

Syllabus Your JD is Next!

Course Facilitators and Contact Information

Course Facilitators and contact information will be posted to announcements.

Questions: Feel free to contact your assigned course facilitator with questions or post to the discussion board.

Overview

We're excited to welcome you to JD-Next! In this pre-JD course, you will begin to develop the skills required of law students. You will learn to write case law briefs, analyze the legal reasoning presented in judicial opinions, and prepare for your doctrinal law courses. You will articulate your own legal analysis when presented with a hypothetical fact pattern, just as you would during a high-stakes law school final exam.

You will begin to develop these skills through direct, scaffolded instruction, frequent assessment, and individualized feedback throughout the Skills Workshops.

You will then have the opportunity to apply these skills to a short portion of typical doctrine from the 1L subject of Contracts. While you will learn some of the doctrine of the law of Contracts during that portion of the course, your true purpose will be to orient yourself as a student learning legal doctrine through the case law method. You will be confronted with the elements of a doctrinal law class: (1) analyzing and briefing case law; (2) answering your instructor's questions about the readings; (3) outlining the doctrines as presented in both readings and your instructor's lectures; (4) applying the law to novel, hypothetical fact patterns; and (5) preparing for, and taking a high-stakes exam containing both the multiple choice and written essay questions typical of a law school exam. Think of it as a preview of a typical law school class, one where you can begin to acclimate to the unique process of studying the law.

The skills introduced in this course are fundamental to success in law school. Though those skills may take years to master, in school and in practice, you can begin your 1L year confident in your approach.

Course Objectives

Our overall goal is to prepare you to excel as a law student. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Make clearly written and organized arguments that are well supported by primary and secondary sources.
2. Apply relevant primary and secondary legal sources to specific fact scenarios using prescribed analysis and argument.
3. Apply investigative techniques to support the development of a legal argument.

4. Build an effective doctrinal outline for typical law school exams.
5. Write case briefs in preparation for Socratic cold-calling and open-book exams.
6. Write an effective legal analysis of a hypothetical fact pattern.
7. Identify and articulate the legal issue in a judicial opinion.
8. Identify and articulate the dispositive facts of a judicial opinion.
9. Identify and synthesize the rule of law as applied in a judicial opinion.
10. Distinguish the legal reasoning of the plaintiff, defendant, and the court in a judicial opinion.
11. Identify and articulate the procedural posture of a given judicial opinion.
12. Identify and articulate the holding and disposition of the court in a given judicial opinion.
13. Connect your skills, values, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs to what you have to offer the legal profession as you journey into a career in the law.

Course Workload and Expectations

The course takes place over 8 weeks, during which you will watch approximately 8.5 hours of law-related videos, supplemental instructional videos, and complete online assignments. You will be expected to think critically and complete your weekly assignments without independent research on the legal issues that arise.

Grades and Due Dates

This course will not count towards any credit requirements at your law college. As such, grades will be purely formative, to be used as feedback, so you can get a sense of what is working and what needs improvement. For any graded assignment, you will have the opportunity to retake or revise your submission. Due dates are likewise for your benefit, allowing you time to consolidate your understanding, and allowing us time to provide timely feedback and guidance through class reports on common errors and model answers.

Though this course is an online, asynchronous course, you will be provided with recommended due dates and a schedule. We recommend that you adhere to these due dates for three reasons: (1) learning spaced out over time yields learning outcomes vastly greater than cramming, i.e., learning over just a few days; (2) to provide timely feedback for written assignments, your coach will evaluate some assignments the day following due dates, and you may lose out on the benefits of this feedback; and (3) students who do adhere to recommended due dates in online asynchronous courses are significantly more likely to complete and benefit from the course.

To help you remain on track, we will provide you with weekly time budget estimates, ask you to complete a weekly planning assignment, and provide question prompts designed to bolster learning self-regulation. One study found that these specific interventions in an online asynchronous course significantly improved student engagement and reduced attrition. We take your preparation for law school very seriously, and your completion of the course means a great deal to our research.

