Attorney Practice EXTERNSHIP Course SYLLABUS – 860.512 2058

**University of Baltimore School of Law**

**SPRING 2018**

**Course**: Attorney Practice Externship

LAW Course Number 860.512

**Instructor**: Maria Ellena Chavez-Ruark

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Available for individual consultation by appointment

**Days/Time:** Thursdays from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Location:**  Room assignments are available through MyUB.

**Course Description**: Under the supervision of a practicing attorney and faculty supervisor, students learn about the lawyering process first hand by interning in the private or public sector and attending a classroom component. Students develop reflective learning and problem solving skills, increase their substantive legal knowledge, explore issues of professionalism and ethics, and gain a deeper understanding of the legal system and the practice of law.

**Course Materials:**  We will use Westlaw’s TWEN system as our primary out-of-class communication tool. The syllabus for the course, additional reading assignments and other important information will be posted on TWEN. All assignments are to be submitted through the TWEN assignment box. Your name should be included at the top of all materials submitted. Plan to check TWEN regularly so you are knowledgeable of all matters affecting this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** At the end of this class, students will be proficient in their ability to build communication skills both orally and in writing, develop a range of skills necessary to be successful in the legal profession, understand the importance of professionalism in the legal profession and utilize experiential learning tools to establish professional and personal goals.

**Grades:**  This is a pass/fail course. You must complete each of the following requirements to pass the course:

Attendance, participation and reading assignments 15%

Journal assignments 15%

Written work product 15%

Field placement 45%

Additional course requirements 10%

**Course Expectations:**

1. Attendance, Participation and Reading Assignments (15% of grade)

This class is most valuable if you attend and participate in the discussion. Therefore, 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 such information. During class do not discuss any privileged or confidential information.

There is no required text. All assigned readings will be available on TWEN. There will periodically be handouts given in class.

2. Journal Assignments and Weekly Timesheets (15% of grade) – due Tuesdays by 5:00 p.m.

Purpose: Each of you will keep a journal in which you discuss the progression of your externship and reflect on what you are learning in your externship or in class, whether it is 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. The communications will help me understand how you are spending your time.

Content: Your journal should not be primarily accounts of what you did each day. Rather, they should focus on what you are thinking and feeling about your experiences. What is exciting or surprising? What is bothering you? What are your questions or insights about lawyering? What criticism or praise do you have for the legal system? What else interests you or is important to you? What else would you like to be taking place in the externship? What are your observations?

Confidentiality: Please be careful when writing 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 err, you must err on the side of non-disclosure. Time spent writing your journal entries does not apply to your field work requirement.

Timing and Format: Journal topics are assigned weekly and should be between one to two typed, double-spaced pages. Journal entries should be submitted along with your timesheet for the prior week with a brief description of your activities. Each journal assignment should be submitted in Word format, and the file name for each journal entry should include your last name and the assignment number (*e.g.*, Ruark\_1.doc). Journals and timesheets should be submitted via the TWEN assignment box.

3. Written Work Product and Cumulative Timesheet (15% of grade) – due April 27, 2018

At the end of your placement, you must submit your written work product (*e.g.*, memoranda, pleadings, motion papers, interview notes, trial notebook), which represents the array of work that you have performed and skills that you have developed during your placement. Three credit enrollment requires ten pages of written work product. The page requirement need not be one document and can be a series of smaller writing assignments. If your work is almost entirely confidential and/or your placement does not allow your submission, you and your supervising attorney may complete and submit the Affirmation of Work Product form which is available on TWEN. Submit your cumulative timesheet with your written work product.

4. Field Placement (45% of grade) – cumulative total time due April 27, 2018

Time Commitment: You must complete 130 hours in the placement this semester. You are encouraged to work in large blocks of time, be present at the field placement site at least two different days each week and work at least ten 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 timesheet 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 submission. Keep a cumulative list of your time so you may easily tabulate your total hours at the conclusion of the semester.

5. Additional Course Requirements (10% of grade) – various due dates

Learning Agreement: The Learning Agreement must be completed and signed by you and your supervising attorney and is due no later than January 26, 2018.

Individual Meeting With Instructor: You are required to have at least two individual meetings with the professor during the course of the semester.

Supervisor Evaluation: You must have a mid-term review and an exit interview with your supervising attorney. During these meetings you and your supervisor should review your learning agreement and discuss your overall performance and areas for improvement. For your exit interview, provide your supervisor with the evaluation form to be completed by them and reviewed with you. The form is available on TWEN. Once completed, you will submit the form on TWEN or your supervisor can email it to me directly. The completed evaluation is due on April 27, 2018.

Student Evaluation: You must submit your Student Evaluation through TWEN. The completed evaluation is due on April 27, 2018.

**Attendance**: Class attendance is your primary obligation, and your right to continued enrollment in the course is conditioned on a record of attendance satisfactory to the professor. You are expected to attend each class. If you have more than two absences this semester, you may be compelled to withdraw from the course. If you are forced to withdraw for exceeding the allowed absences, you will receive a grade of FA (failure due to excessive absence). This policy is consistent with American Bar Association Standards for Law Schools.

**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:** Use of a laptop during class is prohibited.

**Class Cancellation:** If the professor must cancel a class, you will receive notice of the cancellation by email and a notice will be posted on the classroom door. If there is inclement weather, you 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, you 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 the 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**

**Week One – Introduction and Objectives**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: January 16, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: Discuss at least three objectives for your externship, how you intend to achieve each objective and what challenges you foresee for each objective. Be specific and consider the skills you want to develop and your short-term and long-term goals. For each objective, list experiences, tasks and observation opportunities that you believe will assist you in attaining your goal. The objectives will be part of your Learning Agreement with your supervising attorney. Use this exercise to help facilitate a conversation with your supervising attorney about your objectives.

