SYLLABUS

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICAN LAW
LAW 609
SPRING 2017

Class times:
Tuesdays from 1:30-3:10 in Room 164, as well as additional required individual conferences (noted on the weekly schedule).

Required text:

Additional materials for some assignments will be distributed in class, as well as supplemental readings, hand-outs, and review packets.

Learning objectives:
Cognitive: students will have a firm understanding of the major components of bar examinations, including how to successfully plan and organize answers, structure study time, and assess their independent strengths, as well as areas of challenge, to use in developing a plan for passing state bar exams;
Affective: students will appreciate the importance of minimizing personal distractions and completing the commercial preparation course materials during the eight week exam preparation period, and develop a plan of study that will result in passage on the first attempt; and
Psychomotor: students will be able to write properly formatted and structured essays and MPT’s under loosely timed conditions after practicing and reviewing essay and MPT questions and answers.

Attendance:
Attendance is mandatory for all weekly Tuesday classes, as well as six individual conferences. Each student is allowed two absences, as it will be difficult to keep pace in the course without attending the weekly scheduled class meetings. If you need to miss class for any reason, please stop by my office to go over the content you missed in class. Please note that if you miss a class, it is often impossible to duplicate the group work exercises that take place during class, and that will assist your ability to pass a bar examination on the first attempt.

Assignments:
You will be writing essays and MPTs, as well as taking multiple-choice questions, similar to the MBE exam. We will be doing some of these assignments in class, and reviewing model answers, and you will also be completing some of these assignments outside of class, and getting input through individual conferences.
For readings assigned in the *Clearing the Last Hurdle* textbook, you do not need to
prepare any exercises found in that text. Written assignments are specified separately below.

**Big picture details:**
- January: Planning to pass the bar exam on the first attempt
- February: Essays and memorizing
- March: MPTs
- April: Multiple-choice questions (MBE) and stress management

**Grading and minimum requirements:**
This is a pass/fail course, but you must pass every assignment in order to pass the course. Your professor will have full discretion to determine whether you have satisfactorily completed each assessed assignment or need to re-do it. If you find yourself confused or uncertain as you work on the assignments, make talking to your professor a matter of urgency.

This course is a two credit hour course. The American Bar Association standards require you to spend at least six hours of your time each week on the course. The classroom component is scheduled for one hour and forty minutes each week, so you will spend approximately four hours outside of class sessions reading and preparing, doing practice questions, and attending individual conferences.

**Working together:**
Feel free to discuss the topics raised in class with your peers, and studying in pairs or groups for this course is encouraged. The only exception to this is the written assignments for the course (i.e.- the practice essays, MPT’s, summaries, etc.) will only be beneficial as learning exercises if they are done independently. Any copying of written assignments from a classmate would violate the law school’s honor code. If you have questions about this, please see your professor.

**Class participation:**
This is a small section, specifically designed to provide the individualized attention and focus needed to help you in your bar passage journey. It will be difficult to do your best and learn the skills you need for the bar preparation period, if time during class is spent in electronic grazing. Full participation in class, including the group exercises, will be key to doing well.

**Recording:**
Class sessions will not be recorded. Students may not record the class session without the professor’s permission. If you need a recording of a class session due to some exceptional circumstance, please see your professor for permission.

**Accommodations and assistance:**
The SIU Disability Support Services office determines and provides academic support services for students with permanent and temporary disabilities. To receive accommodations, go to the DSS office, [http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/](http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/). There you will have an interview, have your documentation reviewed, and complete a Disability Accommodation Agreement. Give that agreement to the School of Law Registrar, who arranges classroom accommodations. If you do not have documentation, you should still start at DSS for assistance.

Saluki Cares is a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of
distress—physical, emotional, or financial. You can reach Saluki Cares at 618-453-5714, siucares@siu.edu, or http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html. School of Law Assistant Dean Judi Ray will also help you access university resources. You can contact her at judiray@siu.edu, 618-453-3135.

**Emergency procedures:**
SIUC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, you should become familiar with the SIUC emergency response plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in campus buildings, at http://www.bert.siu.edu, at http://www.dps.siu.edu, and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. You should know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will guide and direct students in the classroom if an emergency affects your location. Follow their instructions, and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will assist your instructor if you need to evacuate or shelter in the building.

**Class schedule:**

**Week 1**
Tuesday, Jan. 17

Beginnings and Clearing the Deck
Prepare for class: Read p. 1-10; 97-100
Handed out: Bar Prep Questionnaire

**Week 2**
Tuesday, Jan. 24

Having a Plan
Prepare for class: Read p. 21-32
Hand in: Bar Prep Questionnaire
Handed out: Packet of sample essay questions and answers
This week: Attend planning conference. Sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.

**Week 3**
Tuesday, Jan. 31

Law School Exams v. Bar Essays
Writing essays (in class plus review)
Prepare for class: Read p. 33-50 and review packet of sample essay questions and answers
Hand in: Brief summary of how bar exam questions and answers differ from law school exams
Handed out: Essay #1 for submission

**Week 4**
Tuesday, Feb. 7

Writing Essays (in class plus review)
Prepare for class: Reread p. 33-50
Hand in: Essay #1 for review
Handed out: Essay #2 for submission
This week: Attend conference on essay answer #1. Sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.

**Week 5**  **Tuesday, Feb. 14**

Writing Essays (in class plus review)
Prepare for class: Read supplemental material
Hand in: Essay #2 for review
This week: Attend conference on essay answer #2. Sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.

**Week 6**  **Tuesday, Feb. 21**

Memorizing: What and How
Prepare for class: Read p. 11-20
Hand in: One page summary of what memorization techniques you have used in the past, how useful those strategies were, and what new techniques you will try in the bar preparation period
Handed out: Packet with sample MPT question and answer

**Week 7**  **Tuesday, Feb. 28**

MPT: What are they Testing and General Tips
Prepare for class: Read p. 51-78 (which includes a sample MPT question and answer) plus the sample MPT question and answer packet
Handed out: Supplemental reading material

**Week 8**  **Tuesday, March 7**

Writing MPT’s (in class simulation of partial MPT plus review)
Prepare for class: Read supplemental material
Handed out: MPT #1 for submission and sign-up sheet for conferences during Week 9 will be distributed in class.

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9**

Monday, March 20: Submit via email your MPT #1
Tuesday, March 21: No class as we are conferencing this week
Wednesday, March 22-Friday, March 24- Attend conference on MPT #1

**Week 10**  **Tuesday, March 28**

MPT: In class simulation on MPT#2.
This week: Attend conference on MPT #2. Sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.
Week 11    Tuesday, April 4

MBE: General tips and strategies
Prepare for class: Read p. 79-86

Week 12    Tuesday, April 11

MBE Simulation: In class we will take some MBE questions under loosely timed conditions, plus review and analysis
This week: Attend ‘think aloud’ session on multiple choice questions. Sign up sheet will be circulated in class.
Handed out: Supplemental reading material

Week 13    Tuesday, April 18

Managing Stress
Prepare for class: Read supplemental material

Week 14    Tuesday, April 25

Building Confidence and Final Thoughts
Prepare for class: Read p. 87-95