

ACADEMIC HONORS CAPSTONE COURSE SYLLABUS

Law 655

Professors Upchurch and Buys

Course Time and Location: Fridays, 11 am to noon (online)

We will not meet every week for this class. The times we will meet are noted on the “Weekly Schedule” below. Class meetings will be held virtually using Zoom during spring semester 2021. This schedule is subject to change during the semester, so please refer to the class TWEN page for updates.

Professors’ Information:

Professor Angela Upchurch

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Professor Cindy Buys

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Office Hours/ Availability:

By Appointment

Course Overview:

In the course, you will complete a substantial project related to an area of legal study or practice of your choosing. The course will permit you to explore a narrow area of the law in greater depth than you might otherwise in a traditional course. To successfully complete the project, you will create a defined work product by which completion of the project can be assessed.

Examples of qualifying projects could include a) independent-study projects, substantial pro bono legal projects, or significant practical legal skills training projects that produce a significant legal academic writing, b) a community resource program or guide related to the law, or c) a substantially equivalent end product. Your project must be approved by the course instructors in order for you to receive credit for the course. You will work on your project with an individual mentor, who may be a member of the faculty or a lawyer in practice. We will help you with finding and selecting a mentor.

Learning Objectives:

The objectives of this course are that you learn, by doing, and with the guidance of a mentor and the course instructors, to:

- Design and complete a project that produces a tangible work product that makes a substantial contribution to the law;
- Develop deep expertise in a narrow legal field of your own choosing;
- Develop and improve your abilities to pursue self-directed legal work, including research and writing, and set and meet your own deadlines;
- Build a relationship with a mentor on the faculty, or in law practice, who is an expert in your

- area of interest;
- Prepare and deliver an oral presentation describing your project and its results

Attendance:

In general, we will not meet regularly as a class, since this class is about you pursuing your own independent capstone project. We will meet a few times during the semester, as described below. You may not miss one of those meetings without advance approval. Unexcused absences will be dealt with in accordance with the law school rules and may include withdrawal from the course. You are expected to be on time for all class sessions. Being on time demonstrates respect for the professor and your classmates and minimizes disruptions to the class. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class.

Further, you cannot receive credit for the class unless you deliver both a tangible work product and an oral presentation describing your project. We will have a set time or times for students to deliver their presentations towards the end of the semester; you must deliver your presentation then unless due to extraordinary circumstances the course instructors allow you to re-schedule for a different time.

Assignments:

The primary assignments for the course are two: 1) submit your project; and 2) publicly present your project. Along the way, there are several milestones you must meet relating to the project such as finding a mentor, submitting a proposal, and submitting a draft of your project. Those assignments are described on the Weekly Schedule below.

Grades:

This class is graded S/U; satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Note that this is not the same as pass/fail, and that since this course is offered as part of the Honors Program the expectations for a satisfactory project are substantial. To be satisfactory, the end work product must meet your self-defined goals, demonstrate professional competency in the area chosen, reflect substantial legal research, and be appropriate for the chosen audience. In order to receive credit, you must both complete your project and present it in public. One hour of law school credit requires you to record at least 42 hours working on the project or engaging in class-related activities, but simply spending the minimum required time does not guarantee credit. You will receive feedback at multiple stages during the semester from your project mentor, as well as the course instructors, as to whether you are making satisfactory progress on your project, and you will have advance notice if you are not on track to receive credit. The course instructors are responsible for making the final determination as to whether you receive credit for the course.

Workload Expectations and Time Keeping Requirement:

The American Bar Association standards for accrediting law schools define “a “credit hour” as 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 one-credit course, which means that over the course of the semester you should spend the equivalent of 3 hours per week on your project. In order to ensure that you meet this requirement, you should record the time that you spend

on the project to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements (42 hours for the semester).

Plagiarism and Collaboration:

You may discuss your project with your mentor and others including other faculty or students at SIU. Any written or oral work product that you produce as part of your project must be your own. Borrowing the words of others without proper attribution will be grounds for receiving an “unsatisfactory” grade for the course.

TWEN Page:

There is a TWEN page for this course, and you should sign up for it. We will use the page for email communication, as well as to post samples and examples of project materials and any required readings. There is no required book that must be purchased for this course; however, the instructors may post readings on the TWEN page from time to time.

Mode of Delivery:

Online class sessions will be conducted through Zoom. Please keep your microphone muted unless you are speaking or you are participating in a group discussion in a breakout room. You are welcome to unmute to ask a question. You can also use the chat function to ask a question in writing.

You are expected to keep your video on unless you have received permission from the instructor to turn it off. Exceptions may be made for short-term technical issues or a privacy concern (please notify the professors if that is the case). You must have your video on when giving a presentation.

Classroom Etiquette and Professional Expectations:

While in the class, you are expected to give the class your full attention and to use your electronic device(s) for only for class-related activities. Please dress as you would for an in-person class. We may ask that you wear professional attire when we have guest speakers or you are giving a presentation. If you choose to use a virtual background on Zoom, please be sure it is professional looking.

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. You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to insure 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. Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreements for each course to the School of Law Registrar's Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations. Accommodation request and renewal forms can be found here: <https://law.siu.edu/academics/>.

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, <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, and her phone number is 618-453-3135.

COVID-19. As a condition of on-campus enrollment, all SIUC students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19, including the requirement that all students wear a mask in campus buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, and studios when others are present, regardless of social distancing. Students are expected to follow physical or social distancing guidelines by keeping at least 6 feet from others, and practicing good hand hygiene. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. SIUC will follow federal, state and county public health recommendations and mandates in all decisions relating to university operation. Students should regularly review the link for the SIUC COVID-19 response.

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Generally, we will not meet as a class every week during spring semester. Instead, your time devoted to this class will mainly be spent independently working on your Capstone project. Times that we plan to meet, as well as deadlines relating to your project, are described below.

Week 1 (Jan. 22) (Meeting by Zoom): Initial class meeting; review of project requirements and deadlines. Each student should be prepared to give a brief (2-3 min.) oral report on their project, including the topic, the anticipated work product, and, if possible, the name and work affiliation of the mentor.

Week 2 (Jan. 29) (Meeting by Zoom): Deadline to submit name of project mentor to instructors. Signed letter from mentors due. Discussion of beneficial mentoring relationships. Readings on mentoring relationships to be posted on TWEN page.

Week 3 (Feb. 5) (no class meeting): Deadline only to submit initial report describing project. Students must get approval of project proposal both from the project mentors and the course instructors. Initial project report must be uploaded to TWEN page by 11 am. A template for the initial project report will be provided.

Week 5 (Feb. 19) (Meeting by Zoom): Discussion of progress and challenges to date

Week 7 (Mar. 5) (Meeting by Zoom): “Halfway” progress meeting with peers and course instructors

Week 10 (Mar. 26) (Meeting by Zoom): Deadline to submit “substantially complete” tangible version of project, which must be uploaded to TWEN page by 11 am. Meeting to discuss requirements and advice for presentations.

Week 11 (Apr. 2): Practice presentations in small groups

Weeks 12-13 (TBD): Public Presentations

Week 14 (Apr. 23): Deadline only to submit tangible final project, final project report, and form from mentor evaluating project. Materials must be uploaded to class TWEN page by 11 am.