall 2025**  
**Tuesday**  
**4:30 – 7:00**  
**Online via Zoom**

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**Required Textbooks:**

*The Small Firm Roadmap – Revisited*, 2023, Stephanie Everett and Aaron Street,  
Lawyerist Publishing, ISBN: 979-8-218-14097-7

**Course Description:** This course is designed to give you a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects of managing a successful law practice. It will equip you with the knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges of running a legal business while keeping ethical standards and providing quality legal services.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, you will:

1. Understand the Business of Law:
  - Identify and understand the fundamental principles of law practice management as a business entity.
  - Recognize the financial and operational aspects unique to legal practice.
2. Client Management:
  - Develop skills in client communication, including effective client intake, engagement, and relationship management.
  - Understand strategies for addressing client expectations and resolving conflicts.
3. Legal Technology Integration:
  - Evaluate and adopt proper legal technologies to enhance law practice efficiency.
  - Demonstrate proficiency in using legal software for case management, billing, and document automation.
4. Time and Task Management:
  - Implement effective time and task management techniques to maximize productivity.
  - Prioritize and delegate tasks efficiently within a legal practice setting.
5. Ethics and Professional Responsibility:
  - Identify ethical considerations related to law practice management.
  - Summarize and consider non-dominant perspectives in the practice of law with respect and empathy.
6. Financial Management:
  - Develop financial literacy related to law firm accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting.
  - Create and manage a law firm budget, including billing and collection strategies.
  - Develop and demonstrate an understanding of trust account management.

7. Marketing and Business Development:

- Explore strategies for law firm marketing and client acquisition.
- Develop a basic understanding of branding, online presence, and networking for legal professionals.

8. Risk Management:

- Identify potential risks and liabilities in law practice and develop risk management strategies.
- Understand insurance options and policies relevant to legal practice.

**Grading:** The evaluated coursework will consist of in-class assignments, outside-of-class written assignments, other exercises, and participation points. Each student will submit a Business Plan at the end of the semester, which will be graded. There will be no final examination.

**Grading Scale:** Except when specifically provided otherwise in these Rules, grades at the School of Law shall be awarded on the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage of Points
A+/A	4.000
A-	3.667
B+	3.333
B	3.000
B-	2.667
C+	2.333
C-	1.667
D+	1.333
D	1.000
F	0.000

**Mean Grades and Distribution:** When awarded on the scale outlined in the above section, grades at the Law School shall conform to the means outlined in this section. All upper-level courses will have a mandatory mean between 2.8 and 3.2. The Law School has a predetermined upper-level grade distribution found in the Rules of the Southern Illinois University School of Law, Article III, 1(c). **In other words, as with all your law school classes, this class is graded on a curve.**

**Grades:** Your final grade will be determined by your performance in the following percentages:

40% - Business Plan (**Due by Friday, December 12 at 4:30 p.m.**)

30% - Portfolio

5% - Time Logs

10% - Class Participation, Discussions, and Professionalism

15% - Final Presentation

**Portfolio:** One-third of your grade will come from various writing assignments. You will turn in a weekly podcast reflection, conduct a written comparison of two law practice management platforms, and a law firm marketing comparison. There will also be a trust accounting exercise. More information will be given in class and on D2L.

**Time Logs:** It is essential to become comfortable keeping time logs if you want to run a solo or small-firm law practice. Even if you charge fixed fees (i.e., not hourly billing), learning to keep track of your time is essential for reasons I will explain in class. Many lawyers fail to keep track of their time, often trying to reconstruct it just before billing the client. More information will be given in class and D2L.

**Class Participation, Discussions, and Professionalism:** I expect you to take part fully in class and small-group discussions. 10% of your grade comes from your class participation. For some past students, their class participation was a determining factor in their grade. ***You must have your camera on during class.*** If you need to have your camera off for a particular class, please let me know ahead of time.

Professionalism means that you must act like a professional. This means you must (a) be respectful of everyone in the class, (b) send me emails that have proper punctuation, capitalization, and syntax, and that don't look like texts or Facebook posts.

Professionalism also means you will not text, email, surf the Internet, shop online, look at Facebook/LinkedIn/Instagram/TikTok, cook, or walk your dog. Since this is a virtual class, checking it is more difficult than if we were in person. Note: If you have an emergency that requires you to check texts, emails, or phone calls during any class session, please notify me before that class.

**Final Marketing Presentation:** In this exercise (a simulation), each of you will be an experienced lawyer who coaches new lawyers in setting up, managing, and growing their practices. You, the experienced lawyer, have been asked to deliver a presentation to a group of new lawyers at a bar association meeting. You will discuss ways new lawyers can effectively market their solo and small-firm law practices. Time limit: 5-7 minutes. More detailed information will be provided.

**Independent Work & Ban on Collaboration:** You are not allowed to obtain help from any other person (including any other student) or generative artificial intelligence (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT) on any writing assignment in this course. This ban on collaboration includes obtaining written materials from any other person or generative artificial intelligence and communicating with others about an assignment. If you violate the prohibition on collaboration policy, you will receive a failing grade on that assignment. You also may be found violating the Honor Code, which can lead to severe penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. If you are in doubt about how to proceed, ask me.

**Attendance:** Classes meet on Tuesdays from 4:30 to 7:00 via Zoom. I will take attendance in class and follow the School of Law's attendance policy.

