

**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL**

**Mastering Legal Education I
Section 001/002
Fall 2024**

Professor Anna M. Vick

Contact:

Anna.vick@siu.edu
Lesar Law Building Room 226
618-751-4644

Office hours:

Monday and Wednesday (by appointment)
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Walk-in)
Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (Walk-in) and 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (by appointment)

The above are my dedicated office hours, feel free to stop in anytime my door is open.

Mastering Legal Education is a required first-year course in which you will learn how to “learn like a lawyer”. You will develop and refine your legal reasoning and communication capacities; solve authentic legal problems, communicate solutions to problems in writing; and explore strategies to improve your learning in all your law school courses and beyond.

Throughout, you will use learning methods and resources typical of law practice, improve your work product with feedback from many sources, learn our profession’s standards, and receive extensive mentoring, all while simulating your first client representation experiences!

CLASS INFORMATION AND POLICIES

1. Course Objectives. You will learn to:

- Think, act and communicate like a lawyer.
- Identify legal issues in novice and more advanced legal problems and devise effective strategies for solving those problems.
- Comprehend and analyze case, statutory, and other appropriate primary and secondary legal authorities.
- Synthesize law from case, statutory, and other appropriate primary and secondary authority.
- Apply critical thinking skills to legal authorities and their application to facts to solve legal problems.
- Communicate legal reasoning and solutions to legal problems effectively in objective writing.
- Use legal reasoning effectively to solve a client’s problem.

- Nurture a developing sense of professional identity in the context of simulated client representation.
- Appreciate how the cultural backgrounds or attributes of fellow attorneys, clients, or witnesses may be valuable or integral to an attorney's representation.
- Employ productive academic and professional behaviors to succeed in law school and law practice.
- Take initial steps to plan your entry to the legal profession.

2. Course Readings. There is no textbook for this course; however, there are weekly readings and assignments posted on D2L. Most readings are short and cover a wide range of topics related to the academic, professional, and personal development of law students and lawyers. Class activities and discussions will be based upon these readings and the quality of class time is highly dependent upon your engagement with the readings.

3. Class Logistics. This is a large class and for that reason I will be incorporating some devices to help us get to know one another better and manage the trappings of a large group in a large room.

First, you will form groups of 4-5 at the beginning of the semester. These groups will be of your own choosing. You do not have to stick with classmates from your own sections. You must form your group and come up with a name for your group (instruction for this will be provided on D2L) prior to the second class of the semester. I ask that you sit with your group each week so that you can collaborate with one another during class.

Second, each Friday will have a dress theme (favorite color, sports team, band, etc.). You are not required to participate, but it will be an easy way for us to learn something about one another.

Third, at the beginning of each class we will have a short discussion about what subjects/topics are tripping you up during the week. You will have an opportunity to identify fellow classmates that may want to meet up for extra study sessions on these subjects/topics.

Finally, cell phones are not allowed during class. Please have them silenced and put away in your bag. If for some reason, you feel you need access to your phone during a class period, please speak with me beforehand.

4. Grades. You will receive an S/U grade in Mastering Legal Education. "Satisfactory" performance evinces a **good, conscientious effort** to produce a **high-quality work product** and **improve at learning, reasoning, and behaving like a good lawyer**. To receive a grade of "satisfactory" in Mastering Legal Education you must earn at least 65% of the possible 100 points available in this course. Points are earned through performance on assignments and professionalism displayed in the course. You must complete the following activities in a satisfactory manner:

Attend class. You must attend class consistent with the School of Law Rules, specifically Rules III.5(f)-(g) and participate in class once there. Under Rules III.5(f)-(g), you may miss only one (1) Mastering Legal Education class. Absent agreement of the instructor, missing all or part of a class counts as missing all of the class minutes for that class. You must be

prepared to engage during the class discussion and therefore, must have completed all reading assignments. If you have not completed the reading assignments you should not consider yourself “present” for class. If you would like to sit in on a class that you know you are not prepared for and will not claim attendance for, you may send an absence slip via email prior to the start of class. This will allow you to sit in class without being called upon, but you will not receive credit for attending. Attendance will be taken in class via sign-in sheet. Your signature indicates that you have prepared for class and you are ready to fully engage in the class discussion. If it becomes apparent to the instructor that you are unprepared for class, you will be marked absent for the day.

Attend and participate in Study Group meetings with Taylor Mattis Fellows. You **must attend all “Study Group” and individual meetings with your assigned Taylor Mattis Fellow during the term.** In Mastering Legal Education, you will be a member of a “Study Group” and one of the Taylor Mattis Fellows will lead your group. Your group and your Fellow will meet approximately four times during the term to discuss study strategies, examination preparation, legal reasoning methods, peer-to-peer advising issues, and other matters, and you must meet individually from time to time with your Fellow as well. You are always welcome to contact your Fellow for advice or to meet. You will receive the meeting schedule for required Study Groups and individual meetings at the beginning of the term. Consider that schedule incorporated by reference into this Syllabus.

Complete and timely submit required assignments. You must complete satisfactorily and timely submit assignments.

