

University of Baltimore School of Law
SEMESTER YEAR FALL 2017

Course: Law Firm Management
LAW 815.550
Section Number: N/A

Instructor: Michael L. Spekter
mspekter@ubalt.edu
(202) 223-8112
1828 L Street NW Suite 600, Washington DC 20036
OFFICE HOURS OR BEST TIMES FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION: Any
business hours per arrangement with professor.

Days/Time: Any normal business hours

Location: Room assignments are available through MyUB.

Course Description:

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Provides practical information and guidance for the new lawyer to better understand the business aspects of the practice of law. Course topics include basic systems necessary for operation of a small or medium law firm as well as financial management, office personnel, marketing and client relation matters

Course Materials:

Introduction to Law Practice: Organizing and Managing Legal Work Fourth Edition, Gary A. Munneke, West Publishing 2012, ISBN 978-0-314-27645-2

Tomorrows Lawyers, Richard Suskind ASIN B00AYZ9AS4 Available on Amazon or in Bookstore

There will also be on line handouts for every class from various sources, including the ABA Law Practice Management Magazine, Law Practice Today, Legal Seminars on how to run a law office. The course also will include various interesting and timely guest speakers who will supplement various areas covered in the course materials.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Law Firm Management has been designed to assist you in developing the practical skills you will need to succeed in the practice of law, over and above knowledge of the substantive and procedural law – you will learn what you need to know to run a successful legal services business and a successful and profitable small law firm. The class is based on actual office procedures, relevant case law and practical experience, but it will be unlike any other course that you have taken in law school. I have designed the

course to be instructive, thought provoking, entertaining, but above all with the goal of making you “practice ready” when you graduate and take the bar.

This law course was created for law school students who plan to enter private practice as a lawyer or firm manager. Some of you may be planning to just hang out a shingle and go it alone; others may be joining small firms already in existence where every lawyer is involved in firm management to a greater or lesser degree; others may be uncertain about career plans, but intend to learn about practice as an alternative that they may consider. This course has been designed to provide you with a perspective that you haven’t been exposed to in law school – that to successfully practice law and to be able to help those who need legal services, you first need to have the knowledge to run your office as a business so that you can thrive and grow in a competitive and continuing evolving legal services market.

Grades:

During the course of the semester, the class will be divided into law firms of 4 members. (Four firms of 4 members, based on the 16 students currently signed up for the course) The group project components of the class will be worth 50% of the course grade, and all members of your firm will receive the same grade on group projects. The Group assignments are described below. **WE WILL MEET ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS DURING THE SEMESTER, 4:20-6:10 PM. CLASS ATTENDANCE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR THIS COURSE AS IT IS LIMITED TO 16 STUDENTS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF YOUR GRADE.**

* Project 1: Complete a law firm structure questionnaire for your firm. The questionnaire will be distributed in class and on line. The questionnaire will be worth 10% of your final grade, and will be **due ONLINE on September 6th** .

* Project 2: Develop a partnership agreement for your firm. This will be worth 10% of your grade and will be **due on October 4th**

* Project 3: Develop a business plan for your firm. The business plan should include a marketing plan for building a practice niche and clientele; a resources plan discussing the human (staffing), physical (office space, equipment, furniture and supplies) and information/technology resources your firm will require; and a financial plan in the form of a pro forma budget and balance sheet, with an estimate of your fees and profits, including necessary financing for your firm. This assignment will be worth 30% of your final grade and will be **due on November 29th**

For the purposes of these assignments, assume that all of the members of your group are partners/shareholders of the firm. As with any law firm, the allocation of responsibilities for management functions is a problem you must resolve among yourselves. Each of you is responsible for the quality of the firm’s work product, and jointly and severally liable for omissions or errors therein. You will find a basic description of the firm in your casebook, but if you wish to modify that I am open

to modification of practice areas or interests. You may contribute up to \$20,000 (monopoly money only please) to the firm, per partner, but creative financing is encouraged.

If for any reason the members of the firm decide by a majority vote that an individual is not carrying their weight in assignments, upon a vote of the majority of the firm members, then I am to be contacted at the earliest possible date and that individual will complete all assignments as a solo practitioner.

There will be no final examination for the course. The remaining 50% of your grade will be based on individual assignments, described below:

* Personal career plan and resume: Prepare a 1-2 page statement of your career goals, outlining how your experiences in the law office management class have affected your long-term expectations for a legal career. Bring your statement with an updated resume to class on **September 20th**. This assignment will be worth **10%** of your final grade.

* Diary of observations and insights: During the course of the semester, keep a diary of observations and insights about the experiences that you have had in your Law Firm Management class, including readings, class discussions, group projects, outside work experiences and professional goals. You are not restricted to any particular format, but your grade will be determined by the depth and clarity of your comments. This assignment will be worth **20%** of your final grade in the course and must be emailed to your professor at mspekter@ubalt.edu on or before a date to be set prior to the end of the semester. (**December 6th**) This year I am requesting that you backup your diary regularly and even print it out. I would like sample pages from all students (approx five pages at least) handed in at class on **October 18th** to make sure that everyone is on the right track.

