

# SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

## Mastering Legal Education

Spring 2023

Professor Jennifer E. Spreng

Contact:

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Lesar Law Building Room 212

Class Logistics:

Tuesdays 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
with exceptions

Office hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon to 1:00 p.m.  
I am also happy to see students by appointment at other times.

In Mastering Legal Education II, you will continue learn to “learn like a lawyer.” You will make Academic Success plans for the term and explore your professional identity, start setting professional development goals, and taking first steps to achieving them. In the process, you will continue to perfect your Prepare, Perform, and Improve (PPI) activities for high-impact learning and legal work preparation. You will also continue via individualized programs to hone your legal reasoning and communication capacities; solve legal problems; communicate the solutions in writing; and then use the associated strategies to improve your learning in all your law school courses and activities. Finally, you will receive the support you need from professors, Taylor Mattis Fellows, and others at SIU Law to maximize your academic and professional success!

**Treat this syllabus like a court’s scheduling order.  
You are responsible for knowing and complying with this syllabus,  
especially assignment deadlines!**

## CLASS INFORMATION AND POLICIES

1. Course Objectives. The objectives of this course are that the student shall:
  - Understand how to plan for Academic Success.
  - Create and execute an Academic Success plan with a range of productive tactics and accountability checkpoints.
  - Identify and hone the student’s professional identity.
  - Identify admirable lawyers and characteristics of legal careers.
  - Identify and explore attributes of a healthy and happy professional life.
  - Identify important aspects and advantages of cultural competency and respect for difference for a professional lawyer.
  - Understand how to plan to develop professionally.
  - Create a Professional Development Plan for use in law school.
  
2. Books and materials. We will use the following in this class:
  - We will use materials available to you on the D2L site for this class.
  
3. Attendance. All school policies related to attendance and tardiness are in effect. Missing announcements, assignments, or in-class activities due to absence or tardiness may result in a loss of points. Otherwise, attendance is mandatory for all scheduled class meetings and other scheduled course activities.
  
4. Grades in Mastering Legal Education: Required Activities. You will receive a grade of either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” in Mastering Legal Education II, a 0.5 credit-hour course, depending in part on your performance with both required and scored activities. “Satisfactory” performance in a required activity evinces a **good, conscientious effort** to perform and/or produce a high-quality work product and improve at both learning, reasoning, and communicating like a lawyer. To receive a grade of “satisfactory” in Mastering Legal Education you must complete several required activities satisfactorily.
  - a. 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) and the needs of this course, **you may miss only one (1) Mastering**

**Legal Education class.** See the Class Activities Chart below for the complete calendar. To “participate in class,” you must be prepared for class, have all necessary materials, and contribute to class discussion and activities appropriately or you may be counted absent for purposes of this class attendance requirement. If you do not have a copy of an assignment required for a particular Mastering Legal Education class for use in that class when needed, you may be unprepared for that class.

b. Attend and participate in Study Group meetings with Taylor Mattis Fellows. 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 during four weeks of the term to discuss study strategies, examination preparation, legal reasoning methods, peer-to-peer advising issues, and other matters.

You must attend two “Study Group” meetings with a Taylor Mattis Fellow during the term. The two weeks when your Study Group must meet with your Fellow are as follows:

- Week Six
- Week Ten

Your Taylor Mattis Fellow will be glad to meet with your Study Group at other times and any student individually. If you must miss a Study Group meeting, you must file a motion to extend time to make the meeting and then schedule to make it up with your Taylor Mattis Fellow. Many students will attend individual meetings with Taylor Mattis Fellows distinct from this requirement.

c. Attend your individual meeting. I welcome opportunities to meet with you in-person or on Zoom about Mastering Legal Education, improving your learning in other classes, or other matters of interest or concern to you. I am often in the office and available on Zoom. Email me for an appointment or drop by the office.

**In addition, you must meet with me during the second or third week of the term, as scheduled.** At this meeting, we will discuss your Fall semester

performance and goals for Spring semester, in the context of preparing an individualized Academic Success Plan for you.

**As part of your Academic Success Plan or otherwise, I may also ask to meet with you or for you to meet with a Taylor Mattis Fellow on other occasions as well.** These meetings are required and part of your scored Academic Success Plan progress.

In my role as an Academic Success professor, I will provide you with many opportunities to improve your legal reasoning and learning skills. For example, either your Taylor Mattis Fellow or I will be glad to meet with you, help you select activities for improvement, review practice examination questions, or give you other coaching to help you develop your skills. You should feel free to ask for help with improvement even if I do not. Please take advantage of all opportunities I or anyone else at SIU can provide to help you maximize your law school success!

