



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL HEALTH LAW & POLICY SYLLABUS - SPRING 2026

Professor Brandy Johnson

Office: 244

Email: brandy.johnson@siu.edu

Phone: (618) 453-8117

Room: 206

M/W 1:30 -2:45 p.m.

Office Hours: T/TH 3:00-4:00 p.m.

PURPOSES OF THE COURSE AND STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Research, writing, and analysis are staples of the legal profession. They represent the basic skills that attorneys perform throughout their careers. This course is intended to further refine your skills in legal research, legal analysis, and legal writing. In a Senior Writing Seminar, students are required to create an advanced legal writing project that involves substantial legal research and sophisticated legal analysis on a topic related to disability rights & policy.

Satisfactory completion of the Seminar requires the production of a paper of a minimum of 7,500 words in length (approximately 30 pages), which must involve substantial research and analysis of one or more complex legal issues. The Seminar includes significant writing instruction, Bluebook instruction for writing scholarly papers, and individual formative and summative assessments. Students will be expected to submit a topic, an outline of the proposed paper with a partial bibliography of sources, a first draft of the proposed paper, and a final version. During the last few weeks of the semester, each student will be expected to prepare a 15-minute presentation about the topic of the final paper, using PowerPoint or some other presentation software.

As a student in this class, you should expect to achieve the following learning outcomes throughout the semester:

- Students will learn to draft scholarly papers worthy of publication and will give presentations to the class about the subject of their papers.
- Students will learn to use the Uniform System of Citation (the "Bluebook") to reference sources used in a scholarly paper.
- Students will refine their ability to communicate complex legal analysis in clear prose.

- Students will gain familiarity with issues related to health, the delivery of healthcare, the regulation of healthcare, and the health insurance industry.
- Students will learn about health disparities, discrimination, ableism, and the impact of bias on healthcare delivery, and how different segments of society interact with the healthcare system.
- Students will learn about laws, policies, and ethical issues related to subjects such as accessing care, healthcare refusal, autonomy, the right to die, physician-assisted suicide, genetic modification, and reproductive healthcare.
- Students will learn to identify instances when medical ethics and law or policies may conflict and make persuasive arguments that promote equity.
- Students will be able to effectively employ strategies of active listening, empathy, and deliberative engagement, and cross-ideological dialogue during classroom discussions and group work.

REQUIRED TEXT:

ELIZABETH FAJANS & MARY R. FALK, SCHOLARLY WRITING FOR LAW STUDENTS: SEMINAR PAPERS, LAW REVIEW NOTES AND LAW REVIEW COMPETITION PAPERS (5th ed. 2017)

VALERIE K. BLAKE, ISAAC D. BUCK & JILL WIEBER LENS, LEARNING HEALTH LAW (2025)

RECOMMENDED SOURCES:

The Uniform System of Citation (The Bluebook), 21st or 22nd ed. (Copies available in the library)

REQUIRED CLASS TECHNOLOGY:

Professor Johnson will be using D2L to supplement the class. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the information posted and discussed on D2L. Assignments will be posted on D2L.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Active class participation is essential to success in this course. You should not plan on taking **any** absences in this class unless you have an unforeseen or unavoidable conflict. As such, attendance is mandatory (including any make-up class), and you may miss no more than four (4) classes during the semester. I would advise that you not use all your absences early in the semester. Those exceeding the maximum number of absences will

be subject to the ramifications described in the Law School's attendance policy. See School of Law Rules III.5 (f)-(g). The attendance requirement is not subject to modification by a professor, nor may a professor excuse an absence. If the maximum number of absences allowed has been exhausted, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may grant leave and relief from the regular attendance requirement in extraordinary circumstances.

This semester, there will be at least one make-up class (e.g., we will need to make up the class that will be missed for Martin Luther King Day). Failure to attend a make-up class or to complete a make-up class assignment will count as an absence.

Being late in the legal field can have costly consequences for your clients, firm/organization, and your career. Being part of a professional school involves acquiring the training and tools needed for long-term success. This includes being timely and prepared for appearances, appointments, and other professional obligations.

