

LAW 790 – ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE BAR COURSE SYLLABUS

**UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE SCHOOL OF LAW
SPRING 2020**

Course: Essential Skills for the Bar
LAW 790
§§ 311, 412

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and by individual appointment using Symplicity

Days/Time: § 311 meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.
§ 412 meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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

Course Description:

The objective of this course is to begin the bar exam preparation process by focusing on bar exam-taking skills and techniques. The course will provide strategies and techniques for answering essay, multiple choice and performance test questions of the type contained on the Uniform Bar Exam (UBE). Because these activities require a degree of substantive knowledge, the course will review portions of selected Multistate Bar Exam subjects and to a lesser extent, a small survey of law testable only on the Multistate Essay Exam. Students will be required to complete practice essay, multiple choice, and performance test questions, and they will receive feedback on their answers. This course is not intended to replace commercial bar preparation courses. Prerequisite: 60 credits completed.

Course Materials:

We will be using several former bar exam artifacts in this course, and I will provide you access instructions for those as assigned. For the Multistate Bar Exam elements of the course, we will be using the Kaplan materials indicated below:

Title: MBE Subjects Outline Materials (blue cover)

ISBN: 9781506251349

Use in Course: Survey of law testable on the MBE and MEE

Title: Compass (black cover)

ISBN: 9781506257877

Use in Course: Pre- and Post-Test Diagnostic of Seven MBE subjects

Both of the above titles are available in the University of Baltimore [book store](#).

Multistate Bar Exam (MBE) Resources: MBE practice question performance data will be diagnosed and calibrated using an online performance resource indicating student performance by MBE subject as well as time spent on questions. Graded MBE exercises are highlighted in **bold** under “Assignments” below. Instructions on setting up an account and being able to access the Kaplan portal for MBE diagnostic will be discussed closer to the part of the course involving the MBE.

Multistate Performance Test (MPT) Resources: Provided by the instructor as assigned in the MPT review days of the course. All MPT review exercises will be posted on the course TWEN page. Graded MPT exercises are highlighted in **bold** under “Assignments” below. MPT practice exercises will be graded by licensed attorney graders, simulating the process used for grading the MPTs on the bar exam.

Multistate Essay Exam (MEE) Resources: Provided by the instructor as assigned in the MEE review days of the course. All MEE review exercises will be posted on the course TWEN page. Graded MEE exercises are highlighted in **bold** under “Assignments” below. MEE practice exercises will be graded by licensed attorney graders, simulating the process used for grading the MEEs on the bar exam.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Understand the format, weighting and scoring of all three components of the UBE
- Be able to differentiate the testing objectives of each of the three components of the UBE and understand the level of critical analysis inherent in each component
- Appreciate the time-pressured nature of answering questions on all parts of the bar exam, including multiple-choice questions, under simulated bar exam conditions and demonstrate the ability to respond under time pressure
- Determine relative strengths and weaknesses in discrete testing areas through diagnostic assessment of:
 - the seven subjects of the MBE
 - the twelve subjects of the MEE
 - the skills and abilities tested on the MPT

Grades:

This course is a “Pass/Fail” (“P/F”) course. Preparing for the bar exam requires many steps, and this skills course is only one of them preceding a more deliberate, focused bar preparation experience closer to the administration of your specific bar exam. This course does not grade you on substantive knowledge of the law; rather, it assesses your proficiency in recalling and applying the testing skills reviewed in a variety of testing scenarios. Because of this, completion of the assigned exercises for practice MBE, MPT and MEE problems is the major focus for “P/F” assessment. In addition, your “final exam” will be a condensed bar exam scenario within a three-hour period consisting of a simulated MPT, MEEs and a selection of MBE questions. In Maryland, DC and New York, a 266 (out of 400) is required to pass the UBE; this equates to a 66.5%. **To pass this course, the required baseline score on all assessments (including class participation score and the final exam) is a 60%.** The scoring and weighting of all assessments is described immediately below.

- MPT Practice Assignments 13%
 - MPT #2 (Draft/Annotate) 1.5%
 - MPT #3 (Draft/Annotate) 3.5%
 - MPT #4 (Answer/Timed) 8.0%
- MEE Practice Assignments 14%
 - MEE #2 (Answer/Timed) 5.0%
 - MEE #4 (Answer/Timed) 9.0%
- MBE Practice Assignments 27%
 - Civ. Proc. and Const. Law
Online Quiz 3.0%
 - Evidence and Crim Law/Proc
Online Quiz 5.0%
 - Contracts and Real Property
Online Quiz 7.5%
 - Torts
Online Quiz 11.5%

- Class Participation 16%
- Final Exam Performance 30%

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 practice assignments and to consistently participate in class discussion in order to demonstrate that you’re developing the critical analysis skills necessary for optimal performance on the bar exam.

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. Attendance presupposes attendance for the full 75 minutes of class. Students who walk in late or leave early can be counted as absent. If there is an emergency necessitating your late arrival or early departure from a particular class session, you are to inform me of it **before the class session** it will impact or as soon as practically possible after. Students are allowed to attend the alternate section of this course (e.g., a §311 enrolled student can attend the §412 section on a given day and vice versa) only for the same corresponding lesson (lessons by dates below) but should inform me by email for each individual session for which they attend to swap attendance.

Regular Semester Hours	
Credit Hours of this Course	Meetings Per Week
	2
3	5 absences

Course Web Site:

This course has a TWEN page that links to this syllabus, announcements, the class assignments, and other class materials. I will email the class when new assignments and content are loaded on the course TWEN page. However, you are responsible for self-enrolling in the TWEN page and for checking it regularly for course information.

Computers:

Students are to use laptop computers or tablets for class related purposes. The diagnostic tools and exercise progression activities, particularly with the MBE practice problems, will be exclusively through an online platform.