5. Grades in Mastering Legal Education: Scored Activities. You will receive a grade of either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” in Mastering Legal Education, a 0.5 credit-hour course, depending in part on your performance with both required and scored activities. **“Satisfactory” performance in a required activity evinces a good, conscientious effort to perform and/or produce a high-quality work product and improve at both learning and reasoning like a lawyer.** Along with completing required activities in paragraph 3 above, to receive a grade of “satisfactory” in Mastering Legal Education you must also earn ninety-five (90) of one hundred (100) points for the class:

a. Written assignments. **You must complete satisfactorily and timely submit assignments in the “Assignments Chart” below.** These will include developing Academic Success and Professional Development plans, making reports on progress with those plans, journaling and discussion activities, and a final project. You may expect to earn all the points for these assignments if when you turn them in, they are timely, consistent with all instructions and protocols for the course, and of satisfactory quality as defined above.

Among the written assignments include several related to the Academic Success Plan we will develop together. This plan will set goals for academic

improvement and identify tangible steps toward those goals and help you find available supports from Academic Success professors, Taylor Mattis Fellows, and other school resources. You will report and reflect on your progress three times during the term.

Toward the end of the first half of the semester, you will prepare your Professional Development Plan with advice and ideas from professors, colleagues, Taylor Mattis Fellows, and others. You will then use it when meeting your Faculty Mentor, choosing second-year classes, and identifying productive co-curricular, extra-curricular, and employment opportunities.

b. Professional Identity Movie Series reports. This course requires that you attend and report on two movies about high-impact and hero lawyers. One, “To Kill a Mockingbird” is preparation for Week Four’s class; you will have opportunities to see it at school or on your own. You will find information about the others on D2L. You are welcome to attend all the movies, and I look forward to seeing you there!

c. Your responsibility is to schedule and attend a counseling session with Casey Parker, the Director of Career Services (room 212A) after you turn in your Professional Development Plan, which you should take to the meeting. She may reach out to you about this requirement, but you should initiate contact regardless. You have until the end of the term to complete this requirement, and you will receive five (5) points for this activity when I receive a message at the end of the term from Director Parker that you fulfilled this requirement.

d. Participation and professionalism. Professionalism, including professional participation in class and completion of activities to support your learning where performance dictates, is worth twenty (20) points of your final grade for the fall semester. Professionalism’s roots are the lawyer’s understanding that this profession holds itself to the highest ethical and professional standards. For this grade category, “professionalism” is “student professionalism,” defined as follows:

Conduct whereby lawyers, in the ethical service of others, take personal responsibility to: (1) ensure they are competent in their understanding of the law; (2) pay close attention to detail in their work product and use of language; (3) simultaneously handle multiple tasks

when necessary in a timely manner so as to meet obligations; (4) dress and groom in a manner consistent with their workplace culture; (5) treat others with respect, even in disagreement; (6) put the interests of clients before their own; and (7) protect the rule of law.

To maximize this portion of your final grade, do the following: actively read and prepare for each class session; arrive to every class on time and ready to participate; participate regularly in class activities and discussion; be respectful and courteous to everyone in the classroom; do not talk, text, or use cell phones or other electronic devices during lecture except as such use may be directly related to the class; make every effort to improve your skills as the semester progresses, including completing supplementary activities for the purpose; and thoughtfully engage in discussion if called upon in the class.

Because I assume all law students arrive at law school with a sense of professionalism, all students will begin each semester with the full portion of their grade devoted to professionalism. Deductions may result and I will then deduct points accordingly, solely and entirely in my discretion, for each instance of unprofessional conduct.

e. Other. I retain the discretion to add or deduct points/credit related to professionalism, participation, preparedness, attendance, quizzes, extra credit and activities not otherwise indicated on this syllabus.

6. Assignment deadlines. See 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. Note that the rules below apply both to Legal Writing and Mastering Legal Education.

a. Late submission. Do not turn in written assignments late. See the chart below for the consequences of turning in assignments after the due date and time as indicated in the Assignments Chart below. The only exceptions to this policy require that you file a Motion for Extension of Time as explained in subsections (b) and (c) below.

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

b. 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 unless COVID-19 has interfered with your ability to meet the deadline.

c. Process for moving for an extension of time. Forms for a Motion for Extension of Time and 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 analogous 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.

