School Law EDU 678

SYLLABUS – Fall 2009 Online/Blended

Reaching the Instructor
Instructor  Pamela B. Anderson, J.D.
Address     University of Maine School of Law, 246 Deering Ave., Portland, ME 04102
Office      Once the course begins, I hope to set up virtual office hours so that we can chat online for questions and course issues.
Phone       Office: 207-780-4991
            Cell: 207-653-8065  (for messages)
Email       pamela@usm.maine.edu
            I check my email daily (except Sunday) and will respond to you within a day. This is the best way to reach me.
Web         http://www.courses.maine.edu
            School Law EDU 678

Accommodation
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Some of the course materials may need to be adapted for accessibility.

For learning resources and accommodation assistance, please go to University College website at http://www.learn.maine.edu/courses/.

At any point in the course, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel that you could be performing at a higher level, please consult with me by email or telephone.

Texts
Order from the campus bookstore online at http://www.usm.maine.edu/books/.

Required:

Recommended:
    *Maine Education and School Statutes, 2009-10* (Swan Island Press, 2009)

Course Materials
Course materials, consisting mainly of law cases, statutes, constitutional provisions, and optional articles and web resources will be available on the Blackboard website. For help accessing Blackboard, call the USM Help Desk, 780-4029.
USM Email Communication Policy

In order to meet the academic and administrative needs of the University community, the University of Southern Maine has established email as an official and primary means of communication to all of its students, accepted and/or enrolled. In some cases, email may be the only form of communication. Official University assigned email accounts are created for all accepted and/or enrolled students usually in the form of FirstName.LastName@maine.edu. Students are responsible to read all information sent to them via their University assigned email account. The University has the right to expect that such communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. Beginning Fall 2006, it is imperative that students understand that a majority of University information will be communicated to them via their University assigned email account. Confidential information will not be sent via email. If the University needs to convey sensitive information to the student and the information cannot be conveyed using the password protected Student Self-Service venue, the University will send the information via United States Postal Service. The University reserves the right to notify students via email when any action on the student’s part may be necessary. Some actions can be accomplished using the University’s Student Information Systems that are made available through special links that are password protected. Students should activate their assigned email accounts at https://mail.maine.edu. The complete Email Communication Policy can be found online at http://usm.maine.edu.

Class Structure

Schedule: EDU 678 starts the week of September 14, 2009 and ends on December 13, 2009. Each course week will begin on Monday and ends on Sunday at midnight, for the purpose of submitting assignments. This is a regular, semester-long course, which includes a mix of readings, assignments and application exercises online through the Blackboard Discussion Board. The course will have two class meetings at the Rockland Center of University College, on September 21st and on November 2nd.

Course objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify legal issues related to education and determine appropriate responses and policies.
- Identify strategies and practices to predict, prevent and/or minimize legal conflict.
- Find and accurately interpret relevant statutes, regulations, court opinions and secondary sources related to school law.
- Read and analyze court opinions in school law cases by identifying the key facts, legal issues, holding and rationale.
- Understand and apply legal principles in the core areas studied.
- Understand when and how Constitutional principles may limit a school board’s discretion in creating and enforcing its policies.
**Expectations:**
Online participation will revolve around **topical discussions and/or written assignments**, related to the topic studied that week in the assigned reading and lecture. You are encouraged to think through and write out your online contributions prior to posting them. This will help keep the discussion focused and at a high level of quality, which is more important than quantity.

I encourage you to check out good email and discussion board etiquette at this site: [http://www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette](http://www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette). If we all follow these guidelines, we will create a positive learning community!

We are creating and working within a learning community, so **it is critical that you stay current**. There are **weekly assignments** in the course and **three quizzes**. Assignments and quizzes are always due by **Sunday midnight** of the week assigned.

To plan your time, I suggest you plan approximately **four to six hours per week** for the course. This is an estimate based on student experience with the course. It is very important that you make this time commitment at the start so you will not fall behind in your reading, assignments, or participation in online discussions.

**Discussion Board:**
Blackboard Discussion Board forums will be used as a key part of the course. **Topic Forums** will be set up regularly. You will be expected to post **one substantive original comment** and **one reflective response** to others in each forum. **Please post your original comment by Thursday**, to allow time for others to respond. I have posted criteria for grading the discussion forums in the Assignments folder.

In addition there will be 3 general forums for the class:

1. **Current Events Forum**
   Please post current events where law and education intersect. These may be from the news, internet, or examples from your own school experiences. You are expected to post at least **two new threads** (new topic) and **two reflective responses** to others during the semester. This forum will be graded.

2. **Case Brief Forum**
   You will be assigned **one law case to brief** and post to this forum, so others in the class will have access to the case briefs. The case brief assignments will be posted in the Assignments Folder after the course begins. No responses/replies to case briefs are required, as they are for your information only.

3. **General Questions**
   Please post course questions, concerns, and comments about the course to this forum, and I will respond to them regularly so I can be responsive to student needs. If you can help others, please do!

I will be posting my reflections on the topic forums, usually on Tues.-Wed. following the assignment. I will have a limited presence in the Current Events Forum. This is intended for your discussion of topics and events that interest you and to expand the course
coverage of current legal issues. I will read the posts and respond to issues raised or for clarification. I will not post to the Case Brief forum, but will review the briefs and respond to the author individually with email comments.

**Assignments:** Check the Assignment folder on Blackboard weekly for the week’s topic overview, reading, cases and specific assignments. If you are late on weekly assignments, including the Discussion Board posts, I will accept the assignment but may lower the grade if this is a consistent pattern. Try to keep up with the work weekly! Of course I will make exceptions for extenuating circumstances but you need to communicate with me in a timely manner.

**Quizzes:** There will be three quizzes which you will take online during the course. The Quizzes will be posted in the Assignment Folder. The quizzes will be from the course readings, both the text and law cases. They are intended to check your comprehension of the material. The questions will be a mix of true-false, multiple answer, short answer, and short essays. The quizzes should be completed by the due dates: Quiz One- October 18th; Quiz Two- November 15th; and Quiz Three- December 13th.

**Grading:** Discussion Board participation = 40%; written assignments including case briefs = 30 %; and quizzes = 30%.

**Course Schedule:** See the attached Course Schedule Grid for the overview of the assignments. Assignments will also be posted by Friday of each week for the following week, in the Assignments Folder on Blackboard.

If you have questions, please post to the General Questions Forum or email me. I will also go over any questions or concerns during our class meetings in Rockland.