

LAW 122: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FALL 2019 AND SPRING 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces and explores the professional competencies that lead to a satisfying and successful professional career. While you may be three years away from formal entry into legal practice, the formation of your professional identity begins as soon as you enter law school. This class provides an opportunity for you to reflect on the process of professional formation, from considering your individual values, strengths, and interests, to examining the culture and expectations of the profession, to developing the key tools and strategies you need to pursue employment on your chosen path.

Why This Course Is Important: This course is unlike others you will take in your first year. Rather than focusing on issues of concern to clients, this course revolves around issues of concern to you as individuals and future leaders. Engaging thoughtfully in this course is the first step in the process of professional formation: “an ongoing self-reflective process involving habits of thinking, feeling, and acting to make continued progress toward technical excellence and the aspirational goals of the profession in serving others.”¹

At this early stage, the course is designed (1) to provide space for meaningful self-reflection in an otherwise somewhat chaotic first year; (2) to teach you about what the practice of law looks like and help you begin to incorporate some of the key skills, values, and concepts necessary to succeed in the profession; and (3) to build a firm foundation for your transition to practice after graduation by providing you with critical tools you need to make decisions about employment in your first summer and beyond.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the year, students who engage in this course thoughtfully and with commitment should:

- Develop skills in a range of areas relating to the day-to-day practice of law, including professionalism, professional reflection, interpersonal communication, and finding and succeeding in legal jobs
- Understand the role lawyers play in society and the challenges, responsibilities, and privileges of being a member of the legal profession
- Become familiar with the range of careers in which a law degree is required or desirable, reflect on a career path that will be truly satisfying, and understand best practices in job search activities
- Take responsibility for and ownership of their professional identity formation and career planning

¹ Wear D., Castellani B., The development of professionalism: curriculum matters, Acad. Med 2000 Jun; 75(6), 602-11 (referring to professional formation in the medical field).

COURSE POLICIES

Class Format: We expect each student to complete the assigned readings and engage actively in class discussions. It is up to each of you to do the work necessary to make the most of your collective learning experiences. Unlike your other courses, faculty are here to facilitate rather than lecture. There may be moments we need to convey information, but most of the course activities are designed to enable questions and open discussion. **You will find this course far more rewarding if you arrive prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue.**

Course Schedule and Deadlines: All of us are aware that the first year of law school is demanding. The fact that this course is one credit should not make you feel it is a lower priority. As professionals, we expect you to be attentive to deadlines and a class schedule that is not the same every week. **The ability to keep track of deadlines, manage time effectively, and submit work on time is a critical component of professionalism.** In this sense, this course is closer to the experience you will have as lawyers than it is to the typical law school experience.

You should approach assignment deadlines in this course in the same way you would approach them as an attorney. Each assignment is due at the announced time, on the announced date. **Late assignments will not receive full credit.**

Technology Respite: We have adopted a “no technology” policy for this course. Building relationships through personal interaction with your peers and instructors is an important component of professionalism and a critical skill in law practice. You may not use a laptop computer, iPad, smartphone, or similar device during class, unless an instructor has specifically authorized you to do so, or you have an accommodation approved through the University Learning Assistance Center.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Readings: Most of the assigned course readings are from the online [Career Planning Guide](#) (use your WFU credentials to log in). If there is an additional reading assignment listed on the Class Schedule, it will be available on Sakai. You'll notice these assignments are typically shorter than the readings you have for your doctrinal classes – that does not mean they are less important. Readings have been carefully selected to convey information clearly, stimulate reflection and/or spur discussion.

Forum Posts: Each section has its own online discussion forum, accessible through the course website on Sakai. You are required to post an informal reflection **24 hours before** each class meeting. The posts are not anonymous, unless otherwise specified. The prompt will be provided one week in advance and will relate to each week's reading or discussion topic. In addition to responding to the prompt, you may post a comment about any relevant subject you choose. For example, you might comment about a personal experience relevant to the class topic, or follow up on an issue raised in a previous class. You may post more than once and respond to the comments of your classmates or instructors.

The purpose of the online forum is to encourage you to engage in serious reflection about what you are learning. In this semi-public space, you should be developing your skills of reasoning, self-awareness, and judgment about professional issues. Although these posts are informal, you are expected to take them seriously. They will be available to other students in your section, as well as law school faculty and administration. Avoid the use of shorthand, vulgarity, or sarcasm. We reserve the right to withhold credit for any posting that does not reflect serious effort.

Career Panels: One of the objectives of this course is to educate you on what the practice of law looks like. To that end, we have a series of career panels scheduled for September 23-October 11, designed as an opportunity for you to learn about different areas of practice. Panelists represent a wide variety of practice areas and will offer insight into their day-to-day lives, advice about how to approach law school, and information about how they hire. **You are required to attend at least three career panels**, and are welcome to attend more.

Reflection Assignments: You will be asked to complete a reflection assignment at the end of each semester. You have the option of submitting a written essay or a recorded TED Talk-style video. Details on topic, length, and grading will be available on Sakai.

Networking Events: You are required to attend two on-campus networking events, one in each semester. **Table Talk with the North Carolina Bar Association** is scheduled for **Friday, October 18 from 11:30am-1:30pm** in the Law Commons. **Meet the Deacs** is scheduled for **March 19 from 5:30-7:00pm** in the Law Commons. Both programs are opportunities to meet with attorneys in multiple areas of practice and employment settings. Although these are the only required programs, we encourage you to review the law school calendar regularly and take advantage of the numerous

opportunities to meet and learn from practicing attorneys, which is a critical part of your professional formation.