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

8. Taylor Mattis Fellows and Mastering Legal Education. Taylor Mattis Fellows are 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 Taylor Mattis Fellows for my Mastering Legal Education sections are:

- Katharine Bauer (katharine.bauer@siu.edu)
- Allison Cozart (Allison.cozart@siu.edu)
- Michael Hall (michael.a.hall@siu.edu)
- Michael Keeney (michael.keeney@siu.edu)
- Sean McDowell (sean.mcdowell@siu.edu)
- Zachary Vancil (Zachary.vancil@siu.edu)

You will remain in your assigned Study Group from Fall semester for two Study Group activities. Many of you will also meet regularly with one of the Fellows as well. They are happy to serve as your peer mentor for questions and concerns about law school and being a law student.

9. 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 one-half-credit course such as Mastering Legal Education, the Standard means a student must attend at least **twenty-five (25) minutes** of class each week (one classroom hour = fifty (50) minutes). The ABA also requires that students in a half credit course spend **at least one hour** per week on out-of-class work. Note that these are minimum requirements. You may assume you will spend much more than this bare minimum doing assignments for Mastering Legal Education given the nature and importance of the subject.

**THIS SYLLABUS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT MY SOLE DISCRETION.**



**ASSIGNMENTS CHART**  
**Mastering Legal Education**

<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>DUE</b>	<b>PTS</b>
Study Schedule for Spring 2023	<b>Sunday, January 22</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Draft Academic Success Plan	<b>Sunday, January 22</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Journal Entry 1 - Imagining Your Future	<b>Monday, January 23</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Final <i>Signed</i> Academic Success Plan	<b>Sunday, January 29</b> by 11:59 p.m.*	5
Discussion post – Questions for the Panel	<b>Wednesday, February 1</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Role Model Lawyer/To Kill a Mockingbird reflection	<b>Monday, February 6</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Journal entry 2 – Cultural Impact	<b>Monday, February 13</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Academic Success Plan Report 1	<b>Sunday, February 26</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Second movie reflection	Complete <u>one</u> of the following reflections: Argentina 1985 due 1.23 The Attorney due 1.30 Denial due 2.13	5
Professional Development Plan	<b>Wednesday, March 1</b> by 11:59 p.m.	10
Wellness Activity	<b>Thursday, March 23</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Academic Success Plan Report 2	<b>Sunday, March 26</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Final Project on Professional Identity	<b>TBA</b>	5
Academic Success Plan Report 3	<b>Sunday, April 23</b> by 11:59 p.m.	5
Academic Success Plan Completion		10
Career Services Meeting		5
Participation and Professionalism		10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

\* Depending in part on your individual meeting date.

## CLASS ACTIVITIES CHART

Remember to check to see if the reading/assignment list carries over to the next page!!