Preparation for class means reading the assigned readings & reviewing all information required for that week. Attendance in an online course means logging into D2L regularly and taking part in all activities that are posted in the course.

As a non-required course, you may not accumulate more than nine credit hours of absences. Class hours are calculated on a fifty-minute basis. Since this course meets once a week for three class hours, you are entitled to three (3) full-class absences. **Unless prior arrangements are approved, more than three (3) absences will result in your withdrawal from the class or a grade reduction per School of Law Rules III.5(f)-(g).**

**Policy for Missed or Late Work:** Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course syllabus and course schedule (and posted in D2L). Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on those days. As attorneys, if a rule of civil procedure or a judge required you to submit a pleading by a particular deadline, missing that deadline could mean losing your client's case or, at a minimum, losing an opportunity to provide additional evidence or argument. You should look at meeting deadlines during law school as practice for meeting deadlines in your legal career. However, I recognize that sometimes "life happens." In these instances, you may use your allotted two flex days. These days allow you to submit an assignment up to two days late without penalty. You can use these days for any assignment (except the final business plan assignment) and for any reason. You do not need to explain; email me and let me know how many of your flex days you would like to use.

Once you've exhausted your flex days, then point deductions will occur for any assignment submitted after the deadline. An assignment submitted within 24 hours of the due date will only be eligible for 80% of the maximum points allotted. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours after the due date will not be accepted. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g. you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

**Religious Holidays:** Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance.

**D2L:** There is a D2L page for the course. You are automatically granted access to the D2L page because of your registration in this course. Changes in class meetings, assignments, discussions, and other essential material will be presented in D2L announcements. It is your responsibility to check this group regularly. All assignments must be submitted through D2L. A handy way to keep on top of your assignments and communication in D2L is to download the **Brightspace Pulse App** for iPhone and Android.

When access to D2L is not available for an extended period (greater than one entire evening – 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.), you can reasonably expect that the due date of assignments will be changed to the next day (assignment still due by midnight).

**Zoom:** I use Zoom for this course. The links to join the weekly class sessions are found in the course D2L calendar.

**Office Hours:** Since this is a virtual class, I will not have office hours at the law school. I can meet by phone, virtually, or in person at my office in Carterville. You can schedule a meeting using my scheduling link: <https://calendly.com/lahq/student-meeting>

**Electronic Communications:** This course uses a "three before me" policy regarding student-to-faculty communications. When questions arise during this class, please remember to check these three sources for an answer before asking me to reply to your individual questions:

1. Course syllabus
2. Announcements in D2L
3. The “Water Cooler” discussion board

This policy will help you potentially identify answers before I can get back to you, and it also helps your instructor avoid answering similar questions or concerns multiple times. If you cannot find an answer to your question, first post your question to the “Water Cooler” discussion board. Here, your question can be answered to the benefit of all students by either your fellow students who know the answer to your question or the instructor. You are encouraged to answer questions from other students in the discussion forum when you know the answer to a question to help provide prompt assistance.

If you have questions of a personal nature, such as relating to a personal emergency, questioning a grade on an assignment, or something else that needs to be communicated privately, you are welcome to contact me via email or phone. I would prefer it if you could email me first. I will usually respond to email and phone messages from 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays. Please allow 24 hours for me to respond.

If you have a question about the technology being used in the course, please get in touch with the SalukiTech assistance.

**Class Schedule and Reading:** *A schedule of reading assignments will be emailed and posted on D2L.* It may be adjusted during the course. If so, an updated schedule will be posted, and I will tell you about it in class. You are expected to read the assigned reading materials **before** each class. To receive full credit, written assignments must be turned in on time, typed, grammatically correct, and **follow the instructions**. Unless stated otherwise, “on time” means that assignments must be turned in before class or other deadline to receive credit, regardless of whether you attend that class.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF**

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** Supplemental syllabus information from the University is contained in a separate document, posted under the Syllabus content folder on D2L, and incorporated herein by reference.

**WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS:** NOTE that the amount of time you must spend preparing for each class is substantial. 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: 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 3-credit-hour class that meets once a week. Thus, the amount of assigned reading and out-of-class preparation should take you about 6 hours for each class session or 6 hours for the week. All told, applying the ABA standard to the number of credits offered for this class, you should plan to spend a total of 9 hours per week (three in class and six preparing for class) on course-related work.

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarizing another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Honor Code and can lead to severe 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:** We ask that you become familiar with **Emergency Preparedness @ SIU**. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness @ SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts, visit <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.

**DISABILITY POLICY.** SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Disability Support Services coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval, please contact DSS immediately at 618-453-5738 or [disabilityservices.siu.edu](http://disabilityservices.siu.edu). You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to ensure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty. Please send approved accommodations to your faculty through the DSS online portal.

**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) 453-2461, or [siucares@siu.edu](mailto:siucares@siu.edu), <https://salukicare.siu.edu/>. Associate Dean Doug Lind ([dlind@siu.edu](mailto:dlind@siu.edu), 618-453-8713) and Assistant Dean Judi Ray ([judiray@siu.edu](mailto:judiray@siu.edu), 618-453-8135) are available at the School of Law to help students access university resources.

**SAFETY AWARENESS FACTS AND EDUCATION** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://safe.siu.edu>

Updated: \*August 9, 2025\*