Understanding the business of practicing family law

**University of Baltimore School of Law**

**Spring 2018**

**Course**: Understanding the Business of Practicing Family Law

LAW Course Number

Section ­LAWF 901.491

**Instructor**: Leslie G. Billman

(w) 410-280-1700

email: lbillman@lawannapolis.com

Individual consultations can be arranged based on mutual availability; please contact the instructor to make such arrangements

**Days/Time:** Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

**Location:**  Check the Law School class schedule for the room assignment

**Course Description**:

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to help attorneys understand the business of family law: how to attract clients, how to decide which clients to accept and how to manage client relationships, as well as how to staff a practice and manage its finances.In addition, the course will familiarize students with the challenges of a family law practice, including clients who are often emotionally vulnerable, which places additional responsibilities on the practitioner. The course also will discuss methods that help the practitioner establish appropriate boundaries and maintain his/her equilibrium.

**Course Materials:**

There is no mandatory textbook. Students will be referred by the instructor to recommended readings pertaining to topics of study

**Student Learning Outcomes: Student learning outcomes include:**

 -Differentiating among law practice structures

-Selecting practice structures appropriate for the individual (i.e. small firm, large firm, solo practitioner

-Understanding the steps needed to set up a family law practice (i.e. insurance, office space, staffing)

-Generating clients through networking opportunities and marketing

-Understanding the financial dynamics of a family law practice’s income, expenses, escrow account

-Learning to run a family law practice for profitability and intervening obstacles

-Problem-solving of day to day financial issues encountered when operating a law practice

**Grades:**

BASIS FOR GRADING: Class participation 10%; Projects: 25%; Final Paper: 65%

**Course Expectations:**

American Bar Association Accreditation Standards 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 recommended reading assignments and to research and locate additional publications that bear on class topics. You should consistently participate in class discussion in order to demonstrate that you have reflected on the issues raised in the assignments/readings/class topics.

**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 Web Site:**

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 and/or ipads for class related purposes.

**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 the School of Law. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; misuse of library materials; use of another’s book or study materials without consent; unapproved multiple submissions; material misrepresentation of one’s academic history or standing; misrepresentation of any academic matter; intentionally giving another student false or inaccurate information about class requirements; inappropriate discussion of exams; and misrepresenting or falsifying class attendance reports. [Reference to School of Law Honor Code, https://law.ubalt.edu/academics/policiesandprocedures/honor\_code/index.cfm]

**Title IX Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy:**

The University of Baltimore’s Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policies are 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 via email at lmetzger@ubalt.edu.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DATE: January 16, 2018

TOPIC: The chicken and the egg: Where in the world do we start an analysis of the Business of Practicing Law? Let’s start at the end… Please read the article linked below and be prepared to discuss how the End is instructional to the Beginning.

1. READING: Anatomy of a Law Practice Audit – when it’s too late. What could you have done differently?
	1. <https://www.americanbar.org/publications/law_practice_magazine/2011/january_february/anatomy_of_a_law_practice_audit.html>