CLASS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
<p><b>Week</b> <b>1</b> Fri., Jan. 20</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MASTERING LEGAL EDUCATION II and YOUR ACADEMIC SUCCESS PLAN</b></p> <p><u>Supplemental Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Academic Success Plan Assignment Sheet and Worksheet</li> <li>✓ Study Schedule Assignment and Worksheet</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>DUE – FRIDAY, January 20 by the time class begins:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Sign up for your first individual meeting with me.</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Please come to class prepared</u></b> to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What you learned in Fall 2022 about how to study to produce desirable learning results or how you might change the ways you study to improve results for the future.</li> <li>✓ What your study schedule should contain on a weekly basis and throughout the term.</li> <li>✓ What your goals are for maximizing your academic performance in Spring 2023.</li> <li>✓ What practical steps you or others can take to maximize academic performance in Spring 2023.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Week</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>Fri., Jan. 27</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Attend your first individual meeting as scheduled this week.</b></p> <p><b>WHAT KIND OF LAWYER DO YOU WANT TO BE?</b></p> <p><u>Readings and class preparation activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct Preamble paragraph 6 <a href="https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_preamble_scope/">https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/model_rules_of_professional_conduct_preamble_scope/</a></li> <li>✓ Review your class of 2025 Declaration of Professional Commitment: <a href="#">Oath</a></li> <li>✓ Look at the Justice index? How does your state rank? <a href="https://ncaj.org/state-rankings/justice-index">https://ncaj.org/state-rankings/justice-index</a></li> <li>✓ Take the character strength assessment <a href="https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths-via">https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths-via</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>DUE – SUNDAY, January 22 by 11:59 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Draft Academic Success Plan</li> <li>✓ Study Schedule</li> </ul> <p><b>DUE – WEDNESDAY, January 25 by 11:59 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Journal Entry 1 – Imagining your Future</b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>If you choose to complete your reflection on Argentina 1985: due January 26 at 11:59 p.m.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Please come to class prepared</i></b> to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What does it mean to you to be a lawyer?</li> <li>✓ What is our duty to help others? To help society?</li> <li>✓ How should your Declaration of Professional Commitment impact your plan for development as a lawyer?</li> <li>✓ What competencies should a lawyer develop to best meet the ideals of the ABA Preamble paragraph 6? Your Declaration of Professional Commitment?</li> <li>✓ How can you develop the competencies that clients and legal employers need from lawyers in the changing legal market?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week</b></p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p>Fri., Feb. 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REAL LAWYERS and REAL ANSWERS</b></p> <p>A panel of local lawyers will visit our class on this day. To accommodate other sections, we may meet in a different room or at a different time.</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How TV Portrayals Affect the Legal Profession.</li> <li>✓ Happiness and the Law</li> </ul>	<p><b>DUE – SUNDAY, January 29 by 11:59 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Final Academic Success Plan</b></li> </ul> <p><b>DUE – WEDNESDAY, February 1 by 11:59 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Discussion post: Questions for the Panel of Attorneys</b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>If you choose to complete your reflection on The Attorney: due on February 2 by 11:59 p.m.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Please come to class prepared</i></b> to discuss the following:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The realities of the legal profession</li> <li>✓ How our professional identity develops over time.</li> <li>✓ How to integrate your work into your overall life plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Fri., Feb. 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HEROIC LAWYERS? A STUDY OF ATTICUS FINCH</b></p> <p><u>Readings and Class Preparation Activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Watch the movie <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (we will offer multiple public showings of the movie prior to class but you may also watch it on your own)</li> <li>✓ <i>The Half Virtuous Integrity of Atticus Finch</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Atticus Finch - The End of Honor: A Discussion of To Kill a Mockingbird</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>DUE – Wednesday, February 9 by 11:59 p.m.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Role Model Lawyer/<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Reflection</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Please come to class prepared</u></b> to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is it about the Atticus Finch character that makes so many lawyers view him as their hero?</li> <li>✓ What characteristics of compassionate lawyering did Atticus portray?</li> <li>✓ How did Atticus integrate his professional identity with his overall life?</li> <li>✓ After watching the movie, and reading the articles, how do you feel about Atticus Finch as an attorney?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Fri., Feb. 17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <p><u>Readings and Class Preparation Activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Take the implicit associations test <a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html</a></li> <li>✓ Watch this video: <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_dont_ask_where_im_from_ask_where_im_a_local?language=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_dont_ask_where_im_from_ask_where_im_a_local?language=en</a></li> <li>✓ Read about the Five Habits of Cross-Cultural Lawyering <a href="https://fivehabitsandmore.law.yale.edu/jean-and-sues-materials/habits/">https://fivehabitsandmore.law.yale.edu/jean-and-sues-materials/habits/</a></li> <li>✓ Excerpts from chapter 6 of <i>Learning for Practice: A Text for Experiential Legal Education</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Cultural Competency: A Necessary Skill for the 21st Century Attorney</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>DUE – WEDNESDAY, February 15 by 11:59 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Journal Entry 2 – Cultural Impact</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>If you choose to complete your reflection on Denial: due February 16 at 11:59 p.m.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Please come to class prepared</u></b> to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How we all have our own preferences and blinders that hamper our effective working relationship with others.</li> <li>✓ How we each carry bias despite our best intentions to be egalitarian.</li> <li>✓ How we can improve our cultural effectiveness with conscious effort.</li> </ul>

	<b>WEEK SIX – week of Feb. 20</b> <b>First Study Group Meeting</b> Conversation topics and activities will include wellness and professional well-being.	
<b>Week 6</b> Fri., Feb. 24	<b>PREPARING YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>  <u>Readings and Class Preparation Activities:</u>  ✓ Review professional development plan template prior to class.	<i>Please come to class prepared</i> to discuss the following:  ✓ Appropriate contents for a professional development plan.
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>NO CLASS!</b>	<b>DUE – SUNDAY, February 26 by 11:59 p.m.:</b> ✓ <b>Academic Success Plan Report 1</b>  <b>DUE – WEDNESDAY, March 1 by 11:59 p.m.:</b>  ✓ <b>Professional Development Plan</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>MID-TERM EXAMINATION WEEK</b> <b>NO CLASS!</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>	
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>WEEK TEN – week of March 20</b> <b>Second Study Group Meeting</b>  Conversation topics and activities will include preparing the Group Project	<b>DUE – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 BY 11:59 P.M.:</b>  ✓ <b>Wellness Assignment</b>  (No Class this week)
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>DUE – SUNDAY, March 26 by 11:59 p.m.:</b>  ✓ <b>Academic Success Plan Report 2</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>DUE – SUNDAY, April 23 by 11:59 p.m.:</b>  ✓ <b>Academic Success Plan Report 3</b>