Consequently, an attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class. If you arrive after class has started (which will be at 9:00 a.m.) you may not join the class and will be marked absent. Please note that, by signing the attendance sheet, you are asserting and representing that you: (1) are present, (2) arrived by the time the class is scheduled to begin (9:00 a.m.); (3) have completed any assignment (which includes having read all assigned materials for the class); and (4) are prepared to participate in the class discussion, including, but not limited to, providing a summary of the cases assigned for the class, answering questions about the material assigned for the class, actively participating in any group discussions/activities, and attempting to answer and/or discuss any hypotheticals posed during class. If, during class, it is apparent that you did not prepare for class, you will be marked absent.

You may not sign the attendance sheet for anyone except yourself or ask someone else to sign it for you. Doing so constitutes an honor code violation and will be reported in accordance with the law school's rules. A violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation.

Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences and ensuring they do not exceed the four permitted absences. Students should **not** rely on the instructor to advise them when they have reached their third or fourth absence. Students should be able to check their attendance on the D2L page for the class.

Note: Unexpected and uncontrollable events can occasionally occur. If you know you will be late for class due to such an event (e.g., you are in a motor vehicle accident, caught in traffic from an accident, etc.), contact Professor Johnson before class or as soon as you are able. She will consider the circumstances as a whole, including how late you would have been to class and any such prior incidents, and may permit you to watch the video of the class in place of being counted as absent. Professor Johnson retains the right to grant or deny any such request. Therefore, students are expected to plan accordingly to ensure they have ample time to safely travel to campus and present themselves in the classroom before the appointed time the class is due to start.

Should you have a medical appointment or an unavoidable conflict (e.g., an interview for a legal job) that will delay your timely arrival to class, contact Professor Johnson before class to discuss the situation. Likewise, if you have personal circumstances that make it difficult for you to arrive for class in a timely manner, please make an appointment to discuss the situation with Professor Johnson.

Note: Professor Johnson retains the right to modify the above attendance policy as needed at any point in the semester. Students will be notified of any changes to the policy, including the method used to take and record attendance.

CLASS PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION & ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Reading & Class Preparation Assignments

Reading assignments and course material will be posted on D2L. I expect that you will come to class having read the material for the day and ready to participate in class discussion. **The first reading assignments are available on D2L.**

2. In-Class Participation

You are required to participate in class actively. Students will be expected to invest themselves in the papers and presentations of other students in the class. Additionally, students are expected to contribute helpful comments to improve their classmates' work. Law school is a learning laboratory wherein we can all learn from each other.

COURSE WORKLOAD:

You might be interested to know that the ABA standards incorporate out-of-class work in the calculation of credit hours. Under the ABA standards, **you should expect to spend 150 minutes per week in class (2.5 hours) plus (a minimum of) six hours of study a week. Accordingly, your reading, research, writing, and class sessions should take an average of nine hours each week.** We will forego meeting for several class sessions to allow you more time for research, writing, and conferences.

PROFESSOR & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

As a law student, it is expected that you will treat your time spent both in class and outside of class (researching and writing) as a professional. You can expect the same from Professor Johnson.

You can expect Professor Johnson:

- To start and end class on time.
- To reply to e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.

- To be available during my posted office hours (and to provide alternative office hours should any require rescheduling).

Professor Johnson will expect you:

- To come to every scheduled class/conference and to be on time.
- To be attentive and engaged in class.
- To only leave class when necessary (e.g., to use the restroom) and to keep these departures to a minimum throughout the semester.
- To refrain from using laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices during class for anything other than classwork.
- To spend an adequate amount of time on the assigned readings as well as your research and writing.
- To seek help when appropriate.

Advisory: This course may explore various policy issues that may be sensitive to some people. It is anticipated that individuals may hold very different personal and/or professional views regarding the topics to be discussed. Some students may find the views of others, or the views expressed in some of the assignments, to be disquieting, challenging, and/or upsetting. Class participation is expected and encouraged so that we can all think about our beliefs, thoughts, the historical context, and critically engage with the existing literature.