Informational Interview: You are required to write a reflective essay based on an informational interview with a practicing lawyer located anywhere in the country. You may use a lawyer you already know and have met, or any other lawyer you choose, with the exception that you may not interview a Wake Forest faculty member or administrator, a parent, spouse, or other close family member. If you are unable to identify a lawyer to interview, we will help you find one. The interview should take approximately one hour. Details on topic, length, and grading will be available on Sakai.

Mock Interview: You are required to complete a mock interview in January 2020. These interviews will be scheduled by the OCPD with volunteer practicing attorneys. Details on how to sign up for an interview time will be provided.

Fall/Spring OCPD Checklist: The Office of Career & Professional Development has created a checklist of critical activities or actions that you will undertake each semester. The Spring and Fall checklists are available on Sakai – **be sure to review these at the beginning of each semester**. They contain tasks to complete throughout the semester and cannot be left until the last minute.

Pro Bono Project: We recognize the value of pro bono work by law students, primarily for the good of the community outside the law school, but also for its impact on students' professional formation. Pro bono service helps law students identify their core values, hone professional skills, and develop professional networks. We encourage you to get involved with pro bono projects as your time permits. More details on the Wake Forest Law pro bono program are available at <http://probono.law.wfu.edu/>, and you will receive detailed information about pro bono opportunities from members of the Pro Bono Board during the semester.

GRADING

You will receive a **letter grade*** in this course (awarded in the spring semester), based on your timely and full completion of the following:

- (1) Attendance and active class participation
- (2) Preparation for class and weekly discussion forum post
- (3) Attendance at three (3) Career Panels
- (4) Attendance at fall and spring networking events (NCBA Table Talk & Meet the Deacs)
- (5) Completion of all components of Fall and Spring OCPD Checklists
- (6) Fall semester reflection assignment
- (7) Informational interview and reflective essay
- (8) Mock interview
- (9) Spring semester reflection assignment

*The letter grade in this course is not factored into your overall GPA.

LAW 122: Professional Development
 Class Schedule
 Fall 2019

Dates	Class Topic	Assignment
Week of August 19	Introductions, goals, and syllabus review	Bring signed Student Professionalism Contracts to class
Week of August 26	Strategic Planning: Secrets of Law School Success	Career Planning Guide: Planning Your Legal Career Perry, Joshua E., Thinking Like A Professional, 58 J. Legal Educ. 159 (2008)
Week of Sept 2	NO CLASS	
Week of Sept 9	Self-Assessment: Finding Meaning & Satisfaction in Your Career	Complete Right Profile Attorney Assessment and review report before class Career Planning Guide: The Self-Assessment Process
Week of Sept 16	Critical Skills for Professional Success	
Week of Sept 23	Career Panels	Career Planning Guide: Legal Career Exploration
Week of Sept. 30	Career Panels	
Week of Oct 7	Fall Break: NO CLASS	
Week of Oct 14	Professional Presence: The Legal Resume & Cover Letter	Career Planning Guide: Job Application Documents
October 18	NCBA Table Talk 11:30am-1:30pm	
Week of Oct 21	Professional Presence: The Employer Perspective	
Week of Oct 28	Resume & Cover Letter Workshop	Bring draft resume and cover letter to class for review & editing
Week of Nov 4	Marketing Yourself: Preparing for the Summer Job Search	Career Planning Guide: The Legal Job Search Career Planning Guide: How to Conduct Informational Interviews

Week of Nov 11	OPTIONAL WORKSHOP* Summer job search prep	Bring summer job search application materials and research
Nov 18 – Dec 16	NO CLASS through end of semester	Final Reflection Assignment due December 2 Submit Fall OCPD checklist by December 16 Complete informational interview over winter break
WINTER BREAK		
Week of Jan 13	OPTIONAL WORKSHOP* Summer job search prep	Bring summer job search application materials and research Informational Interview essay due January 17
Week of Jan 20	Professional Presence: Interviewing	<u>Career Planning Guide: The Legal Job Interview</u> <i>Monday, January 20 is a holiday. Sections scheduled for Monday will meet later in the week, as scheduled by instructors.</i>
Week of Jan 27	Mock Interviews (No class meetings)	
Week of Feb 3	Building & Maintaining Professional Relationships	<u>Career Planning Guide: Building Your Network</u>
Week of Feb 10	Mindset, Resilience, & Job Satisfaction	Carol Dweck, “The Power of Believing That You Can Improve,” TED Talk available at TED.com
Week of Feb 17	OPTIONAL WORKSHOP* Summer job search prep	Bring summer job search application materials and research
Week of Feb 24	NO CLASS	
Week of March 2	NO CLASS	
Week of March 9	Spring Break: NO CLASS	
Week of March 16	Planning for 2L & 3L Years	

March 19	Meet the Deacs, 5:30-7:00pm	
March 24/26	Panels - Connecting the Dots: From Intern to Employed (No class meetings)	
Week of March 30	Closing; 2L summer job search timeline; course evaluations	Career Planning Guide: 2L Job Search Timeline Career Planning Guide: Interview Programs
April 6-April 22	NO CLASS through end of semester	Final Reflection Assignment due April 22 Submit Spring OCPD Checklist by May 8

***OPTIONAL Class:** These workshops are designed to provide space and time for you to work on your summer job search research and application materials, and to get immediate advice and feedback from Professional Development faculty. You have the option of choosing one workshop of the three scheduled. **You must attend ONE**, but certainly are welcome to attend all three.