Course Format and Teaching Methods

This is an online course delivered via JD-Next's Learning Management System

The core curriculum will be delivered primarily in two class formats: Skills Workshops and Doctrinal

Classes. In the Skills Workshops, you will learn and practice explicit skills, e.g., how to identify the legal issue in a judicial opinion, whereas, in the Doctrinal Classes, you will learn and apply legal doctrine. In the Doctrinal Classes, you'll find a microcosm of a typical law school class.

The Skills Workshops will generally adhere to the following sequence:

1. Watch a short video and read a short text explaining and contextualizing the skill
2. Take a knowledge check quiz to ensure you caught the key takeaways
3. Watch a demonstration of the skill while taking guided notes
4. Apply the skill independently with a general rubric for guidance
5. Use model answers, skill demonstration videos, and detailed rubrics to complete a self-evaluation of your work
6. Revise and resubmit your independent work

The Doctrinal Classes will generally adhere to the following sequence:

1. Read the Case of the Day
2. Watch class introductory videos
3. Take a knowledge check quiz
4. Watch the doctrinal video lecture on the Case of the Day
5. Take the Problem of the Day Quiz
6. Watch the Problem of the Day Review video

Growth Mindset

We believe in a Growth Mindset, that intelligence can be developed, that mastery is the product of effort, and that challenges are an opportunity for growth and personal development. Study after study has demonstrated the power of a growth mindset to help students learn and thrive. As researchers and educators, we take evidence-based practices and the success of our students seriously. You will find embedded throughout this course our belief in you to embrace new challenges, learn from feedback, and improve your understanding through effort and deliberate practice

Course Schedule

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All activities and assignments will be located in modules under the Content tool in the JD-Next Learning Management System Please see the Course Schedule on the JD-Next Learning Management System for specific due dates.

Week 1

- Case Brief Workshop 1: Preparing to Brief Cases; Procedural Posture and Narrative Facts
- Case Brief Workshop 2: Rule Formulation/Understanding the Reasons for the Rule and the Exceptions to the Rule.

Week 2

- Case Brief Workshop 3: Identifying and Briefing the Issues in a Case
- Case Brief Workshop 4: Understanding the Legal Analysis of a Case

Week 3

- Case Brief Workshop 5: Stating the Conclusion and Holding of a Case
- Full Case Brief Skills Assessment

Week 4

- Class 1: Introduction to the Law of Contracts (Hawkins v. McGee)
- Class 2: Promises to Make a Gift? (Hamer v. Sidway)

Week 5:

- Class 3: Basics of Consideration (Kirksey v. Kirksey; Batsakis v. Demotsis)
- Class 4: Consideration (Feinberg v. Pfeiffer Co.)

Week 6

- Class 5: Consideration and Contract Formation (Wood v. Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon)
- Class 6: Contract Formation: Mutual Assent and Mistake (Lucy v. Zehmer; Raffles v. Wichelhaus)

Week 7

- Class 7: Offer and Acceptance (Lefkowitz v. Great Minneapolis Surplus)
- Class 8: Acceptance by Performance (Ever-Tite Roofing Corp. v. Green)

Week 8

- Class 9: Reliance on Contract Offers Prior to Acceptance and Promissory Estoppel (Hoffman v. Red Owl Stores, Inc.)

Required Texts or Readings

There are no required textbooks to purchase for this course. All readings are open educational resources included in the JD-Next learning modules as downloadable documents or links.

Required Or Special Materials

This course uses materials located in the JD-Next Learning Management System. Please check the notifications when you log into the system. Technical errors, scheduled maintenance, and activity announcements will be posted for your review. You will be utilizing the JD-Next Learning Management System for course content, assessments, and communication.

Accessibility and Accommodations

We strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, you are welcome to let the instructor know so that we can discuss options.

Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

This class is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination against others.