* Time Records: Keep a record of time spent in this course, including the dates and time spent on reading, attending class, working on group projects, working on individual projects and other activities. You may utilize a word processing table, a spreadsheet or a dedicated timekeeping software like Timeslips to record this information. This assignment will be worth **10%** of your course grade and must be e mailed to your professor at mspekter@ubalt.edu On or before a date to be set prior to the end of the semester. (**December 6th**)

* Class participation & Attendance: The final 10 % of your grade will be based upon class attendance and participation, including your partners' assessment of your contribution to the group. If you cannot attend class for any reason, please contact me and your partners by email. According to Law School policy, if you miss more than **one** class for an un-excused reason then you will receive an incomplete. If you have any personal questions, that cannot be covered by email (which works best) you can always telephone me at my office (202) 223-8112 at any time, or Fedex or Mail to me at my office, which is located at 1828 L Street N.W. Suite 600 Washington, DC 20036. I have 24 hour voice mail at my office and will always return calls, as long as you remember to leave a call back number. Or you may schedule an appointment before or after class at the law school.

Course Expectations:

American Bar Association Standards for Law Schools establish guidelines for the amount of work students should expect to complete for each credit earned. Students should expect approximately one hour of classroom instruction and two hours of out-of-class work for each credit earned in a class, or an equivalent amount of work for other academic activities, such as simulations, externships, clinical supervision, co-curricular activities, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

You are expected to complete all reading assignments before class and to participate consistently in class discussion to demonstrate that you have read and reflected on the issues raised in the assignment.

Attendance:

Class attendance is a primary obligation of each student whose right to continued enrollment in the course and to take the examination is conditioned upon a record of attendance satisfactory to the professor. A student who exceeds the maximum allowed absences (generally 20% of class sessions) as illustrated below may be compelled to withdraw from the course, or may be barred from sitting for the final exam. Students who are forced to withdraw for exceeding the allowed absences may receive a grade of FA (failure due to excessive absence). This policy is consistent with American Bar Association Standards for Law Schools.

Regular Semester Hours		
Credit Hours	Meetings Per Week	
	1	2
2	2 absences	5 absences
3	2 absences	5 absences
4	--	5 absences

Course Website:

This course has a TWEN page that links to this syllabus, announcements, the class assignments, and other class materials. You are responsible for self-enrolling in the TWEN page and for checking it regularly for course information.

Computers:

Students **may** use laptop computers for class related purposes. However internet shopping, Amazon (except for Washington Post) Facebook, Twitter, Match.com, or other social media use is prohibited during class times. Failure to abide by this rule will result in retraction of laptop or tablet permission during class times.

Class Cancellation:

If the instructor must cancel a class, notices will be sent to students via email and posted on the classroom door. If there is inclement weather, students should visit the University of Baltimore web site or call the University's Snow Closing Line at (410) 837-4201. If the University is open, students should presume that classes are running on the normal schedule.

Academic Integrity:

Students are obligated to refrain from acts that they know or, under the circumstances, have reason to know will impair the academic integrity of the University and/or School of Law. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, misuse of materials, inappropriate communication about exams, use of unauthorized materials and technology, misrepresentation of any academic matter, including attendance, and impeding the Honor Code process. The School of Law Honor Code and information about the process is available at http://law.ubalt.edu/academics/policiesandprocedures/honor_code/.

Title IX Sexual Misconduct and Nondiscrimination Policy:

The University of Baltimore's Sexual Misconduct and Nondiscrimination policy is compliant with Federal laws prohibiting discrimination. Title IX requires that faculty, student employees and staff members report to the university any known, learned or rumored incidents of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking on the basis of sex, dating/intimate partner violence or sexual exploitation and/or related experiences or incidents. Policies and procedures related to Title IX and UB's nondiscrimination policies can be found at: <http://www.ubalt.edu/titleix>.

Disability Policy:

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires an academic accommodation, please contact Leslie Metzger, Director of Student Services, at 410-837-5623 or lmetzger@ubalt.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS:**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Class No:	Date:	Topic:	Assignment:
1.	Aug. 23	The Business of Law	Munneke Chapter 1
2.	Aug 30	The Marketplace for Legal	Munneke Chapter 2

Groups Work on Law Firm Questionnaire

3.	Sept. 6	Business or Profession	Munneke Chapter 3
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Turn in Law Firm Questionnaire

4.	Sept. 13	The Truth about Law Firms Discuss Law Firm Questionnaire	Munneke Chapter 4
5	Sept. 20	Managing the Practice of Law	Munneke Chapter 5

Turn in Resume and Career Goals

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| 6. | Sept 27 | Strategic Planning and Marketing
Legal Services | Munneke Chapter 6 |
| 7. | Oct. 4 | Managing Clients | Munneke Chapter 7 |
| Partnership Agreement | | | |
| 8. | Oct. 11 | Managing Lawyers and Support Staff | Munneke Chapter 8 |
| 9. | Oct. 18 | Managing The Law Office | Munneke Chapter 9 |
| Turn in Sample Diary Pages | | | |
| 10. | Oct 25 | Managing Information and Technology Resources | Munneke Chapter 10 |
| Groups Meet to work on Business plans | | | |
| 11. | Nov 1 | Managing Financial Resources | Munneke Chapter 11 |
| 12. | Nov. 8 | Managing the Legal Work Product | MunnekeChapter 12,13,14 |
| 13. | Nov 15 | Managing Yourself as a Professional | Munneke Chapter 15, 16 |
| 14. | *Nov 29 | (makeup for Thanksgiving Wednesday)
Last Class Guest Speaker / wrap up discussion | |
| Turn in Business Plans | | | |
| Dec 6 | | Time Records and Personal Diary Due via electronic filing to professor. | |

REST/ WINTER VACATION