

AS OF JANUARY 16

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Mastering Legal Education

Spring 2024

Professor Jennifer E. Spreng

Contact:

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Class Logistics:

Fridays 10:30-11:20 a.m.
with possible exceptions

Office hours:

Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:30 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. You will also meet practicing attorneys and learn how they meet their professional goals and understand their roles and identities as lawyers. 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 for this course include the following:
 - Identify and nurture productive academic and professional behaviors to succeed in law school and law practice in light of the first year experience.
 - Understand the significance of service to clients and protecting the rule of law in a legal professional's activities.
 - Nurture a sense of identity as a legal professional with healthy reference to other identities and competing priorities in your public and private life.
 - Appreciate the importance of the professional skills of cross-cultural lawyering to improve client representation and professional interaction skills.
 - Plan how you will hone your intellectual and professional capacities to become a more effective student and developing lawyer.
 - Take initial steps to plan your entry to the legal profession.
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 as well as movies available to you online.
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, which include:

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. Mastering Legal Education classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays of the first three weeks of school and some Tuesdays afterwards. 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 and assigned individual 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 several times during the term to discuss study strategies, examination preparation, legal reasoning methods, peer-to-peer advising issues, and other matters.

You must attend all scheduled “Study Group” meetings or otherwise assigned individual meetings with a Taylor Mattis Fellow during the term. **The Fellows will announce the Study Group schedule after the term begins.** The Fellows and I will also make sure you know the individual meeting requirement; you must meet this requirement as well.

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 the second week of term. 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 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. We will also review your Project 3.4 memorandum from Fall 2023.

As part of your Academic Success Plan or otherwise, I may also ask to meet with you 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!

d. Complete your Career Placement Activity. You will receive further information about this activity after the term begins.

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 eighty-five (85) 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 activities, and a group project among others. 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 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 watch and report on three movies about high-impact and hero lawyers:

- ✓ Rule of Law movie – you may choose one of the two recent biopics as preparation for Week Two’s class about the challenges and role of attorneys in society where rule of law is not functioning well
- ✓ “To Kill a Mockingbird,” which is required preparation for Week Three’s class
- ✓ “Denial,” which is required preparation for Week Five’s class

You will find information about these movies on D2L.

c. Questions for Attorney Meetings. The class will meet with three attorneys during the term:

- ✓ January 26 – Attorney Kimberly Cruz, via Zoom
- ✓ February 9 – Attorney Evan Taylor, in person
- ✓ TBA – Attorney Jeremy Bland, via Zoom

You will prepare three questions for each of the attorneys ahead of time. You may find out more about each one via links on D2L.

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. Class Preparation. **Every few weeks, I will post upcoming reading and other class preparation activities on our course management system, Desire2Learn (D2L).** You will find a module for each class period in the content section that contains a list of all readings, assignments, and other class preparation materials. Posting periodically will allow us to accommodate outside speakers and take a little more or a little less time on appropriate topics without changing the syllabus or D2L site. I will try to keep up with a sufficiently timely schedule so that you can stay ahead in your reading in case we are especially efficient in covering some materials, which is wise to make sure you are always fully prepared for class. Just make sure that you review the materials for each class you are attending ahead of time and take note of indications on D2L that we may spend a little more or a little less than one class period on any given set of class materials.

7. 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 drobox 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.

8. 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.**

9. 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.

You will remain in your assigned Study Group from Fall semester for Study Group activities. Some of you may 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.

10. 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 two-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

ASSIGNMENT	DUE	PTS
Study Schedule for Spring 2024	Sunday, January 21 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Draft Academic Success Plan	Sunday, January 21 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Questions for Attorney Kimberly Cruz	Tuesday, January 23 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Journal Entry 1 - Imagining Your Future	Thursday, January 25 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Rule of Law movie report	Thursday, January 25 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Final Academic Success Plan	Sunday, January 28 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Role Model Lawyer and To Kill a Mockingbird	Thursday, February 1 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Questions for Attorney Evan Taylor	Tuesday, February 6 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Journal entry 2 – Cultural Impact	Thursday, February 15 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Denial movie report	Thursday, February 15 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Academic Success Plan Report 1	Wednesday, February 28 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Professional Development Plan	Wednesday, February 28 by 11:59 p.m.	10
Academic Success Plan Report 2	Sunday, March 26 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Questions for Attorney Jeremy Bland	TBA	5
Group Project	TBA	5
Academic Success Plan Report 3	Sunday, April 23 by 11:59 p.m.	5
Academic Success Plan Completion		10
Participation and Professionalism		5
TOTAL		100