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UW Law School Syllabus Template

Much of the following template was created initially by UW-Madison, but then adapted for use in Law School courses and clinics, to help instructors develop syllabi. Beginning on the next page you will find a list of both required and recommended elements for course syllabi, *specifically tailored for Law School courses & clinics*. You will also find “instructor notes” that provide additional context and guidance for your consideration, as well as some sample language you can choose to use in your own syllabus. The information on this page is for instructors’ purposes only and should not be included in syllabi provided to students.

**Template key**

\***Indicates the section is needed for federal compliance and/or institutional accreditation.**

***Italicized text*** indicates additional context and guidance for your consideration. This language should not be included in your syllabus.

**Plain text** indicates example language that you may choose to include in your syllabus.

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**University of Wisconsin Law School   
Essential Content & Recommended Course Syllabus Format  
[Fall or Spring] Term [Year]**

*\*Important:* ***all UW-Law courses (including clinic sections) must have a syllabus****.   
\*Additionally, per the UW-Madison Provost’s Office,* ***all sections in red below are required for federal compliance and/or institutional accreditation*.**

# **Key Course Information**

General Identifying Information

**\*Institution Name: “University of Wisconsin Law School”**

**\*Course Subject, Number and Title** *Include special topics title, if applicable.*

**\*Credits** *If unsure, ask Associate Dean Kevin Kelly. The number of credits formally associated with each Law course can be found at* [*http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/law/*](http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/law/)

**\*Course Description**

**\*Requisites**

**\*Meeting Time and Location**

**\*Instructional Modality** *Mode of instruction: in-person, online or hybrid.***\*Instructor Contact Info** *Title, name, office hours, and email.*

**\*(If applicable) Teaching Assistant Contact Info** *Name, office hours, and email.*

## \*Course Learning Outcomes

*The University requires, and the Law Faculty has also voted, to require Learning Outcomes on all Law course syllabi. Course learning outcomes are statements about the knowledge and skills that students are expected to know, be able to do, or value by the end of the course. If necessary, see guidance on* [*how to write learning outcomes*](https://assessment.provost.wisc.edu/student-learning-outcomes/writing-student-learning-outcomes/)*.*

\*How Credit Hours are Met by the Course  
*ABA Standard 310 requires 42.5 hours of combined in-class instruction time and out-of-class student work for each academic credit. (For courses with exams, this includes time spent studying for, and taking, an exam). The applicable ABA Standard uses a helpful guideline of two hours out of class work for every hour in class, but there is technically no required ‘seat time’: the 42.5 hours minimum of student work per credit hour is the bottom-line figure.[[1]](#footnote-1) In conjunction with time spent in class, instructors must carefully assess the amount of out-of-class assignments, readings, etc., to ensure sufficient work is being required of students. If you have questions, please contact Associate Dean Kevin Kelly.* *See* [*these recommendations*](http://law.wisc.edu/facstaff/forms/law_school_course_credit_hour_expectations.docx) *for how to describe credit-hour information in your Law course syllabus.* **CREDIT HOURS [*sample statement (3-credit course)*]**: This is a three-credit course, which meets twice per week in 80-minute class sessions. In accordance with ABA standards, you should expect approximately three hours of out-of-class work, mostly reading, for each class session.

**\***Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction

*Make explicit in the syllabus how this course provides regular and substantive student-instructor interaction. Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning and assessment through at least two of the following: direct instruction, providing feedback on student work, providing information about course content, facilitating discussion of course content, or other substantive interaction. Regular interaction is predictable and scheduled interaction with students consistent with the course length (usually at least weekly but more often in a course of short duration*).  *Find more information on* [*regular and substantive instruction*](https://kb.wisc.edu/apir/107640) *including examples and sample syllabi statements.*

# **Course Expectations**

## \*Grading

* *Indicate how the course is graded and relative weights of assessments*
* *Indicate whether/how attendance and/or participation impacts a student’s course grade.*
* *Indicate that, for JD students, all regularly graded courses are subject to the Law School’s grading curve (Law School Rule 2.07).*
* *Note: effective as of Fall 2022, if your course has a writing intensive requirement and you believe for pedagogical reasons or because of the nature of assignments the course should not be subject to the Law School’s grading curve, your course must be graded on the basis of either S+, S, S- and U or on the basis of S and U, in lieu of letter grades. See Law School Rule 2.01(6).*
* *If you have questions about grading (including compliance with the required Law School grading curve) please contact Associate Dean Kevin Kelly*

