

**Course L900**  
**Extern Syllabus**  
**Fall 2008, Class Room 342**  
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[www.law.loyno.edu/extern](http://www.law.loyno.edu/extern)

## **Course Description**

The educational objectives of the Extern Program are to strengthen your skills in order to enhance your competence upon initiating the practice of law.

In connection with that objective, you are expected to work on your ability to analyze and solve legal problems, evaluate legal arguments, communicate effectively in written and oral forms, set deadlines and meet them, implement a coherent and effective research strategy, and know and be able to use fundamental research tools. The extern experience also has as an objective to reinforce and amplify your knowledge of procedure and substantive areas of law, and the nature of legal rules and judicial institutions. Last, but not least, externs are expected to know and be able to identify ethical issues in the work they perform.

## **Student Responsibilities**

In order to carry out the educational objectives of the Extern Program, you are required to

- 1) Submit a Learning Goals Plan by August 25. The Learning Goals Plan is a way for you to set objectives for your externship and to track the progress you have made.
- 2) Keep detailed time sheets of all extern activities. You must report your time by first registering at <http://law.loyno.edu/extern> and then using the Online Time Sheet. You are expected to perform 60 hours per credit of placement work. This will work out to a little over 120 hours once you include travel, journal writing and class time.
- 3) Submit weekly journals. Journals must be submitted by e-mail by 5pm of the Friday before our class. (e.g., for class on Monday, September 8, your journal will be due at 5 p.m. on Friday, September 5th. All e-mails must have the phrase "Extern Journal" in the subject line. Please follow the attached format in preparing your journal. Your first journal is due August 29th.

While composing your journal, please pay special attention to the upcoming topics. Give some thought to the topic and include your thoughts in your journal entry. If additional research is required, note so in your journal. Topics are designed to enhance and compliment your extern experience. Journals should also include summaries of assignments/cases observed (no identifying information, such as case numbers or litigant names, should be used- confidentiality at the placement

must be observed at all times); discussion of any meeting had with the supervisors, including discussion of how feedback is sought and whether or not the feedback is adequate; discussion of any ethical issues encountered; discussion of observations of the judge with whom the law student works and of the attorneys practicing in his or her court, with particular attention to describing those attributes which the law student believes, based on his/her experience, are necessary and desirable to a good lawyer and judge; critical evaluation of the judicial decision-making process as observed by you; ethical issues and critical evaluation of your own work and progress.

4) Participate in a regularly scheduled class of 50 minutes duration. You are required to participate in a bi-weekly seminar in addition to the work to be performed at your placement.

As mentioned above, to the extent that it enhances your reflective writing, you should additionally do your own research, incorporating articles, websites, treatises or other information in your journals. The schedule of classes and information on the topics follows.

5) Other Responsibilities: Please remember that externs receive no cash remuneration. Further, day students who participate in this course and are placed with the Louisiana Supreme Court and the United States District Court may not be employed during their work in those courts. Evening students may be employed but not for a law firm. Students who are externs for other courts or agencies may not be employed without the written permission of the supervisor as outside employment may create a conflict of interest.

6) Personal meetings. We will meet periodically to review progress and discuss any placement issues. Meetings will be scheduled to accommodate the supervisor and the student's schedule.

## **Grading**

This course is a two semester out placement with two credit hours allowed per semester. It is pass/fail. As part of the grading process, your field supervisor will be asked to evaluate your performance at the end of each semester. It is therefore important that you give some thought to seeking and obtaining feedback throughout the semester.

## **Course Schedule and Topics**

Seminar topics are designed enhance your reflective discussions. The process of becoming a lawyer is a complex one involving substantive knowledge and an awareness of the role of the lawyer in the legal system. Your ability to identify, analyze and process both will be essential in determining what kind of lawyer you will become, where your strengths are and how you will eventually incorporate yourself in the

professional life of lawyers. As you reflect, please keep in mind that some of the information you need to formulate your answers/perceptions about the process of becoming a lawyer are to be found in the comments of others at the placement. Accordingly, the journal should reflect your attempts at answering your own questions and/ or doubts and exploring the practice of law in general.

Schedule of Topics for Journals and Class Discussion:

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| August 18    | Observation and Reflective Journal Writing. Discussion.  |
| August 25    | Law and Facts: Truth and the Judicial System. What is it? Where does it fit in the judicial system? Does truth matter in the legal process?  |
| September 8  | Law and Context: Justice. What is it? What does it mean in the court room? Do judges think about it? Do clients' think about it? Do lawyers think about it? Does the layman equate law with justice? Is it the goal of the law?  |
| September 22 | Ethics: Meaning of Lawyer Competence. What makes a lawyer competent. Who decides? Are you competent? Why? Why not? What is left out of law school in order to make you more competent at the time of graduation?   |
| October 6    | Legal Skills: Time Management. Are you a good time manager? Why? Why not? What does time management have to do with a law practice? How does time management affect litigation? Set aside a one week period and observe what kind of time manager you are and note your observations. What interferes with your managing time? |
| October 20   | Legal Skills: Written and Oral Communication. What makes each one effective? Does the strength of your case have anything to do with how you communicate with others regarding the case? What considerations are important when communicating with the court? With other lawyers? With staff?                                  |
| November 3   | Class Presentation. Part 1   |
| November 17  | Class Presentation. Part 2   |
| November 25  | Class Presentation. Part 3   |