SYLLABUS
SENIOR SEMINAR: RELIGION AND THE LAW
(Law 590-3 §201)
Professor Valerie J. Munson
Fall 2015

Office: Room 212
618-453-8658
vmunson@siu.edu

Required reading:
All required reading will be posted on the TWEN page for the course.

Individual Conferences:
I am happy to make myself available to you for individual conferences as much as possible. There will be no mandatory individual conferences. If you wish to schedule a conference, please contact me by phone or email. It is best not to attempt to schedule a meeting with me in person right before, during, or after class as I generally do not have full scheduling information available to me at those times.

Class time and place:
Thursdays – 4:30-7:00

Course objectives:
In this course students will learn:

1. The key legal doctrines emanating from the religion clauses in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

2. How to write:
   a. a legal memo concerning a matter involving complex analysis;
   b. a letter to a client involving complex analysis;
   c. an Op-Ed concerning a matter involving complex analysis.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend all class meetings. Only two absences will be allowed. Your absence from more than two class meetings will result in a reduction in your final course grade, and possibly a failing grade. In case of an unforeseeable, genuine emergency that requires you to exceed the two-absence limit, please contact me so that we may meet to determine whether you can complete the requirements of the class, and, if so, how.

Attendance will be taken daily by means of an attendance sheet. Your signature on the attendance sheet constitutes your representation that you have read the assigned material for
the day and completed any assigned writing, and that you are prepared to fully engage in class
discussion in the manner set forth below. If you are unprepared for class but would like to take
an absence and still attend, do not sign the attendance sheet and leave me a note on the
lectern before class begins with your name, the date and the notation “attending unprepared”.

You are expected to arrive on time to class. If you are tardy and arrive after class has begun,
please feel free to join the class, but do not sign the attendance sheet. A day on which you are
tardy will count as an absence.

**Class Discussion and Participation:**
You are expected to fully participate in class in a manner becoming future members of the bar.
Such participation consists of considered comments or questions that are relevant, contribute
to moving discussion and analysis forward, build on the comments of others, include support
from the readings or other relevant authority, and reflect an understanding of the basic
concepts in the readings, raise questions for study, or integrate experiences, other readings, or
other reflections. THE SIMPLE EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL FEELINGS AND OPINIONS OF THE
“TALK RADIO” OR “LUNCH CONVERSATION” VARIETY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE APPROPRIATE
CLASS PARTICIPATION.

We will be discussing topics that are of considerable significance to many people and about
which reasonable people may have differing beliefs and views. Consistent with your role as a
future member of the bar, you are expected to conduct yourself at all times with the utmost
courtesy and civility, according your classmates and professor respect, listening to them with
an open mind, and thinking critically about your own point of view and that of others.

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is a clear violation of both the SIU School of Law Honor Code
http://www.law.siu.edu/Current%20Students/PDF/SOL%20Honor%20Code-Revised%2011-13-
08.pdf and the SIU Legal and Ethical Conduct Requirements
http://bot.siu.edu/leg/policies.htm1#7F Plagiarism will be treated severely and the penalties
for any student who plagiarizes will include receipt of an “F” for the course and referral for
formal academic misconduct proceedings which may result in expulsion from the law school. If
you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, refer to the definition in the SIU Legal and Ethical
Conduct Requirements at the above link.

**Use of Devices in the Classroom**
The only appropriate use of devices such as laptop computers in the classroom is note taking or
accessing information at my request or with my permission. All cell phones must be turned off
(not to “vibrate”) during class. If emergency circumstances require that you be available by
telephone during class, respect and courtesy dictate that you notify me of that fact before the
start of class. Video recording during class is not permitted without my prior, written consent.
Audio recording during class is not permitted without my prior, written consent. Use of any
device for any purpose other than those referenced above is not permitted, without my prior,
written consent. Use of any device during class for communication, entertainment, or any
purpose whatsoever other than those set forth above may well result in immediate expulsion from the course and/or a failing grade.

Emergency procedures:
As required by the campus-wide SIU administration, I am providing the following information to you:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC emergency response plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on BERT’s website www.beret.siu.edu, on the Department of Safety’s website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down), and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Assignments, Deadlines, and Grading:
1. Memo – 35 points. Due Friday, October 23 by 5:00 p.m. by emailing to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu.

2. Client letter – 35 points. Due Friday, November 6 by 5:00 p.m. by emailing to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu.

3. Op. Ed. – 20 points. Due Thursday, November 19 by 4:30 p.m. by emailing to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu and by bringing a hard copy to class.

4. Professionalism - 10 points (timely submission of assignments, level of preparedness for class discussion [as measured by adequacy of response to questions by professor] and quality of class participation [as measured by quality of voluntary participation in class discussion].)

Week 1
Thursday, August 27
Class Topic: Overview of semester
Subject matter content
Writing content
Assignments, evaluation, and grading
First Amendment Religion Clauses - General Background
What is Religion?
Note: No advance preparation is required for this class.

**Week 2**  
**Thursday, September 3**  
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come to class prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).

Class Topic:  
- History of First Amendment Religion Clauses  
- Establishments  
- Intellectual Influences

**Week 3**  
**Thursday, September 10**  
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come to class prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).

Class Topic:  
- Overview of Basic First Amendment Standards  
- Free Exercise

**Week 4**  
**Thursday, September 17**  
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come to class prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).

Class Topic:  
- Overview of Basic First Amendment Standards  
- Establishment

**Week 5**  
**Thursday, September 24**  
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come to class prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).

Class Topic:  
- Overview of Subjects of First Amendment Litigation  
- Religion and the Public Schools  
- Religious Symbolism Outside the Public School Context  
- Public Aid to Religious Schools, Organizations and Individuals

**Week 6**  
**Thursday, October 1**  
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come to class prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).
Class Topic: Overview of Subjects of First Amendment Litigation
Church Property Litigation
Religious Employment Litigation
Why and how to write a legal memo on a complex matter of law. (You will be given a specific fact pattern for which you are writing a legal memo at this class.)

Week 7
Thursday, October 8 [No Class – Work on Memos]

Week 8
Thursday, October 15 [No Class – Work on Memos]

Week 9
Thursday, October 22 [No Class – Work on Memos]

Friday, October 23 Turn in memo by emailing a copy to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu by 5:00 p.m.

Week 10
Thursday, October 29

Class Topic: Feedback on memos
Why and how to write a client letter on a complex matter of law

Week 11
Thursday, November 5 [No Class – Work on Client Letters]

Friday, November 6 Turn in client letter by emailing a copy to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu by 5:00 p.m.

Week 12
Thursday, November 12

Class Topic: Feedback on client letters
Why and how to write an Op-ed

Week 13
Thursday, November 19 Turn in Op-ed to Professor Munson at vmunson@siu.edu prior to the start of class. Bring a hard copy of Op-ed to class.

THANKSGIVING VACATION
Saturday, November 21 – Sunday, November 29

Week 14
Thursday, December 3
Assigned Class Preparation: Read/watch/listen to materials posted on TWEN for this class and come prepared to discuss assigned problem(s).