Required Individual Meetings. You are **required to meet individually with the professor two times during the semester.** The first meeting will occur prior to midterm exams and the second meeting will occur after midterm exams.

Professionalism Points. There are a total of ten (10) professionalism points available to you throughout the semester. These points will be earned by successfully completing the pre-class quiz before class each Friday. The quizzes are based upon the readings assigned for the week.

5. Assignment deadlines. See the appropriate assignment sheet and the Assignments Chart for assignment due dates. Each of the assignment sheets also lists the items you must post in the D2L assignment dropbox by the deadline to receive full credit.

Late submission. Do not turn in assignments late. You will lose points or credit for assignments turned in after the due date and time as indicated in the chart below. The only exceptions to this policy require that you file a Motion for Extension of Time as explained below.

See the chart below for precise rules on point deductions for late work.

POINTS AVAILABLE FOR ASSIGNMENT	POINTS DEDUCTED IF UP TO 24 HOURS LATE	POINTS DEDUCTED IF UP TO 48 HOURS LATE
Up to and including 5 points	50 percent	No credit after 24 hours
More than 5 points	25 percent	50 percent No credit after 48 hours

Motions for Extension of Time. In rare circumstances, I might extend your time to turn in a response to an in-class activity or out-of-class assignment or to attend a class or meeting with or without a penalty but only if you file a Motion for Extension of Time with grounds showing good cause for the exception with a proposed Order, both clearly stating relief requested.

I am most likely to grant your motion if you anticipate a life event that will interfere with your complying with a due date or activity and file the Motion for Extension of Time prior to the assignment due date or in-class activity. Otherwise, assume I will only rarely grant Motions for Extension of Time and probably never if the proposed due date is on or after the next assignment due date.

Process for moving for an extension of time. Forms for making a Motion for Extension of Time and the additional required proposed Order are available on D2L in the Syllabus and Supporting Materials Module. To move for an extension of time, you must file both documents by emailing them to me. **You must state grounds that show good cause to extend time and/or for any other relief you request.** The forms apply primarily to late submission of written work, but you may modify them to make related requests. You have the responsibility of bringing your motion to my attention and including in the proposed order the provisions you wish me to sign. I am not responsible for responding to motions I overlooked, did not receive, or inadvertently lost.

6. Course Management System. Our course materials, class reading and other assignments, sign-up sheets, and assignment submission drop-boxes will appear on our Desire2Learn course management site (D2L). **I will not accept submissions via email except in unusual situations.**

7. Taylor Mattis Fellows and Mastering Legal Education. Taylor Mattis Fellows are a student-run organization of carefully selected upper-class students who serve as Study Group leaders and mentors for first-year students. Taylor Mattis Fellows have demonstrated high capacity for maximizing their learning in law school with proven methods and mindsets they want to share and model to others.

The Fellows will assign each of you to a Study Group with a particular Taylor Mattis Fellow as your leader shortly after the beginning of the term and provide you with necessary schedule and contact information. That Fellow will lead several Study Group meetings each term, meet with you

individually, coach you through examination preparation strategies, and serve as your peer mentor for questions and concerns about law school and being a law student.

8. American Bar Association (ABA) Standard 310. Under the ABA Standards for accrediting law schools, 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.”

For a half-semester, 0.5 course such as Mastering Legal Education I, the Standard means a student must attend at least **fifty (50) minutes** of class each week. The ABA also requires that students in a 0.5-credit course spend **at least one hour** on out-of-class work. Note that **these are minimum requirements**. At times you will spend more than this bare minimum doing assignments for Mastering Legal Education given the nature and importance of the course.

9. Law School Honor Code and University Code of Conduct. Both the Honor Code and the Code of Conduct apply and are in effect in this class. **Read both documents carefully and make sure you comply with both at all times. Submitting plagiarized work or any other form of work not your own, regardless of a student’s purpose or intent, is potentially subject to serious sanctions as are other academic, honor code, and conduct code offenses.** If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code, Code of Conduct or either’s application, consult me. The following guidance may also be helpful:

- What you may do: You may discuss writing and charting assignments with other students, which includes discussing issues, research, and analysis. You may consult teaching assistants, librarians, and me for questions about assignments. You may sometimes consult teaching assistants and Taylor Mattis Fellows about other matters, and you may always ask me any questions you may have.
- What you may not do: You may not turn in work that is not your own.

Assignment Chart for Mastering Legal Education I		
Assignment	Due	Points
Professionalism Quiz #1	August 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	2
Essay: “Why Did I Chose to Go to Law School?”	August 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10
Group Name and Members	August 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	5
Professionalism Quiz #2	August 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	2
Semester Calendar	August 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	5
Wellness Plan	August 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	5
Briefs for <i>Virgil v. Landy</i> and <i>Bashford v. Schwartz</i>	August 30, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10
Professionalism Quiz #3	September 6, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	2
Outline of Law for Case File	September 6, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10