**\***Attendance

* ***Indicate that regular class attendance is required by ABA Standard 308 and Law School Rule 5.01****. [Note: Law School Rule 5.02 authorizes lowering of final grade in the course for poor attendance.]*
* *Provide any additional attendance-related policies or requirements you have (see ‘Grading’ section above).*

## \*Course Website and Digital Instructional Tools

* *Provide link to the course website (if available).*
* *Provide information about the university’s learning management system,* [*Canvas*](https://it.wisc.edu/services/canvas/)*, and other University instructional tools or platforms (e.g.,* [*Zoom*](https://it.wisc.edu/services/web-conferencing-zoom/)*,* [*MS Teams*](https://kb.wisc.edu/office365/page.php?id=73588)*,* [*WebEx Meetings,*](https://it.wisc.edu/learn/guides/getting-started-with-webex-meetings/) *etc.) that will be used in the course.*

## \*Required Textbook, Software & Other Course Materials

* *List any required materials such as textbooks, open educational resources and eTexts.*
* *List any required course or eText fees, if applicable.*
* *List any required software or tools, even if available at no additional cost as part of UW-Madison licensing. Include directions on how students can access the software or tools, such as through the* [*Campus Software Library*](https://it.wisc.edu/services/software/)*.*

## \*Exams, Quizzes, Papers & Assignments

* *Provide rules and expectations concerning assignments.*
* *Explain how assignments will be submitted (online, Canvas, Dropbox, instructor mailbox, etc.)*
* *If applicable, indicate that 2L/3L students may satisfy the Upper-level Writing Requirement in the course. [This entails a writing project (or projects) that include(s): (1) at least 20 pages (double-spaced) of written work; (2) submission of at least one draft on which the instructor provides, for the entirety of this written work, feedback which specifically assesses student writing (apart from any substantive content); (3) the instructor’s feedback is provided in time for the student to assess it prior to submitting the final product.]*
* *Provide pertinent details about any mid-terms, quizzes, tests.*
* *List relevant details about the final exam (e.g., material covered, open-book or open-note, etc.) and/or paper(s).*

\*Special Note: Clinics  
*Per ABA Standard 304, in addition to (1) direct supervision of each student’s clinical performance by the faculty member, there must be (2) opportunities for feedback from the faculty member, (3) student self-evaluation, and (4) a classroom instructional component. If you are teaching a clinic, these elements should be briefly described in the syllabus.*

\*Special Note: Simulation Courses *Per ABA Standards 304, the course must (1) be primarily experiential in nature, (2) have direct faculty supervision of each student’s multiple simulation performances; (3) have opportunities for feedback from the faculty member; (4) student self-evaluation; and (5) a classroom instructional component. If you are teaching a simulation course (e.g., Trial Advocacy, Pre-Trial Advocacy, Negotiations, etc.,) these elements should be briefly described in the syllabus*.

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

**PRIVACY AND RECORDING [*sample statement*]**: Class sessions will be recorded for those students who require them because they miss class due to illness or another good reason, in the instructor’s judgment. Please email me to obtain access to those recordings, briefly explaining the reason for your absence. Recordings, and other materials from this course are protected intellectual property. Students may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. You are not authorized to record lectures without my express written permission. Students may not copy or post recordings or other materials from this course, including to internet sites or commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes. Unauthorized use of course materials and recordings is copyright infringement and may be addressed under the University’s policies governing student misconduct.   
*See more information about* [*privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures*](https://instructionalcontinuity.wisc.edu/2020/04/03/privacy-of-student-records-and-the-usage-of-audio-recorded-lectures/)*.*

**COURSE EVALUATION [*sample statement*]**: Students will be provided with an opportunity to anonymously evaluate this course and your learning experience anonymously near the end of the semester. Your confidential feedback is important to me, and I encourage you to participate in the course evaluation. I also encourage me to provide feedback, including suggestions for improvement during the semester. If there are ways in which the class can be improved for you and your classmates, I’d appreciate your letting me know earlier rather than later.

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION [*sample statement*]:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values of the University of Wisconsin Law School. These values are inextricably linked to our pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and service. We are committed to creating a welcoming environment for people who embody a wide range of identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, military or veteran status, or other prohibited grounds is not acceptable.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS [*sample statement*]:** The University and Law School support the right of all students to a full and equal educational opportunity to learn. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), WI Stat. 36.12, and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855)](https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-855) require the University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform Assistant Dean Lauren Devine of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability occurs or has been recognized. Dean Devine will work in coordination with the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/) and the instructor to identify and provide reasonable accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND ELECTION SERVICE [*sample statement*]:** Any student who needs to miss class for a religious observance will be accommodated. Students will also be accommodated if they need to miss class to work as election officials. Please notify me by email within the first two weeks of class, if you will need to miss class for election day service or a religious observance.

