

WIDENER UNIVERSITY

DELAWARE LAW SCHOOL

ORIENTATION 2018

Syllabus

Students attending Widener University Delaware Law School are permitted to use these materials. Any other use or distribution of these materials is prohibited. 1

Introduction

As explained in the Readings Supplement, Orientation sessions will help prepare you for some of the unique features of a law school education and a career in the law. You will find below descriptions of the class sessions you will attend during Orientation as well as the assigned readings we expect you to complete.

Reading Materials

The required materials for Orientation are the following: (1) Tracey George & Suzanna Sherry, What Every Law Student *Really* Needs to Know: An Introduction to the Study of Law (2d ed. 2016); and (2) the Orientation 2018 – Readings Supplement. You may purchase the George & Sherry text from many bookstores or from an online book vendor. The link for the Readings Supplement is posted on the Delaware Law School web site at <https://delawarelaw.widener.edu/prospective-students/jd-program/orientation/>

You should read chapters 1 through 5 of What Every Law Student *Really* Needs to Know before the Orientation begins on Tuesday, August 14. We also recommend that you have access to a law dictionary, such as Black's Law Dictionary, (available from any online bookseller in hard copy, and also as an app) to assist you with the new vocabulary you will encounter throughout your law school career.

Attendance

Faculty will take attendance for each Orientation session by passing out an attendance sheet at the beginning of each session and having each student initial next to the student's name on the sheet. Your initials will be the only record we have of your attendance. Please remember that the School of Law's Code of Conduct applies to entering information on attendance records. Please do not be late for the Orientation classes. Coming into a class late is unprofessional, disruptive, and distracting both to other students and to faculty. Anyone repeatedly late will be counted as being absent.

Preparation for Class

Competence is a foundation of the practice of law as a profession, and competence requires thorough preparation. Accordingly, you are expected to read the materials assigned for each session and to prepare to address those materials during the session. It is not too early to begin preparing the assigned readings on the syllabus below. As noted above, the workload in law school is heavy and managing the time to handle that workload is a skill you can begin to develop now.

GENERAL SYLLABUS FOR AUGUST ORIENTATION 2018

Tuesday, August 14

Preparation:

Read: What Every Law Student Really Needs to Know: Chapters 1 through 5; and Orientation 2018 – Readings Supplement: Section I.

Sessions:

Professionalism and Personal Ethics

Dean Smolla will address with you what it means to be a member of a profession and the relationship between professional and personal standards of conduct.

Law School Support Services

This session will provide information related to student service offices on the campus.

Financial Aid Entrance Counseling Workshop

The Director of Financial Aid will conduct this mandated entrance workshop. The session will address terms and conditions of student loan programs, repayment options, and debt management.

Wednesday, August 15

Preparation:

Read: Orientation 2018 – Readings Supplement: Sections II, III and IV.

Also, try your hand at creating a case brief for the first case in Section IV of the reading: McCann v. Wal-Mart, using the sample briefing chart template in the materials.

In addition, please review the Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook. You will find the most recent version of the Student Handbook at the following link: <https://delawarelaw.widener.edu/current-students/jd-offerings/office-of-student-affairs/student-handbook/>

Sessions:

Character and Fitness Standards for the Bar¹

This session will consider the “character and fitness” standards you must meet to be admitted to the practice of law. We also will review the character and fitness questions on your application to the Law School as well as how your conduct before and during law school can affect admission to the bar.

Introduction to American Legal Processes and Case Briefing

Many law school subjects are taught through reading and discussing judicial opinions (“cases”). This class introduces students to active reading strategies and techniques as means for reading cases effectively. The class will focus on the *process* of creating a case brief which is an active reading process you will continue to hone throughout the first year of law school. A case brief provides a

¹ Please note, due to issues of time management, the order in which classes will be held on a particular day will depend on the section to which a student is assigned. For example, this class will be the first class on August 15 for students assigned to Section M and the third class on the schedule for students assigned to Sections S or W. Please remember to follow the Orientation schedule placed in the folder you will receive when you check in with the Admissions Office on August 14.

framework for extracting and sorting important information from an opinion. The skills developed in creating case briefs are vital for class preparation, exam preparation, and for much of the legal analysis lawyers do. For the class exercise with case briefs, we use three opinions addressing the tort of false imprisonment.

Title IX Training

Widener University requires each student to receive information and training on compliance with laws prohibiting sexual harassment. This class fulfills the requirement for new students.

Thursday, August 16

Preparation:

Orientation 2018 – Readings Supplement: Sections V and VI.

Sessions:

Introduction to Taking Notes and Outlining in Law School

Attending classes and being fully engaged in classroom discussions are crucial steps in the learning process for law students. Being fully engaged requires taking effective notes. This session will provide proven techniques for creating exceptional notes, as well as an overview of the essential types of information you should include in your notes.

Successful law students prepare for final exams all semester. A critical step in the exam preparation process is the creation of course outlines. If done correctly, the process of outlining will help you understand and retain the large amounts of information on which you will be tested. We will use the cases assigned for the class on case briefing to address note taking and outlining.

Introduction to Graded Assessments in Law School

Most incoming students are unfamiliar with the examinations given by law professors. The examinations test not only a student's knowledge of the rules studied in class, but also the ability to apply the rules to new circumstances. The class will introduce students to the skills needed to succeed on law school exams generally and essay questions in particular. Faculty and students will work with each other on a practice question requiring a response in an essay format.

Effective Time Management and Use of Resources from the Student Perspective

No one doubts that the novelty and complexities of the first year of law school require effective time management and an understanding of available resources. Seasoned law students will lead a discussion of what worked for them and respond to questions you have about how to excel -- and not merely survive -- during the first year of law school.

Glossary of Terms

Please familiarize yourself with the following terms before classes begin.

Appellant
Appellate court
Appellee
Cause of action
Civil liability
Common Law
Complaint
Constitution
Criminal liability
Defendant
Dictum
Dissent
Federalism
Issue
Holding
Jurisdiction
Motion
Plaintiff
Precedent
Prima Facie Case
Relief
Remedy
Respondent
Separation of Powers
Stare decisis
Statute
Torts
Trial court