Law Practice Management
Spring 2017
Thursday, 4:00 – 5:40 pm

Professor: Sarah Read
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Office Hours: by appointment

Required Texts:
Please download copies of Missouri Supreme Court Rules 4 and 5 at:
http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=667

and the “Managing Your Practice” booklets, ##1, 5-8 (which are free), at practicepro.ca:
http://www.practicepro.ca/managingbooklets/default.asp

You will also be expected to read various handouts or materials on websites, including short articles from bar association journals. You will receive copies or links to these when assigned. Some independent research also will be necessary to complete the assignments.

Also Recommended:
If you do plan on opening your own office after law school, I recommend that you have a text to consult on an ongoing basis. Three to review (which I have asked the library to place on hold) are:


The Successful Lawyer: Powerful Strategies For Transforming Your Practice. Gerald Riskin, 2005 American Bar Association

Grading:

Final Drafts on all Major (*) Projects are due No Later Than 5:00 pm on May 5, 2017. Reflective Essays and the Planning Chart are due the week following the class in which they are assigned. Drafts of key assignments should be brought to class on the days they are to be reviewed. Failure to turn work in on time will result in a reduction of the grade on the assignment, and also on professionalism.
Managing a successful law practice requires time and project management skills, as well as knowledge about the business of practicing law. This course explores the practical and ethical challenges that confront the solo or small firm lawyer. Students will be introduced to a range of resources for the solo and small firm lawyer, and gain practical experience in preparing a business plan, client welcome package, and policies and procedure manual. Material presented is relevant to both the litigation and the transactional lawyer.

Course Objectives

Through the course of the semester students will:

- Develop an understanding of the factors that make up a successful solo or small firm practice. Many of these factors are also relevant to success in a larger firm.
- Learn and practice practical planning and time management skills.
- Develop a realistic business plan and supporting materials.
- Explore ethical issues and learn how to navigate them in a professional manner.

Course Rules and Guidelines:

Note that conformance with these policies accounts for a large part of your professionalism grade.

1. You are expected to arrive in class on time and ready to participate.

2. You are expected to attend every class. However, each student will be allowed one unexcused absence during the semester, provided that you give 24 hours notice. Otherwise absences will only be excused for emergencies or serious illness and documentation of either will be required. If you have 3 (or more) unexcused absences you will fail this class.

3. Please turn off your phones before class.
4. Although laptops, tablets or other electronic devices can be used during class for taking notes, making presentations, or otherwise engaging in classroom activities, you should not be logged into Facebook, answering email, or surfing the Internet during class.

5. When participating in class you are expected to speak professionally and respect your classmates. Note also policy on recording below.

**ADA Statement**

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, you may contact me privately after class or in my office, however all requests for accommodations are handled by the Associate Dean for Academic affairs. To request academic accommodations (for example, a notetaker), students must also register with the Disability Center, [http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu](http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696, and also contact Dean Wells to discuss. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

**Intellectual Pluralism**

The School of Law community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Dean or Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities [http://osrr.missouri.edu](http://osrr.missouri.edu). All students will also have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor at the end of this course.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of the School of Law. All members of the law school community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The law school community regards breaches of the School of Law’s Honor Code as extremely serious matters. In the event that you violate our Academic Integrity rules on any portion of the work required for this class, you may expect a failing grade in this course as well as possible disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor. *Note that you are expected and allowed in this class to use forms and templates available to practicing lawyers, and also in the course reading, as a starting point for your own work.*

**Policy on recording**

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. *In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity*, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under Section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.
Those students who are permitted to record as an accommodation under Section 240.040 of the Collected Rules are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

**Readings and Assignments:** Note additional readings, both required and optional, will be posted on TWEN for various classes.

1/12  **Overview**
Readings on TWEN  
ESSAY ASSIGNMENT - DUE NEXT CLASS

1/19  **Time Management And Planning**
Readings on TWEN  
Planning Ahead Guide at [www.mobab.org](http://www.mobab.org)  
Firm Vulnerability Chart at [www.practicepro.ca](http://www.practicepro.ca)  
FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE  
PLANNING CHART - DUE NEXT CLASS

1/26  **Choosing A Practice/ Locating Your Office**
Readings on TWEN  
PLANNING CHART DUE  
START TIME MANAGEMENT TRIAL

2/02  **Budgets, Financing and Insurance**
Managing Booklet #6  
2ND WEEK TIME MANAGEMENT TRIAL  
SECOND ESSAY DUE NEXT WEEK

2/09  **Fees, Billing and Trust Accounting**
Trust Account Manual (on TWEN)  
MO S. Ct. Formal Op. 128 (on TWEN)  
SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE

2/16  **Clients and Communication**
Readings on TWEN  
Assigned Portions of Managing Booklet ##1, 8

2/23  **Office Systems and Administration**
class on line not in classroom  
Readings on TWEN  
THIRD ESSAY ASSIGNMENT - DUE NEXT CLASS
3/02

“Marketing” and Other Issues, Check-In And Exercises
Readings on TWEN; Internet Search and Post Links
THIRD ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE
DRAFTS OF KEY ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

3/09

Employees, Vendors and Other Help
Readings on TWEN

3/16

Technology
Managing Booklet # 7; Readings on TWEN

3/23

When Things Go Wrong: Risk Management and Professional Misconduct
Managing Booklets 2, 5, 6; Readings on TWEN
DRAFTS OF KEY ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

3/30

NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

4/06

Quality Of Life, Self Care, and Accessing Available Resources
Readings on TWEN
FOURTH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE NEXT CLASS

4/13

Networks, Relationships, and Bar Associations and Check-In*
*class will not actually meet on this day.
This will include an actual networking event, dates to be scheduled. You will also
be asked to review at least three Bar Association sites that relate to your practice
and be prepared to discuss what and why when we meet.

4/20

Making It Work – Monitoring and Evaluation
“Self-Audit” available at www.mobar.org
Assigned Portion of Managing Booklet #8
FOURTH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE

4/27

More On Working With Clients; Questions and Exercises
Readings on TWEN

FINAL DRAFTS OF KEY ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON MAY 5, 2017 BY 5:00 PM