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. Violations of academic integrity can be reported to the bar authorities of the jurisdiction in which the student seeks admission. School of Law Honor Code: https://law.ubalt.edu/academics/policiesandprocedures/honor_code/index.cfm

Course Evaluations

It is a requirement of this course that students complete a course evaluation. The evaluation will be available later in the semester and is entirely anonymous. Faculty members will not have access to the feedback provided on course evaluations until after all grades are submitted.

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 accommodation for academic programs, exams, or access to the University's facilities, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs, at ublawacadaff@ubalt.edu or (410) 837-4468.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for each day of class are listed beginning on the next page. Each assignment is due no later than ten minutes before the start of each indicated class period. For example, for the first day of class: answer the seven MBE questions posted on TWEN (MBE Set #1) before we meet the first day and be ready to discuss them. Unless otherwise indicated in class or by email from me, all assignments will be posted under either “Practice MBE Questions” or “Practice MPT and MEE Exercises” on the course TWEN page.

Assignments listed in **bold** are those submitted for grading and critique that go to the respective MPT, MEE or MBE weightings listed under “Grades” (page 3 of this syllabus) for the “Pass/Fail” grade for this course. Note, however, that all exercises and assignments count towards class participation as we will be discussing these exercises collaboratively during class time. Furthermore, class participation, to the extent any portion of the score for it involves presence in class, is separate and distinct from taking attendance.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

TOPIC(S):

- Course Introduction and Overview
- Review of Syllabus
- Format of the Bar Exam

ASSIGNMENT:

- Review of Seven MBE Questions (MBE Set #1) Assigned for First Day of Class

[THE MULTISTATE PERFORMANCE TEST – 8 sessions]

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

TOPIC(S):

- Overview of the MPT, Skills Tested
 - ❖ Parts – File & Library
 - ❖ Instructions, Audience
 - ❖ Time Management
- Relating Law School Work to the MPT

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned MPT #1 (in TWEN)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Problem Solving

ASSIGNMENT:

- Continue Critical Analysis of Assigned MPT #1 – dissecting the task memo (in TWEN)
- **Draft/Annotate Assigned MPT #2** (in TWEN)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Legal Analysis and Reasoning

ASSIGNMENT:

- Continue Critical Analysis of Assigned MPTs #1 and #2 – the file and the library (in TWEN)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Factual Analysis

ASSIGNMENT:

- Continue Critical Analysis of All Previously Assigned MPTs (in TWEN)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Communication

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Draft/Annotate Assigned MPT #3** (in TWEN)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Organization and Management of a Legal Task

ASSIGNMENT:

- Continue Critical Analysis of All Previously Assigned MPTs (in TWEN)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Recognizing and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

ASSIGNMENT:

- Outlining and Framing More Practice MPTs (in class)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

TOPIC(S):

- MPT – Recognizing and Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Complete Assigned MPT #4 under Timed Conditions** (in TWEN)

[THE MULTISTATE BAR EXAM – 15 sessions]

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

TOPIC(S):

- Overview of the MBE
 - ❖ Format
 - ❖ Subjects Matter, Law Applied
 - ❖ Skills Tested
- Multiple-Choice Test Taking Strategies
- MBE – Civil Procedure Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Civil Procedure Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- Review Civil Procedure Kaplan MCQs Online (Not Scored)
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Constitutional Law Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Constitutional Law Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Complete Civ. Proc. and Const. Law Kaplan MCQ Quiz Online**
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Contracts Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Contracts Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- Review Contracts Kaplan MCQs Online (Not Scored)
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Real Property Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Real Property Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Complete Contracts and Real Property Kaplan MCQ Quiz Online**
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Evidence Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Evidence Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- Review Evidence Kaplan MCQs Online (Not Scored)
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Crim. Law and Proc. Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Crim. Law and Proc. Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Complete Evidence and Crim. Law & Proc. Kaplan MCQ Quiz Online**
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Torts Part I

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned Sections of Kaplan Materials – MCQs in Compass volume; content/rules in MBE Subjects Outline volume – be prepared to discuss MCQs in class

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Torts Part II

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Complete Torts Kaplan MCQ Quiz Online**
- Post-Test Timed MCQs for This Topic In Class

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

TOPIC(S):

- MBE – Final Review and Strategies

ASSIGNMENT:

- Mixed Subject Review of Additional MCQs in Class

[THE MULTISTATE ESSAY EXAM – 4 sessions]

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

TOPIC(S):

- Overview of the MEE
 - ❖ Format
 - ❖ Subjects Matter, Law Applied
 - ❖ Skills Tested
 - ❖ How It's Graded
- Writing Essays for the Bar v. Writing Essays for Law School

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read Assigned MEE #1 (in TWEN) and Write Out/Outline What You Think the Issues Would Be

THURSDAY, APRIL 16

TOPIC(S):

- MBE Subjects on the MEE Part I [Contracts, Evidence, Real Property and Torts]

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Perform Assigned MEE #2 (in TWEN) under Timed Conditions**
- Review Additional MEE Exercises in Class

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

TOPIC(S):

- MBE Subjects on the MEE Part II [Civ. Proc., Con. Law, Crim Law & Proc.]
- MEE Only Subjects Review [Business Associations, Secured Transactions]

ASSIGNMENT:

- Write Out Answer for Assigned MEE #3 (in TWEN)
- Review Additional MEE Exercises in Class

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

TOPIC(S):

- MEE Only Subjects Review [Family Law, Trusts & Estates, Conflict of Laws]

ASSIGNMENT:

- **Perform Assigned MEE #4 (in TWEN) under Timed Conditions**
- Review Additional MEE Exercises in Class

FINAL EXAM – TBD