Lecture: Monday/Wednesday 12:05-12:55  
Law School Building Room 2211

Discussion Sections:  
Friday  
Section 301:  1:20 – 2:10  Room 3247  
Section 302:  12:05 – 12:55 Room 2211  
Section 303:  2:25 – 3:15  Room 3247

Instructors:  
University of Wisconsin Law School Faculty

Class Facilitator:  
Melanie Murchison  
mmurchison@wisc.edu

Office Hours:  
1:15 – 3:00pm, Mondays and Wednesdays or By Appointment  
Office:  
Sewell Social Sciences 7129  
Phone:  
608-262-2753  
E-Mail:  
mmurchison@wisc.edu

Course Description: Welcome to Legal Studies 444: Law in Action! This course is unique because it is taught by a rotating cast of faculty from the UW Law School. Each instructor will lecture on materials of his or her choosing for approximately two weeks. Each instructor will provide guidance for their particular segment. In general, you should have read all the materials for each segment by the last discussion section for that segment. Some instructors may have specific requests, which they or I will inform you of.

What’s the Law in Action?: The Law in Action is best explained by an article penned by UW Law School’s former Dean Ken Davis, located at: http://www.law.wisc.edu/law-in-action/davislawinactionessay.html.

The Unique Role of a Course Facilitator: This course will not only teach you about the Law in Action, but also it will provide you with the opportunity to take a peek at life of individuals who work in the law. As Legal Studies students, you may have questions about law school, life as a lawyer, or other related issues. During the semester, I am glad to take time to address any questions you may have about these topics. The depth of our focus on these issues will depend upon the expressed interest of you and your classmates. Periodically, I will send around surveys to assess your interest in particular topics.

E-mails: Email should be composed in formal, professional language, and with attention to the propriety accorded to the position of the writer, and the addressee. I will not respond to emails that do not meet this standard. Before sending me an email about logistics or information related to the course, reread your syllabus, check Learn@UW, the UW-Madison
website, and check emails you’ve received related to this course. I can guarantee you the answer is there 9 times out of 10. I will not respond to questions whose answers can be found in any of these places. If your question requires a lengthy and complicated response, I really prefer we talk in person. I can usually talk for a few minutes before or after lecture, but the best time would be during office hours or you can make an appointment to meet with me. A good rule of thumb: if your questions cannot be answered in two sentences or less, or if it is a question that you should solve on your own through the course of your reading, then it is not appropriate for email. Lastly, you can expect a 24 hour turn-around to your email. If more than 48 hours have passed since your email, please resend it.

READING MATERIALS:

Required Reading Materials: All reading materials will be posted on Learn@UW.

Supplemental Reading Materials: Students who are interested in learning about law school are encouraged, but NOT required to read “A CIVIL ACTION, by Jonathan Harr, which provides an interesting look at complex litigation.

GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>70% (7 short papers, each worth 10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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Response Papers: You will write a total of 7 short response papers, each worth 10% of your final grade (totaling 70%). Response Papers are to be written at the conclusion of each faculty member’s segment. **Response Papers are due at the first class following the completion of each faculty member’s section.** (The day the next faculty member begins.) Ordinarily, that day will be a Monday. **The last paper due will be collected on the Friday of our last discussion, April 29.** Late papers will be docked ten points (approximately one letter grade). Papers will not be accepted via e-mail.

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The shape of these response papers vary, but your main goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly and thoughtfully engaged with the material such that you can frame intelligent questions or comments about what we’ve been studying. Response papers should engage thoughtfully with the material; you might hone in on a particular passage or bit of information that interested you, offering a close analysis; raise questions and offer preliminary answers to those questions; or make connections between topics from week to week. See “Grading Rubric” for what is expected of an “A” paper.

Response papers must be approximately **2-3 pages, double spaced, in Times New Roman or equivalent, and with 12 point font.** Papers that are unreasonably over or under the page limit will be penalized. Do not treat these papers as “throw-aways” that can be completed hastily. They are the majority of your grade, and must reflect that fact. **Clear writing, proper grammar, and structure are extremely important.**
**Class Presentation: 15%:** This assignment is not intended to be a burden. Rather, its purpose is to help shape our Friday discussions. You will work with at least one other student on this assignment.

During the week of your presentation (the Monday and Wednesday before you present on Friday) you are responsible for the following:

- Read the assigned material even more carefully than usual, so you are fully prepared to discuss. It is not necessary to read beyond the assigned text.
- Attend the lectures and take excellent notes. Really think about what the lecturing professor is getting at. Listen carefully for the “big picture” ideas. Make note of the questions that the lecture raises.
- Meet with your co-presenter(s) sometime during the week. Talk through the readings and lectures together. Prepare three good questions together. Email them to me (mmurchison@wisc.edu) by Thursday at 6:00 pm.

