

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.

**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 Emily Cauble. The number of credits formally associated with each Law course can be found on the law school course schedule.*

**\*Course Description** *you can find the official course description by looking up the course* [*here*](https://enroll.wisc.edu/search)*.*

**\*Requisites** *you can find this information by looking up the course* [*here*](https://enroll.wisc.edu/search)*.*

**\*Course attributes** *you can find this information by looking up the course* [*here*](https://enroll.wisc.edu/search)*.*

**\*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 Emily Cauble.* **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.

You can find sample statements for other types of courses in the Law School Course Credit Hour Expectations document available on the Faculty & Staff Resources page [here](https://law.wisc.edu/facstaff/).

Course Overview

* *Include any additional information not included in the course description. For example, you may discuss how students will benefit most from the course, the type of work the course involves, etc.*

# **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: 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). You should explain the criteria that you will use when assigning these grades.*
* *If you have questions about grading (including compliance with the required Law School grading curve) please contact Associate Dean Emily Cauble*

**\***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.*
* *Note: if you plan to give a proctored exam and allow students to access their textbook during the exam, you need to consider what kind of Textbook you are allowing them to purchase.*
	+ ***If your exam mode will be closed mode (meaning that you do not allow students to access the internet or their hard drives during the exam), then you must require that students obtain books in hard copy not ebooks. You should make this clear on your syllabus and remind students in class and via email. We also recommend that you survey your students to verify that they have obtained the book in hard copy.***
	+ ***If your exam mode will be open mode (meaning that you allow students to access their hard drives but not the internet), then you should verify (by contacting the publisher) that the e-book version is downloadable. If the e-book version is not downloadable and can only be accessed with internet access, then you must require that students obtain books in hard copy not ebooks. You should make this clear on your syllabus and remind students in class and via email. We also recommend that you survey your students to verify that they have obtained the book in hard copy.***
* *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, exam mode, 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

***Note: Many of the policies below are based upon University sample policies, which are periodically updated and can be found*** [***here***](https://teachlearn.wisc.edu/course-syllabi/)***. The policies below are based on what was available as of July 2025.***

**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 enrolled in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. You are not authorized to record lectures without my express written permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability who has an approved accommodation that includes recording for this class. 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, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct. View [more information about FERPA](https://registrar.wisc.edu/ferpa-facstaff/).

**COURSE EVALUATION [*sample statement*]**: Students will be provided with an opportunity to anonymously evaluate this course and your learning experience 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 you 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 & INCLUSION [*sample statement*]:** Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for the University of Wisconsin–Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. UW–Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES [*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 to access and participate in 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 instructional and course-related 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 schedule an appointment with him via the MyUHS application/website or by calling (608) 265-5600 option 2 and requesting to meet with embedded Counselor Schneider. You may also use his drop-in appointments in Room 5101--a self-scheduling link with drop-in times is available at <https://law.wisc.edu/wellness/counseling.html>. 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 . 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/2024-2025/2024-2025-standards-chapter-3.pdf): Standard 310 (Interpretation 310-1). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)