

**UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW**  
**ATTORNEY EXTERNSHIP SEMINAR**

**SYLLABUS**  
**SPRING 2017**

**Course:** Attorney Externship  
LAW 860  
Section 550

**Instructor:** Deborah Katz Levi  
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410-333-4900 ext. 258

**Days/Time:** Thursdays, 4:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** ROOM 204

**COURSE GOALS**

Welcome to the Attorney Practice Externship Seminar. This is a three or four credit, pass fail course, with a field placement and classroom component.

The primary goal of this course is to promote meaningful reflection on your legal practice, both during your externship and in the future. In addition, we will consider various challenges and issues that arise in the practice of law. We will also carefully examine the ethical obligations of lawyers and how those obligations play out in various practice settings. More specifically, the course goals include:

- a. Skills Development  
Students will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the basic competencies required to practice law, including but not limited to: interpersonal skills, research and writing skills, analytical strategies, issue spotting and achieving a work/life balance.
- b. Professional Responsibility  
Field work offers a forum in which students can analyze and consider legal ethics.
- c. Substantive Law  
Students will gain an understanding of legal theory and the practical application of the law that pertains to the areas in which their placement focuses.
- d. Self Evaluation and Reflective Learning  
The field placement, classroom discussions, and journal writing will provide opportunities to learn from experience, gather feedback, and reflect on the student's externship experience.

The format of the class is discussion based, and requires your active participation. We will use TWEN as our primary mode of out-of-class communication. The syllabus for the course, additional reading assignments, and other important information will all be posted on TWEN. In addition, all assignments are to be submitted through the TWEN assignment box. Your name should be included at the top of all the materials submitted. Please plan to check TWEN regularly so you are knowledgeable of all matters affecting this course.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

There is no required text for this course; any necessary reading materials will be provided to you via TWEN or in class.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Attendance, Participation, and Readings**

**15% of grade**

This class is most valuable if everyone attends and participates in the discussion. As such, you are required to attend each class and should contact me in advance if you need to miss a class or if you will be late. The use of laptops and cell phones during class is prohibited as it interferes with discussion.

In your placement, you will have access to confidential and privileged information and materials. The rules of Professional Responsibility bar you from revealing confidential or privileged information. During class do not discuss any privileged or confidential information.

All assigned readings will be available on TWEN or provided in class. Please review the readings prior to each class.

### **Journal Assignments**

**15% of grade**

Each of you will keep a journal in which you discuss the progress of your externship and reflect on what you are learning in your externship or in class, whether about substantive law, lawyers, legal institutions or yourself. Critical reflection is an essential part of learning from experience, and the act of writing about your experiences should help you organize and clarify your thoughts and feelings about your externship. The journals also provide insight for discussion about the demands and constraints of the roles of lawyers and judges, which is a major focus of the course.

**Content:** Weekly journal topics will be provided to get you started. Journals must be typed, double spaced, and 1-2 pages. Your journal should be more than just an account of what you did each day. Rather, they should focus on what you are learning about and how you are feeling about your experiences at your externship.

**Confidentiality:** Please careful when writing in your journals not to disclose any client confidences. If you have a question about whether it is appropriate to include a particular item, ask your supervisor or ask me. If you are in doubt, err on the side of non-disclosure.

**Due Date:** Journals are generally due on the Sunday before each class.

**Time Keeping:** Journals should include your timesheet for the prior week, along with a brief description of what you did at your externship.

### **Written Work Product**

**10% of grade**

At the conclusion of your placement, you must submit your written work product (e.g., memoranda, pleadings, motions, interview notes, trial notebook, etc), which represents the array of work that you have performed and skills you have developed during your placement.

Three credit enrollment requires 10 pages of written work product, four credit enrollment requires 15 pages. The page requirement need not be met with just one document. Be sure to remove/redact any information that may violate rules of confidentiality or privilege. If your work is almost entirely confidential or your placement does not allow your submission, you and your supervising attorney may complete the Affirmation of Written Product, available on TWEN, in lieu of submitting the work itself.

### **Field Placement**

**50% of grade**

During the semester, each student must complete 130 hours in their placement to earn three credits, and 180 hours to earn four credits. Students are encouraged to work in large blocks of time, must be present at the field placement site at least two different days each week, and must work at least 10 weeks of the semester. Travel and meal time do not count. Placements may not bill for your time and you may not receive monetary compensation for your work.

### **Timesheets**

Students must maintain weekly time sheets via TWEN. The time sheet should include hours worked at the externship site and a brief description of the major areas in which you worked. Your total weekly hours must be submitted along with your journal submissions. Keep a cumulative list of your time so you may easily tabulate your total hours at the conclusion of the semester. Your cumulative total time is due not later than May 4, 2017.

### **Additional Course Requirements**

**10% of grade**

- The Learning Agreement must be completed and signed by you and supervising attorney and is due no later than January 26, 2017.
- Schedule a mid-term review and exit interview with your supervising attorney prior to your last week. During these meetings you and your supervisor should review your learning agreement and discuss your performance. For your exit interview, provide your supervisor with the evaluation form to be completed by them and reviewed with you. Once completed, you will submit the form on TWEN.
- Submit your student evaluation through TWEN.
- Students are also required to have individual meetings with the professor during the course of the semester.