Professionalism Quiz #4	September 13, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	2
Case Planning Memo (Group Assignment)	September 13, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10
Professionalism Quiz #5	September 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	2
Practice Quiz	September 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10
Essay or Multiple-Choice Practice Questions from your Group	September 20, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	10
Exam Game Plan	September 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.	5
Cover Letter and Resume Assignment for Career Services	November 1, 2024	5
Professional Identity Topic Submission	Friday, November 22, 2024	5
<p>Remember that in addition to the assignments on this chart, all Taylor Mattis Fellow Meetings and Individual Meetings #1 and #2 (and Reflection Questionnaire) are required for this course. Failure to attend these meetings will result in unsatisfactory completion of the course.</p>		

Orientation Thursday, August 15, 2024	Class Preparation, Classroom Performance & Improvement	
Class One <i>“Becoming an Attorney: Mind, Body, and Soul”</i>	Assigned readings on D2L: Syllabus Academic Success Article	Due Submit answer to Essay Question #: “Why did I go to law school?” via D2L by

<p>Friday, August 23, 2024</p>	<p>Time Management Article Professional Identity Article Wellness Article</p> <p>Client Case File: <i>Graham Realty v. Brenda Chapin</i></p>	<p>10:00 a.m., Friday, August 23, 2024</p> <p>Professionalism Quiz #1</p> <p><u>In-class</u> We will discuss your path to becoming an attorney in terms of academics, professional identity, and personal well-being.</p>
<p>Class Two</p> <p>“Reading and Analyzing Cases and Statutes”</p> <p>Friday, August 30, 2024</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p> <p>Case Reading Checklist Sample Chart Sample Outline Sample Class-notes Article on Attorney Diligence</p> <p>Franklin Real Property Law Franklin District Court Act <i>Virgil v. Landy</i> (1997) <i>Bashford v. Schwartz</i> (2001)</p>	<p><u>Due</u> Submit current schedule for the semester via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, August 30, 2024.</p> <p>Submit current wellness plan for the semester via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, August 30, 2024.</p> <p>Submit briefs for <i>Virgil v. Landy</i> and <i>Bashford v. Schwartz</i> via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, August 30, 2024.</p> <p>Professionalism Quiz #2</p> <p><u>In-class</u> We will discuss any differences between reading and analyzing cases as a law student versus an attorney and the best practices for both.</p>
<p>Class Three</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p>	<p><u>Due</u> Submit chart/outline of law for <i>Graham Realty Inc., v.</i></p>

<p>“Putting It All Together: Synthesizing the Law”</p> <p>Friday, September 6, 2024</p>	<p>Outlining Methods and Examples</p>	<p><i>Brenda Chapin</i> via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, September 6, 2024.</p> <p>Professionalism Quiz #3</p> <p><u>In-class</u> We will discuss how to synthesize several pieces of law into one workable guide that answers multiple legal questions.</p>
<p>Class Four</p> <p>“Answering the Question for a Client”</p> <p>Friday, September 13, 2024</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p> <p>Article on Client Communication and Cross Cultural Competency</p> <p>Client Case File: <i>Graham Realty v. Brenda Chapin</i></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> Submit the portion of the Case Planning Memorandum assigned to your group via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, September 13, 2024.</p> <p>Professionalism Quiz #4</p> <p><u>In-class:</u> We will discuss how to use our charts/outlines to answer a legal question for our firm. We will also discuss the factors outside of the law which may impact our client and continue our discussion on cross-cultural competency.</p>
<p>Class Five</p> <p>“Answering Questions in Law School”</p> <p>Friday, September 20, 2024</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p> <p>Test Anxiety Article Essay Writing Strategies Multiple Choice Strategies</p>	<p><u>Due</u> Submit practice quiz via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, September 20, 2024.</p> <p>Submit essay or multiple choice question set from your group via D2L by 10:00</p>

		<p>a.m., Friday, September 20, 2024.</p> <p>Professionalism Quiz #5</p> <p><u>In-class</u> We will discuss how to best manage the anxiety that law school exams create. We will also discuss the different challenges presented by essay questions and multiple choice questions and strategies for improvement on both.</p>
<p>Class Six</p> <p>“Practice Makes Competence”</p> <p>Friday, September 27, 2024</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p> <p>Review your outlines, class-notes and other useful documents to prepare for a simulated essay and multiple choice exam.</p>	<p><u>Due</u> Submit your “exam game plan” via D2L by 10:00 a.m., Friday, September 27, 2024.</p> <p><u>In-class</u> We will complete a mock exam during this class period.</p>
<p>Class Seven</p> <p>“Midterm-palooza”</p> <p>Friday, October 4, 2024</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p> <p>None.</p>	<p><u>Due</u> None.</p> <p><u>In-class</u> This class will serve as the weekend kick-off to midterms. Students will choose a group to join based upon the subject of their choice. The class period will be spent discussing the subject with your peers.</p>
<p>Post Midterm Reflection Meetings</p>	<p>Assigned readings on D2L:</p>	<p><u>Due</u></p>

October 14, 2024 through October 25, 2024	Midterm Reflection Questionnaire	Sign up for a meeting time with Professor Vick. Submit the Midterm Reflection Questionnaire via D2L prior to your scheduled meeting.
November TBA (Optional) Final Exam Workshopping		