

LEGAL EXTERNSHIP COURSE OVERVIEW & SYLLABUS FALL 2020

Professor Preston K. Ascherin – externassistance@law.usc.edu – 213.821.4705

Class Days: alternating Thursdays, starting August 27, ending November 19, 2020
(specific dates listed below)
Class Time: 1:15-2:55 p.m.
Location: remote via Zoom (meeting links to be provided)
Office Hours: by appointment upon request, via Zoom or phone

INTRODUCTION

Externships consist of your field work at a placement and the bi-weekly instructed course, for which you will earn 2, 4 or 10 CR/D/F credits (separate from your 8 elective CR/D/F). Assignments are designed to support your learning at your field placement and support your growth as you become an ethical, professional, confident, and successful law student and, soon, attorney.

Externships let you learn from experience. The range of practice areas and placement types is broad; you and your classmates will have widely varying work experiences. Though the settings and work will differ, externships are expected to be reasonably similar to the experience of a lawyer advising or representing a client, working in judicial chambers, or engaging in other lawyering tasks in a setting outside a law clinic. Externships require the supervision of a licensed attorney or an individual otherwise qualified to supervise your work. As with other experiential courses, externships integrate doctrine, theory, skills, and legal ethics. Your work as an extern should engage you in the performance of one or more professional skills. The academic assignments you will complete provide opportunities for self-evaluation and for you to reflect upon your work, the skills you are learning, and your evolving understanding of the legal profession.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The overarching learning objectives for all externships are to:

- develop your legal skills by performing work under the close supervision of an attorney (or other qualified individual) and analyzing your externship work through this course;
- analyze and develop your professional identity and plan for how you will forge your future professional identity within and beyond the context of your placement;
- develop good workplace practices and generally prepare for your post-graduate career;
- gain a deeper understanding of particular areas of law, the practice of law generally, and the values of the profession through opportunities to observe, analyze, and “perform” legal work,

including work or situations that implicate the themes of ethics, access to justice, and the broader obligations of individual attorneys and the profession; and

- develop skills related to remote working and learning (particularly related to communication, professional relationships, and time management).

You will set individual goals, specific to your learning objectives, career interests, and placement.

EXTERNSHIP PROFESSOR(S) & SECTIONS

All students will participate in the same externship course and have class sessions together. Students may be divided into sections, or be included in the same section. All students this semester will be in a single section led by me. You will be given access to the Externship Blackboard page to receive and upload assignments.

Please see <https://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu/> for information about using Blackboard.

Check your lawmail address daily and Blackboard regularly for updates and announcements.

EXTERNSHIP COMPONENTS & REQUIREMENTS

Orientation. The first class session will also serve as an orientation at which you'll receive background on reflective learning, training on timekeeping, learn how to access and submit assignments, keep in touch with me, and answer any questions you may have.

Classes via Zoom.

All classes this semester will be conducted via Zoom and recorded, with recordings made available to current externship students.¹ If you will be unable to attend a class, please inform me as soon as you're able. You will have to review the class recording and complete an additional asynchronous assignment. If you have more than one unexcused absence (i.e., an absence with no or a poor explanation), you may receive a D in or be withdrawn from the course.

During class, you are expected to have your cameras on with your face centered on screen. If your personal situation (e.g., poor internet connectivity, illness, or your home environment) makes this difficult or impossible, please contact me to discuss potential accommodations. Virtual backgrounds should eliminate most privacy and similar concerns. Earphones or headsets may improve audio quality and help you avoid disrupting roommates, family, etc. Include your name when you log in to Zoom, and feel free to include your preferred name/pronunciation/pronouns (or notify me privately if you prefer).

See <https://keepteaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/classroom/zoom/> for information about setting up, logging into, and using Zoom.

¹ Please review your responsibilities regarding use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). Also, you may not create your own class recordings without the instructor's permission. Violations of these policies will be met with appropriate disciplinary sanction.

Timekeeping. Your timesheets are necessary to document your work, but also teach the skill of careful timekeeping and time management. You will track and report your externship hours using Tickspot, a web-based software. Tickspot instructions and time entry tips will be posted on Blackboard. If you have not received an emailed Tickspot invitation (check your lawmail address!) or are not already set up on Tickspot by August 27, please contact me immediately.

Tickspot time entry is simpler than submitting physical timesheets, but **your supervisor must still review your time entries for each reporting period by the due date for that period. It is your responsibility to make sure this happens.** You can print a PDF of your entered time by clicking “Reporting” toward the top of the Tickspot screen, then running a custom report.