## **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Class One – January 12 – Introduction & Goals**

Journal: Due 1/8/17

Describe your goals for the internship. What skills would you like to develop? Do you have short term and long term goals? How do you plan to accomplish these goals?

Reading:

1. Learning from Practice, Chapters 1 & 2

## **Class Two – January 19 – Managing the Work – Supervision, Feedback & Assignments**

Journal: Due 1/15/17 Describe the process for supervision, feedback and assignments. Is your supervisor taking time to manage your experience, or are they more hands off? Are there other attorneys who are playing a part in your supervision. If so, how is that working out?

Reading:

1. Learning From Supervision – Chapter 3
2. What Every Law Student Needs to Excel as an Attorney
3. 26 Lawyering Effectiveness Factors

## **January 26 – No Class – Observation Week**

Make it a point to observe a lawyer "in action." Either go to court; ask to sit in on a client interview; or if nothing else, ask to observe a conference call. Try to get outside the experience of researching and writing to watch a lawyer in your office practicing law.

Reading: Observation – Chapter 4

Journal: Due 1/22/17 What did you observe? What particular skills did you notice that the lawyer you were observing used? What are some things you would like to emulate in your practice or not, and why?

## **Class Three – February 2 – Ethics, Conflicts, Confidentiality**

Journal: Due 1/29/17 Describe any ethical issues you may have encountered during the last few weeks and how they were resolved. Have you observed any lawyers behaving honestly or dishonestly? Civilly or uncivilly?

Reading:

1. Professionalism—Chapter 9
2. Ethical Issues in Externships – Confidentiality, pp 279-286

## **Feb. 9 – No Class – Individual Meetings – Journal (free choice) due 2/5/17**

## **Class Four – February 16 – Communications – Tools and Styles**

Journal: Due 2/12/17 How are you communicating with your supervisor? How does she or he communicate with you? Is it by phone, through email, or in person? Is the style of communication formal, casual, or does it vary? Any email protocol or use of social media policies at your externship site? Any thoughts on interoffice communication as it compares to client communication?

Reading:

1. Effective Communication and Professional Relationships—Chapter 5 pp. 83-107
2. Email Etiquette for Lawyers

## **Class Five – February 23—Cultural Competency**

Journal: Due 2/19/17 How are you observing cultural competency issues in your placement? How about as they relate to clients? How is cultural competency reflected in the composition of the office? Is that topic discussed or addressed in your work or in office dynamics? How do you anticipate cultural competency could arise as it relates to lawyering.

Reading:

1. Cultural Competence—Chapter 6 pp. 113-119; 122-125
2. Bias –Chapter 7, pp 167-172
3. Five Habits for Cross Cultural Lawyering 151-152

## **Class Six – March 2—Relationship Building & Networking—ATTEND A Networking Event**

Journal: Due 2/26/17 Attend a networking event this week and write about it in your journal. How did you feel before you attended the event? How did you introduce yourself to people? Were there any awkward moments and how did you handle them? In general, describe the event and what if anything you enjoyed most about it.

Reading:

1. Developing Your Game Plan – Building Meaningful Professional Connections
2. A Distinguished Career Starts with Networking

## **Class Seven – March 9 – Work Life Balance, Stress Management**

Journal: Due 3/5/17 What do you like to do for fun? How do you handle stress? What is your assessment of how the people in the office handle stress and work life balance? Have you made any observations about office hours and staff working extended hours? Does this vary depending on the person's position in the office? What does work life balance mean to you?

Reading:

1. Balancing Personal Life and Professional Life – Chapter 25
2. A Law Student's Guide to Being a Happy, Healthy, and Honorable Lawyer

\*Sign up for Presentations

## **March 16 – No Class – Spring Break**

## **Class Eight – March 23 – Career Development**

Journal: Due 3/19/17 Could you see yourself working in an office like the one where you are currently externing? What have you learned about yourself in terms of your interests, projects you enjoy and tasks you don't like? How has this experience impacted your thoughts on how you might want to use your law degree? What are you looking for in terms of an office environment, culture, supervision, training, and work life balance?

Reading:

1. Externships and Career Planning – Chapter 26

## **Class Nine – March 30 —Finishing Strong**

Journal: Due 3/26/17 What are the top five things you have enjoyed most about your externship and what are the five greatest challenges? As you being reflecting back on your experience, is this the type of law you would like to practice, why or why not?

Reading: Looking Back, Looking Forward – Chapter 28

## **April 6 No Class**

## **Classes Ten and Eleven – April 13 & 20– Class Presentations**

**Presentations:** Prepare for a 10 minute presentation on your externship experience. Develop a theme. You should think about what you want the audience to take away from your presentation. Include in your presentation what you have learned through your externship, how this experience impacted you, how this experience relates to what you are learning in your studies, any surprises, any particularly positive or eye opening experience? Is there anything that you found concerning that is either a systemic issue or something regarding the practice or the profession? How has the externship impacted your view of your future career choices? Any advice for your classmates based on your experience?

Final Journal: Due 4/16/17 Review each of your prior journal entries. Did any of your views or goals change from the beginning of the externship to now? What skills did you develop? How has the externship impacted your thoughts on the role of lawyers, what it means to be professional, ethical, and competent? Share your thoughts on the kind of lawyer you would like to be and the type of work you might want to do in the future. Was this experience helpful to you?