

# Introduction to Transactional Skills

## Syllabus

**Spring 2023**

**Tuesday and Thursday, 9am-10:15am**

**Location: Room 102**

**Law 539-3 Section § 001**

Professor Lorelei Ritchie

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30-noon; or by appointment

Email: [Lorelei.Ritchie@siu.edu](mailto:Lorelei.Ritchie@siu.edu)

**Textbook:** Stephen Sepinuck et al., Transactional Skills (West Academic) 3d Edition. I may include additional handouts for some class sessions.

**Course Description and Student Learning Objectives:** This course is an experiential course, designed to meet the requirements of the law school's experiential requirement (satisfactory completion of this course will provide 3 of 6 required experiential credits needed for law school graduation). In keeping with ABA Standard 304, the course will act as a "simulation course" which will integrate Contract theory, skills, and legal ethics, with a focus on Contract drafting skills. Students will hone skills in legal analysis and reasoning, written and oral communication, and ethical client counseling. As additional learning objectives, in accordance with ABA and SIU guidelines, students will be able to effectively employ strategies of active listening, empathy and effective allyship during classroom discussions and group work.

**Attendance Policy and Class Participation:** Under the Rules of the School of Law, students may not accumulate absences in a course numbering in excess of twice the credit hours for the course during the semester. The Rules provide for three options if a student accumulates absences in excess of the allowable number. The professor may recommend that: (a) the student be given the lowest possible grade; (b) the student be given a "W"; or (c) the student be allowed to continue in the course with a grade reduction.

The course is designed to be inclusive of various learning styles. Class sessions will often include required in-class group projects. The in-class group discussions and projects are intended to be interesting and informative opportunities to collaborate with "colleagues." Consistent with our role in preparing students to be responsible, ethical lawyers-in-training, please treat the classroom, and everyone in it, with the respectful demeanor and discussion that you would display in a courtroom.

**Recording of Classes:** The professor may record classes via audio or video (including for increased availability due to COVID-19 restrictions). Classes may also be recorded for ADA compliance purposes. No recordings should be used or disseminated without the professor's permission.

**Exams, Grading, and Writing Assessments:** It is anticipated that there will be a midterm exam, which will be administered in-class during midterm week (likely on Tuesday, March 6). It is also anticipated that there will be a three-hour final exam at the end of the semester. **Both the midterm and the final exam will be closed-book exams involving Contract drafting and some memo writing to explain your choices.** The schedule and means of administration will be updated in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that 10% of your grade will be based on the midterm exam, 65% of your grade will be based on the final exam, and 25% of your grade to be awarded for quality of in-class participation, including participation in the required in-class group writings and discussions (or, on the negative side, your grade may be lowered by excessive absences or poor conduct in class).

**Workload Expectation:** 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: (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 3-credit hour class, meaning that we will spend two 75-minute blocks of time together each week (scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday). The amount of assigned reading and out of class preparation should take you about 6 hours for the week. All told, applying the ABA standard to the number of credits offered for this class, you should plan on spending a total of 9 hours per week (3 in class and 6 preparing for class) on course-related work.

**Tentative List of Reading Assignments:** Each week, I will confirm the following week's reading assignment at the end of Thursday's class. In order to avoid assigning an excessive amount of reading, we will sometimes skip around a little bit. Please complete assigned reading in advance of each class so that you are prepared to participate in, and benefit from, the discussion in class. Please also make sure that you have access to the textbook for reference during each class session.

**Tentative Class/Reading List:**

Except as otherwise noted, all references are to the Sepinuck textbook. Please complete assigned reading in advance of each class so that you are prepared to participate in, and benefit from, the discussion in class. Please also make sure to

have access to the textbook for reference during each class session. Feel free to skip over exercises contained in the assigned reading. We will skip some exercises entirely, and do others together in class.

Week 1:

Tuesday, January 17: Sepinuck, pp5-13 (Intro; skip Exercise 1-1)

Thursday, January 19: Sepinuck, pp15-20; 49; 54-57 (Components; Forms; we'll look at exercises in class)

Week 2:

Tuesday, January 24: Sepinuck, pp65-66 (cont'd, Forms; we'll look at exercises in class)

Thursday, January 26: Sepinuck, pp65-66 (cont'd, Forms; we'll look at exercises in class)

Later assignments will be assigned in advance of each week. If you need to read ahead, you may ask for the tentative reading assignments.

Additional Syllabus Attachments per SIU Policy:

**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. 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.

**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/>. Assistant Dean Judi Ray is available at the School of Law to help students access university resources. Please email her at [judiray@siu.edu](mailto:judiray@siu.edu), or call 618- 453-3135.

**COVID-19.** SIUC's policy on face masks and social distancing is consistent with the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois Department of Public Health. For up-to-date information, students, faculty, and staff should visit SIUC's COVID website (<https://siu.edu/coronavirus>), which includes the Saluki Safety Plan. People can also send email to [pandemicinfor@siu.edu](mailto:pandemicinfor@siu.edu).

**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>