Your supervisor’s review serves to confirm you have not included information that would violate the confidentiality requirements of your placement. Failure to obtain your supervisor’s approval before the due date for a given period will be considered academic misconduct and may result in an F. Due dates are the Sunday after the work week following each reporting period. This allows you to get your time entries to your supervisor, them to review and approve, and you to make any changes your supervisor requires. Your supervisor must approve each set of time entries in writing (a confirming email is fine), but do not submit your supervisor’s written approval to me.

Plan ahead. Ask your supervisor to designate another attorney in the office to review your report if your supervisor will be unavailable to review it in a given week.

Academic Assignments, Etc.

In addition to completing your requisite externship hours, you will be assessed on:

- *Seven class sessions* of 100 minutes each
 - class participation is evaluated and requires consistent, thoughtful participation in exercises and discussions
 - come to class having done any assigned reading and other assignments
- *One separate check-in meeting* with the Director of Externships
- *Self-assessments* at the beginning and end of the semester
- *Goal-setting form* to complete at the beginning of the semester (instructions will be provided)
- *Four reflective reports (six for full-time externs)* throughout the semester, which provide opportunities to process and analyze your experiences, giving you a deeper understanding of law and practice
- *Eight sets of time entries (up to nine for full-time externs)* (described above; schedule below)
- *One ten-page (double-spaced) writing sample (two for full-time externs)* as an example of your substantive assignments at your placement, unless your supervisor prohibits the release of such work on grounds of confidentiality (please contact me immediately if this is the case at your placement)

Check-ins and Communication With Me. In addition to your group and/or individual check-in meeting with me, you should contact me as questions or issues arise with your placement to ensure you fulfill academic assignment requirements and get the most out of your externship experience.

Fulfillment of Hours at Placement. You must complete 100, 200, or 500 hours of work at your placement to earn the 2, 4, or 10 credits for which you enrolled. You must satisfy the hours your placement requires even if (1) that commitment is for more hours than necessary to for academic credit or (2) you withdraw from the course. Absent specific approval, you must complete your hours by December 3 (full-time externs have one additional week).

GRADING, RULES & DEADLINES

As stated above, the externship consists of (1) work at your placement and (2) this course.

Requests for an extension of the deadline for any assignment must be sent to me before the assignment deadline and include an explanation of the reason for the request. There are no extensions or adjustments to the schedule for holidays; the deadline schedule for timesheets and reflective reports proceeds regularly, regardless of these events.

Each assignment is due and must be uploaded correctly to Blackboard no later than 11:59 p.m. on the date stated in this syllabus. Assignments submitted after 11:59 p.m. on the due date without prior approval will be considered late.

Any assignment submitted in the wrong spot on Blackboard will be considered missing until properly submitted (*i.e.*, under the corresponding assignment). If you make an error in submitting your assignment, re-submit the correct material. If you encounter difficulties in doing so, please contact externassistance@law.usc.edu.

If you receive a grade of no credit for more than two assignment, you will receive an F. Your meeting with your Professor is a required assignment.

Whether you receive Credit, a D, or an F, is based on the following weighting:

Class participation, professionalism, and check-in meeting	12.5%
Timekeeping reports	7.5%*
Reflective reports (including goal-setting plan and self-assessments)	25%**
Satisfaction of minimum externship hours	50%***
Writing sample(s)	5%

*Timekeeping guidance and examples will be posted to Blackboard.

**Scoring criteria for reflective reports are at the bottom of this syllabus.

***Falling short of your minimum hours may result in an F. Contact me immediately if you are concerned about meeting your hours (e.g., not being provided substantive work at your placement).

COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS/ORIENTATION

Read “Foundations for Practice: The Whole Lawyer and the Character Quotient” by the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, July 2016. Pages 2-22, 26

https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/foundations_for_practice_whole_lawyer_character_quotient.pdf

Complete an online self-assessment using the link below most appropriate to your placement. You will repeat the assessment at the end of the semester.

Civil Skills Assessment	https://usc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a8K78x5avcZlVw9
Criminal Skills Assessment	https://usc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cJ8YkR1clunPppH
Judicial Skills Assessment	https://usc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9XK2tB1I6TiGsp7

Complete your Goal Setting and Planning sheet (will be posted to Blackboard) to the extent you can without input from your site supervisor. Or, if you've already started your externship, review your goals sheet with your site supervisor and complete it with their input. You will upload your goals sheet—but *not* your self-assessment—with your first reflective report due September 6.