On the day of your presentation, you and your presenter(s) are responsible for the following:

- Give a 10-15 minute summary of the week’s readings and lectures. This summary should not simply consist of reading your class notes. Rather, make certain you raise the “big picture” ideas you identified and make connections with other material we have covered during the semester.
- You may wish to, but are not required to, provide the class with a handout.
- As we move into class discussion, you are not the only students expected to participate. You are, however, expected to be fully engaged. Be ready to explain the discussion questions you submitted. Raise new questions/ideas as you recognize them.

**Class Participation 15%:** The quality of the course increases dramatically with good class participation. Good class participation means coming to class on time and prepared, following the discussion, and giving your best efforts to provide a well considered answer when called upon. Asking questions or offering comments can also reflect good class participation, but you need not volunteer often to participate fruitfully in class.

So that I can avoid giving seating assignments, please bring a nameplate (handed out at the first discussion section) with your name on it to all classes (including discussion sections). During class, the nameplates will assist the faculty in calling on you. More generally, they are useful so that I can adequately assess your class participation. I expect voluntary contributions to the discussion and will keep track of participants and use this in making a final determination of your class participation grade.

Also, as the class is about Law, in Action (see what I did there?) please send me anything you find (news articles, Netflix shows, documentaries) you think reflect what we’re talking about each week! I can then share these with the class.
Grading Rubric:

A (92-100)  AB (88-91)  B (82-87)  BC (78-81)  C (70-77)  D (60-69)  F (<60)

A-range: Student demonstrates serious and substantial intellectual engagement with the material. The student provides ample evidence of having read the requisite texts and offers sharp critical analysis, not mere summary of the material. The work is well organized, the argument presented clearly. The work is free of major grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors.

B-range: Student demonstrates an above average grasp of the material, but does not fully explore its potential; the subject leaves some aspect of the topic insufficiently developed or unexamined altogether. The “B” paper has organizational flaws and some grammatical/spelling/punctuation errors.

C-range: Student demonstrates average analytical ability. This work meets the minimal acceptable requirements of the assignment in a satisfactory but lackluster fashion. Overall organization is weak, with ideas unfocused or undeveloped. The student offers summary, rather than analysis, of the topic at hand, or makes generalizations rather than specific comments. The work contains numerous errors in presentation.

D/F-range: Student presents seriously flawed work, or failed to meet the basic requirements of the assignment.

ATTENDANCE:

Your regular and engaged presence in this class is both expected and appreciated. During each class and discussion section, I will send around a sign in sheet. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have signed in. If you have not signed in, please see me immediately after class to do so. Failure to sign in will result in an absence. You must attend the discussion section for which you are officially enrolled unless you have some compelling reason and notify me advance.

You are permitted to miss a total of three classes/discussions, no questions asked. Once you move beyond four absences, your final grade will be adjusted downward by ten percentage points for each additional absence. As such, it is important that you think carefully about choosing not to attend class or discussion, as you may need absences for unexpected circumstances. Exceptions will be considered only in extreme circumstances, such as the death of an immediate family member, or the severe illness of you or your child, but do not assume that an exception will be made.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic misconduct is a complex topic with which you should familiarize yourself (see http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html). In particular, note that plagiarism (presenting another author’s ideas or writing as your own) is a serious offense and will not be
tolerated. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the assignment, failing the course, or being expelled from the University. If you are unsure whether your writing constitutes plagiarism, err on the side of over-citation. Be particularly mindful of how you use your classmates’ Presentations in Response Papers.

Students also have an obligation to conduct their academic work with honesty and integrity according to University standards. Therefore, it is important that you:

- become familiar with the rules of academic misconduct;
- ask me if you are unsure what behaviors constitute academic misconduct in a specific class or assignment;
- let me know if you think you see or become aware of incidents of misconduct;
- be aware that helping someone else to cheat is a violation of the rules and may result in misconduct charges against you.

**Sitting in the Back:** Simply put, try not to. Experience tells that students who are closer to the action are more engaged. Being more engaged not only helps you learn, but it helps instructors gauge your understanding. (If you’re thinking about being a lawyer, you’re going to need to learn to sit up front, anyhow!)

**Laptop Use:** Please use your laptops for note-taking purposes only. While you may be an excellent multi-tasker, other uses of your computer are distracting and disrespectful to those around you and to the instructor. Instant messaging among classmates is particularly distracting, and is strictly prohibited.

**Feedback:** Please let me know how I can make our time together better. Really!

**Tentative Schedule**

1. **Intro class** 1/20; **Prof Murchison**
2. **International Law** 1/25; 1/27 **Alexandra Huneeus**
3. **Criminal Law** 2/1; 2/3; 2/8; 2/10 **Adam Stevenson**
4. **Transactional Drafting** 2/15; 2/17; 2/22; 2/24 **Andrew Turner**
5. **Wrongful Convictions** 2/29; 3/2; 3/7; 3/9 **Lindsey Cobbe**
6. **Consumer Protection** 3/14; 3/16 **Sarah Orr**
7. **SPRING BREAK!**
8. **Consumer Protection** Continued - 3/28/3/30 **Sarah Orr**

8. Law and Technology 4/18; 4/20; 4/25; 4/27 Jeffrey Glazer