Students are expected to engage in class discussion and to do so respectfully and professionally. If a student is unable to be respectful and professional, they will be asked to leave the class and receive an absence.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

DEADLINES:

Topic Selection – 5:00 p.m. on January 28, 2026

Outline – 5:00 p.m. on February 12, 2026

First Draft - 5:00 p.m. on March 18, 2026

Final Draft - 5:00 p.m. on April 23, 2026

All written assignments are to be turned in by the above deadlines. Extensions are generally not permitted and will be given only for extreme circumstances that are clearly beyond your control. If you are not in class on a day that a written assignment is due, it is still your responsibility to make sure that your assignment is turned in on time.

A WARNING NOTE ABOUT LATE PAPERS: The Rubric for each assignment (other than the paper presentations) will indicate that a 10% reduction in score will occur if you turn in your paper more than one hour past the announced due-date and time; a 25% reduction in score will occur if you turn in your paper more than 3 hours past the announced due-date and time; a 50% reduction in score will occur if you turn in your paper more than 5 hours past the announced due-date and time; and you will receive a score of "0" if more than 12 hours have passed since the announced due-date and time. **If the percentage reduction in score results in a deduction that is not a whole number, Professor Johnson will round that deduction up to the next whole number.**

GRADING

The course will be graded as follows:

1. Topic Selection (5 points): Due by 5:00 p.m. on January 28, 2026.

Your first major assignment is to pick a topic for the paper that you plan to write for the course and submit a written description of your Topic Selection. The submission should include a working title and a one-paragraph explanation of the reason for your selection and what you hope your research will reveal. *You may subsequently change topics*, but a good-faith first effort will be required by the start of class on January 28, 2026.

2. Outline (10 points): Due by 5:00 p.m. on February 12, 2026.

You are expected to submit an outline of the paper you plan to write, containing at least headings and topic sentences to provide insight as to what your final project will look like. In addition, you must include full Bluebook citations for at least **ten** sources that you plan to use in your paper.

3. First Draft (25 points): Due by 5:00 p.m. on March 18, 2026.

You are expected to submit a first draft of the paper you will provide at the end of the course. The draft should include polished citations for each source cited and should include **at least 4,250 words**.

4. Final Paper (45 points): Due by 5:00 p.m. on April 23, 2026.

Your final paper should represent your best effort to select a legal issue regarding health law and/or policy and to write about that topic. The final paper must be **typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins. Footnotes should be single-spaced.** The final paper must be **at least 7,500 words**.

5. Presentation (10 points)

You will be expected to prepare a 15-minute presentation about the topic of the final paper, using PowerPoint or some other presentation software. In the presentation, each student should explain the thesis of his or her paper, the results of their research efforts, and why the paper adds to the public understanding of one or more legal issues regarding health law and/or policy.

6. Class Participation (5 points)

NOTE: None of the assignments will be graded anonymously in this course.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarizing another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Honor Code and can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. The Honor Code defines plagiarism as:

passing off another's ideas, words, or work as one's own, including written, oral, multimedia, or other work, either word for word or in substance, unless the student author credits the original author and identifies the original author's work with quotation marks, footnotes, or other appropriate designation in such a way as to make clear the true author of the work.

OFFICE HOURS:

Professor Johnson's office hours will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Feel free to stop by her office outside of these hours. Professor Johnson will also be available throughout the semester via email or by appointment via Zoom/Teams or phone. If you would like to schedule a Zoom/Teams or phone appointment with me, please email Professor Johnson with some proposed dates and times.

NOTICE OF RECORDING POLICIES:

For the benefit of students who are unable to attend a particular class due to an unavoidable circumstance, and for students who wish to review a particular class to better facilitate learning objectives, class sessions will be recorded. You must contact Professor Johnson for the recording. Because of the possibility of a technical malfunction, Professor Johnson cannot guarantee the successful recording of every class. Students are free to make audio (not video) recordings of class lectures for their own purposes, but you are not permitted to distribute that recording to other individuals inside or outside of class.

ATTACHMENTS:

This Syllabus incorporates by reference the Law School Syllabus Attachment and the Provost Syllabus Attachment available on the course D2L page.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT:

You must sign onto D2L for the first assignment.