Separate Meeting

You will meet once with me individually (or in a group with similarly placed externs—TBD) between August 31 and September 11.

CLASS SESSIONS

Class 1 (August 27)

Orientation

Introductory lecture by Professor Ascherin

Class 2 (September 10)

Legal Research Refresher

Librarians

Readings and Assignment TBD

Class 3 (September 24)

Lawyering 101 (Workplace Best Practices)

Lecture by Professor Ascherin

Class 4 (October 8)

Case Rounds

Group discussions of cases, assignments, challenges, issues at your placements

Class 5 (October 22)

Ethics & Professionalism

Lecture by Professor Ascherin

Readings and Assignment TBD

Class 6 (November 5)

Anti-Bias in Practice

Lecturer, Readings and Assignment TBD

Class 7 (November 19)

Networking, Developing Client Relationships, Etc.

Lecture by Professor Ascherin

Readings and Assignment TBD

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WRITING SAMPLE DUE DATE(S)

Full-time externs must upload a mid-semester writing sample to Blackboard by October 25.
End-of semester writing samples must be uploaded to Blackboard by December 6.

TIMESHEET SCHEDULE & DUE DATES

Reporting Period	Timesheet #	Due Date (all Sundays)
August 23–September 5	1	September 13
September 6–19	2	September 27
September 20–October 3	3	October 11
October 4–17	4	October 25
October 18–31	5	November 8
November 1–14	6	November 22
November 15–28	7	December 6
November 29–December 3	8	December 13
<i>Full-Time Externs Only (If Necessary to Meet Minimum Hours):</i>		
<i>December 4–December 10</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>December 20</i>

- All time reports must be submitted on Tickspot by 11:59 p.m. by the due date
- All time reports must be reviewed and approved by your supervisor **before** the due date.
- Only submit time reports for the periods you work.
- You may work more hours than you need to report.

DO NOT change timesheet reporting periods!

Reporting periods begin and end on the dates indicated above. If you start in the middle of a reporting period, report for the portion of the period worked by the due date for that period. If you start your externship after September 5 or are received approval to work beyond December 3 to complete your minimum hour requirement, email me re potentially adjusted timesheet due dates.

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REFLECTIVE REPORT SCHEDULE & DUE DATES

Reflective Report #	Due Date (all Sundays)
1	September 6
1.5 (<i>Full-Time Externs Only</i>)	September 20
2	October 4
2.5 (<i>Full-Time Externs Only</i>)	October 18
3	November 1
4	December 6

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct: plagiarism (presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or in your own words) is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards and Appropriate Sanctions” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health – 213.740.9355 (on call 24/7)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 800.273.8255 (on call 24/7)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – 213.740.9355 (213.740.WELL), press “0” after hours (on call 24/7)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) – 213.740.5086 | *Title IX* – 213.821.8298

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

equity.usc.edu | titleix.usc.edu

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment – 213.740.5086 or 213.821.8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

The Office of Disability Services and Programs – 213.740.0776

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

dsp.usc.edu

USC Campus Support and Intervention – 213.821.4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

campussupport.usc.edu

Diversity at USC – 213.740.2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency - UPC: 213.740.4321 | *HSC*: 323.442.1000 (on call 24/7)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

dps.usc.edu | emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: 213.740.6000 | *HSC*: 323.442.120 (on call 24/7)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

dps.usc.edu

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REFLECTIVE REPORTS CRITERIA

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Completeness	Clearly and completely answers the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length and is submitted on time.	Almost completely answers the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length and is submitted on time.	Partially addresses the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length and/or is submitted on time.	Does not address the assignment prompt and/or is submitted late.
Analysis	Rich, detailed description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	Full description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	Partial description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	No/poor description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.
Evidence	Clear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self. Shows "reflection in action" and includes conclusions based on synthesis.	Clear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.	Slight or unclear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.	No attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.
Writing	Impressions plus critical reflection (i.e. exploration and critique of assumptions, values, beliefs, and/or biases; multiple perspectives; alternatives; and the consequences of actions). Includes discussion of how behavior may change based on new insights. Correct spelling and grammar.	Impressions plus reflection (i.e. attempting to understand or question the case). Uses correct spelling and grammar.	Impressions without reflection. Errors in spelling and grammar.	No impressions, reflection or introspection. Errors in spelling and grammar.