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES [*sample statement*]:**  The University is committed to the mental and emotional well-being of all students. Many students struggle with mental health challenges during law school. If you ever find yourself facing such challenges, please do not hesitate to ask for help. Information is available at <https://law.wisc.edu/wellness/mental-health.html>. The Law School has a full-time counselor, John Schneider, LCSW, dedicated to providing confidential counseling at no cost. You may reach him at [john.schneider@wisc.edu](mailto:john.schneider@wisc.edu) to schedule an appointment. You may also seek help from University Health Service (UHS) at 608.265.5600. The Wisconsin Lawyers’ Assistance Program 24/7 Help Line provides confidential services to law students, at 800.543.2625. For additional resources, please contact Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Lauren Devine at [lauren.devine@wisc.edu](mailto:lauren.devine@wisc.edu) . In an emergency, please call 911.

**INFORMATION REGARDING STUDENT USE OF ARTIFICAL INTELLIGENCE (AI):** *According to the Law School’s No Collaboration Policy (Law School Rule* [*6.11*](https://law.wisc.edu/current/rules/chap6.html#6.11)*), “no collaboration with, or assistance from, other persons is permitted on exams, papers, or written exercises, except to the extent that the instructor has granted permission therefore in writing.”  This policy does not address artificial intelligence..*

*Law School Rule 3.20 requires all Law School instructors to establish a policy for student use of generative AI in their courses. “The policy must be clearly communicated to students and be included on the course syllabus…”*

*Instructors have the discretion to decide whether students may use AI in your classroom. This decision is complex and nuanced; there is no one-size fits all approach. Instead, instructors should consider doing a “core skills/knowledge” assessment. [See* [*Making a Decision about whether to Allow AI in your Classroom*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T9snWv-fVUO8q-3xdd8Ij86Li72Q_go78QqU9kjF2tI/edit#heading=h.ncuzdzccxo33) *from the UW Law School Artificial Intelligence Working Group, August 2023.]*

*If you decide that students may use AI, you should explicitly state what tools students are - and are not - allowed to use and for what purpose.  Depending on your pedagogical values and course learning outcomes, consider adopting or revising one of the sample statements below for your syllabus. These sample statements are adapted from the* [*University of Massachusetts Amherst Center for Teaching and Learning*](https://www.umass.edu/ctl/how-do-i-consider-impact-ai-tools-chatgpt-my-courses)*)*

**Use of AI is Prohibited** **[*sample statement*]**:   
This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves. Students should not use generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, to write any portion of an assignment for them.

**Use of AI is Allowed for Certain Tasks with Attribution** **[*sample statement*]**:   
The use of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course to ***[insert specific task(s) such as to conduct research, to generate ideas, to revise existing work you have written]***.  Students must cite or otherwise acknowledge the use of any AI-generated material that informed their work (see [examples from the Chicago Manual of Style](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html)). Students who have permission to use generative AI should do so thoughtfully and carefully.  Be aware that the material generated may be inaccurate, incomplete, biased, or otherwise problematic and that the use of AI may stifle your independent thinking and impede your learning.

**Use of AI is Encouraged for Certain Tasks with Attribution [*sample statement*]**:In this course, students are encouraged to use generative AI tools, including ChatGPT to ***[insert specific task(s) such as to conduct research, to generate ideas, to revise existing work you have written].***  Students must cite or otherwise acknowledge the use of any AI-generated material that informed their work (see [examples from the Chicago Manual of Style](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html)). Students who have permission to use generative AI should do so thoughtfully and carefully.  Be aware that the material generated may be inaccurate, incomplete, biased, or otherwise problematic and that the use of AI may stifle your independent thinking and impede your learning.

**SCHEDULE …**

*This is where you provide reading assignments, dates, etc.*

**[End]**

1. UW-Madison [policy statement](https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1011) on the definition of the credit hour: “Generally, UW–Madison will follow the federal credit-hour definition: one hour (i.e., 50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty/qualified instructor instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks, or the equivalent engagement over a different time period.” This is the equivalent of 42.5 hours per credit overall, *viz*.: “15x50 minutes + 15x2 hours”; *see* [ABA Standards](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2022-2023/2022-2023-standards-and-rules-of-procedure.pdf): Standard 310 (Interpretation 310-1). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)