INTRODUCTION TO LAWYERING SKILLS/CIVIL PROCEDURE I
COURSE INFORMATION, GOALS, POLICIES, AND SYLLABUS

Professor

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Office Hours
Tuesday, Thursday 9:15am – 10:15am

**You can also drop by my office anytime, or make an off-hours appointment by email**

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Class Meeting Times and Locations

Wednesday, Friday: 9:00am - 11:45am; Location Angelos Law 403
Wednesday: 1:30pm-2:45pm; Location Angelos Law 102

Required Texts

The Bluebook: A Uniform Manual of Citation (20th ed. 2015).
Amy Sloan, Basic Legal Research (6th ed. 2015).

** NB: Our main Civ Pro textbook will be an online textbook called ChartaCourse. You will need to sign up for this book via your Ubalt email address. This year, I have made a special arrangement for ChartaCourse to be available for FREE (it is ordinarily $49)
Course Goals

Introduction to Lawyering Skills ("ILS") and Civil Procedure I ("Civ Pro") are two separate yet integrated courses. Students will receive separate grades for each course and each course covers different materials. ILS introduces you to legal analysis and argument and gives you a practical grounding in legal research and writing. Civ Pro covers the basic “rules of the game” of civil litigation from trial through appeals. While distinct, the two components of the course are also intimately related in that they both seek to provide you with the basic concepts and skills necessary to succeed in law school and as a lawyer. As a whole, this course aims to teach you to the “fundamentals” in the theory and practice of law. Since law is a profession as well as a practice, learning the fundamentals necessarily includes an introduction to your ethical obligations towards your clients and towards the profession.

When you complete this course, you will have acquired the necessary skills to: 1) effectively read and understand cases, statutes, rules and other sources of law; 2) make persuasive legal arguments supported by relevant authority; 3) find relevant legal authority through legal research; 4) write legal memoranda in proper form; 5) self-regulate your own learning of the law; and 6) manage workload and deadlines in a professional manner. In addition to these concrete skills, you will also have learned the theory behind the actual process of civil litigation and how to use the rules of civil procedure to serve your clients.

Course Policies

1. Attendance – Regular class attendance is required. Attendance counts towards your participation grade in both ILS and Civ Pro. Attendance is established by signing the class attendance sheet. A student who is more than 5 minutes late may stay for class but may not sign the attendance sheet and be counted as present for that day.

Students who have more than five absences will not be eligible to take the final exam and complete the course. (Absences due to religious holidays are not included in this policy, but you must let me know in advance if you will miss a class for this reason and an appropriate make-up will be scheduled.)

Please note that under this policy, there are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences. Absences for any reason are treated alike (with the exception for religious holidays) and work cannot be “made up” to make up for a missed class.

2. Preparation – For our class to function properly, everyone must come each day fully prepared to discuss the day’s readings. Preparation also counts towards your participation grade. At the most basic level, preparation means completing the assigned reading before each class and thinking about any assigned study questions.
Reading legal cases is not easy – especially in the first semester – and I do not expect that you will grasp every aspect of the reading. Being prepared does not mean that you need to know the “right” answers. When I call on you to answer a question, getting the answer “wrong” is entirely forgivable. On the other hand, class discussion is impoverished if we are not all familiar with the day’s texts and therefore “on the same page.” As a general rule, failing to carefully read the day’s assignment is not forgivable.

With that said, I understand that circumstances may arise that prevent you from being fully prepared. Rules have exceptions. Therefore, I will permit you to “pass” once on account of being unprepared with no questions asked and no consequences. However, to take advantage of this safe harbor provision, you must inform me BEFORE class that you are not prepared. (If I call on you and you pass but had not told me, it counts as two passes). Passing more than once will negatively affect your grade.

3. **Assignment Deadlines** -- Learning to keeping track of and meet multiple deadlines is a vital part of becoming a professional. Be advised that this course will have periods where multiple assignments come due at or around the same time. In addition, you will also have deadlines and assignments from your other courses. You will need to get in the habit of planning ahead for busy times and budgeting your time accordingly. (Major deadlines for this course are detailed in the ChartaCourse Syllabus).

Assignments are due no later than the announced deadline. If you fail to submit an assignment on time, you will receive a 15% deduction, provided that you submit the assignment within 24 hours of the due date/time. After 24 hours, you will receive an additional 15% deduction for each 24-hour period or fraction thereof. You must turn in all assignments to pass the course.

4. **Collaboration** – Unless otherwise indicated, collaboration is not permitted on any graded assignment. However, I strongly encourage collaboration in preparing for class and in studying for exams. Most students tend to form and join “study groups” for this purpose. If you are unable to find an appropriate study group after the first few weeks of the semester (approx 3-4), please let me or your TA know.

5. **Professionalism** – Learning cannot effectively take place in an environment that is unprofessional or uncivil. To that end, I expect that you will observe basic professional courtesies such as arriving on time and turning off your cell phone. Since one of the key goals of the class is learning how to make effective arguments, it is my hope that we can have lively class debates where all students feel comfortable participating and expressing their opinions. Respect for your colleagues is vital to fostering a healthy debate environment. At all times, remain mindful of the diversity of perspectives and experiences in our classroom and be respectful as you articulate your arguments. We need not agree on everything, but we do need to disagree professionally.
6. **Computers** – As a general rule, you are permitted to use computers to take notes or do legal research. However, accessing the Internet for non-note taking purposes – i.e., sending email, updating Facebook, playing Angry Birds, etc. – is strictly prohibited. Not only are such activities unprofessional, they can also be highly distracting to your fellow students. I reserve the right to ban the use of computers if they are being misused.

7. **Methods of Evaluation** - This is a six-credit course. ILS and Civ Pro are worth three credits each and are separately graded. The grades will be calculated as follows:

   **Introduction to Lawyering Skills** – The final grade will be based on the following: Closed Memo Draft Consultation (10%); Closed Memo Final (25%); Open Memo Draft Consultation (10%); Open Memo Final (40%); Research and Citation Exercises (15%).

   **Civil Procedure** – The final grade will be based on the following: Midterm Exam (20%); Final Exam (75%); Class Participation (5%).

8. **Mandatory Curve.** As first-year courses, ILS and Civ Pro are both subject to the mandatory curve. The official policy as posted on UB Law website is:

   All first year courses are subject to a mandatory grading range. Under the mandatory grading range... the arithmetic average of all of the grades assigned to students in the section [must be] no lower than 2.670 and is no higher than 3.000. Grades shall be distributed within the required first year courses as follows: between 15-25% shall be grades of A- or higher and between 7-14% shall be grades of C- or below, except that, in each section of Introduction to Lawyering Skills the 7-14% range of grades of C- or lower is recommended but not required.

**Course Syllabus**

The complete hyperlinked course syllabus will be available on ChartaCourse starting August 10, 2015. You need to check your Ubalt email to be able to access this syllabus. Please check that email regularly.

The list of topics covered in the Civ Pro component of the course includes: Life of civil case, pleadings and challenges to them, discovery, interim remedies, pre-verdict judgment, trial, juries and appeals.

The list of topics covered in the ILS component of the course include: fundamentals of legal argument, basic legal research and citation, and office memo writing.