Class: January 18, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Two – Office Culture, Politics and Professionalism**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: January 23, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: What is the office environment? What is the attire in the office, for court and for meetings with clients? Have you observed any office rituals or habits? How would you describe the culture? What does professionalism look like (give examples)? How would you describe the interaction among staff, between staff and attorneys and among attorneys? Does the office have regular staff and/or attorney meetings, and if so, how often, is there an agenda, is it mainly reports, is there case discussion, etc.? How are issues addressed/resolved?

Class: January 25, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

Due on January 26, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.: Learning Agreement completed and signed by you and your supervising attorney

**Week Three – No Class, Individual Meetings**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: January 30, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: What kind of law do you want to practice (criminal, family, commercial litigation, tax, etc.)? What skills do you think are important for this practice area? Are you skills compatible with the skills needed for this practice area? How do you intend to develop and hone the skills that will allow you to be successful?

Class: February 1, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Four – Managing the Workload and Getting Feedback**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: February 6, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: How busy are you (not enough work, too much or about right)? Do you receive assignments from more than one person, and if so, how is that working? Do you work individually or in teams? Do you receive one assignment or several assignments at a time? Do you receive feedback on your work either verbally or in writing?

Class: February 8, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Five – Ethics, Conflicts and Confidentiality;**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: February 13, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: Have you had any conversations about ethics, conflicts of interest or confidentiality or received any written guidance on these subjects? Have you observed any situations in which an actual or potential conflict of interest was addressed? How would you describe the importance of checking for conflicts? How would you describe the importance of confidentiality in the attorney-client relationship?

Class: February 15, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Six – Communication Tools and Styles**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: February 20, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: How are you communicating with your supervisor? How does she/he communicate with you? Is it by email, phone or in person? Is the style of communication formal, casual or does it vary? Do you believe the communication style is effective? Are there any email protocols or policies at your externship site? Is there a difference in the communication tools and styles when the recipient is a client as opposed to an internal firm recipient? Is there a difference in the communication tools and styles between generations?

Class: February 22, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Seven – Diversity and Inclusion**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: February 27, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: How would you describe the diversity among attorneys (gender, racial/ethnic, LGBT, generational, etc.)? Does the firm have a diversity and/or inclusion policy? If so, what is it and how is it communicated? Do you see an effort by the firm to promote the policy? Is diversity and inclusion important? Why or why not? Do you think it is important to clients?

Class: March 1, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Eight – Relationship Building and Networking**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: March 6, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: Have you met everyone in your office or in your department? Has anyone acted as a mentor for you or taken an interest in your professional development? Have you had a longer conversation beyond “hello” and “how are you” with anyone besides your supervisor? Are you getting to know any of the support staff? Have you participated in any social activities? What, if any, challenges are there as a law student in developing relationships and networking?

Class: March 8, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Nine – Work-Life Balance and Stress Management**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: March 13, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: What does a work-life balance mean to you? What types of things do you like to do for fun? Are you doing them as often as you did before law school? How do you handle stress and school-life balance? What is your assessment of how the people in the office handle stress and work-life balance? What are your observations regarding office hours for attorneys and staff? Does this vary depending on the person’s position in the office or department?

Class: March 15, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Ten – Access to Justice**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: March 20, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: What barriers prevent or interfere with citizens accessing the justice system? Does the firm have a pro bono initiative or encourage its attorneys to perform pro bono legal services? What are your pro bono and public service objectives? How will you integrate them into your practice? What can you do now to start to integrate these objectives into your work?

Class: March 22, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Eleven – Career Development**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: March 27, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: 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 do not like? What are you looking for in terms of office environment, culture, supervision, training and work-life balance?

Class: March 29, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Twelve – Public Speaking**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: April 3, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: This week, observe someone who is making a presentation in court, to a client, within the firm or to some other group. It could even be someone on a national news program or a TV show in which a lawyer is making an argument in court. What did you notice about the presentation? How long was it? Did it keep your attention? What was the person’s body language, verbal and nonverbal cues? How was the presentation organized? Was it persuasive or informative? What did this person do or say that you want to incorporate into your speaking style? What did this person do or say that you want to avoid doing yourself?

Class: April 5, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

**Week Thirteen – Looking Forward**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: April 10, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: Write your “elevator speech” (a 30-60 second statement) describing your externship experience as if you were in an interview and asked about it.

Class: April 12, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

Class Assignment: Be prepared to give your elevator speech in class.

**Week Fourteen – Class Presentations**

Journal Assignment and Timesheet Deadline: April 17, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Journal Topic: 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 and what it means to be professional, ethical, and competent? Share your thoughts on the kind of lawyer you would like to be and the kind of work you might want to do in the future.

Class: April 19, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

Class Assignment: Be prepared to give an eight to ten 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 has impacted you, how this experience relates to what you are learning in your studies, any surprises, any particularly positive or eye opening experiences. Is there anything that you found concerning that is either a systemic issue or regarding the practice or the profession? How has the externship impacted your view of your future career choices? Do you have any advice for your classmates based on your experience?

**Week Fifteen – Continuation of Class Presentations**

Journal Assignment Deadline: None

Journal Topic: None

Timesheet Deadline: April 24, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Class: April 26, 2018 at 6:15 p.m.

Class Assignment: Continue class presentations from prior week

Due on April 27, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.:

1. Written work product (of Affirmation of Written Product);

2. Hours with cumulative total;

3. Supervisor evaluation of student; and

4. Student evaluation of placement.