

Legal Internships and the Law

Fall 2021

LAH 340L (Unique #31085)

Professor Mark A. Levy

COURSE INFORMATION & SYLLABUS

- Class Meetings:** Tuesday – 5-6:30pm – CBA 4.338
- Office Hours:** TBD (or by appointment)
- Office/Phone/e-mail:** CLA 4.416; 512-560-0676; mark.levy@austin.utexas.edu
- Class Home Page:** *To access the class home page, go to this link <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> and log in with your UT EID and password. You will find a link to this course under the “Courses” tab (heading “My Courses”). All course materials, announcements and grades will be posted here.*

I will use Canvas and email for instructional use. I may also add supplemental readings during the semester. For that reason, you should routinely check your Canvas notifications and regular email. I will use the email address you gave for registration, so please be sure that is the correct one.

America’s laws, lawyers, and courts have charted and changed the course of American history. In our classroom discussions and readings, we will explore the role of lawyers and how the practice of law has shaped American society. As a component of Liberal Arts Frontiers, students in the Legal Internships clinic will also intern in law offices or legal settings and meet weekly in class to discuss and learn from each student-intern’s experience. The hands-on experience students gain in their public service internships will help shape our classroom discussions, from topics including legal ethics and professional development to legislative oversight and settlement negotiations. Students will learn about the practice of law and how lawyers serve the public interest while gaining practical experience and first-hand knowledge of different legal fields.

The cornerstone of the Legal Internships clinic will be your participation as a student-intern in a legal, public policy, judicial, or legislative office. While help will be provided to select your internship before the semester begins, the final choice of where you work will be yours. The role you choose should be discussed and decided upon with your host supervisor and the course instructor. Examples of suitable host agencies include the Office of the Attorney General, the Travis County District Attorney’s Office, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, judicial chambers, or a legislator’s office. Private legal offices are not eligible to host interns.

Students should make their best effort to have their host agency selected and approved before the semester begins.

Course Bibliography:

Case law from the Supreme Court of the United States and Circuit Courts of Appeal, as well as scholarly articles from various law journals.

Floyd Abrams: "The Soul of the First Amendment"

Erwin Chemerinsky: "Federal Jurisdiction" (Seventh Edition)

Angela Davis: "Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor"

John Hart Ely: "Democracy and Distrust: A Theory of Judicial Review"

Wortham, Scherr, Maurer, and Brooks: "Learning from Practice"

Internship Requirements & Eligibility:

To be eligible for this course, the internship host agency must be a law-related nonprofit organization, government legal office, judicial chambers, legislative office, lobbying or trade associations, or a private law firm. In the past, students have interned in a variety of offices, including the following:

Travis County District Attorney's Office

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid

Texas Public Policy Foundation

Texas Advocacy Project

RAICES

Texas Appleseed

Texas Attorney General's Office

Texas Star Alliance

Private law firms

Legislators' offices

City of Austin Law Department

And others!

Internship eligibility is reviewed on a case by case basis; however, in addition to the criteria above, the internship must (1) provide direct and daily supervision and guidance; (2) provide regular access to the supervisor; (3) assign meaningful projects; and (4) provide a professional, established working environment with a strong learning component (home-office sites, shared or co-working sites, virtual/work from home or "in the field" internships are not eligible for the course).

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is mandatory. Also, please be punctual, as a courtesy to the rest of us.

Religious holy days. A student who misses class because of the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete any work missed within a reasonable time (generally, a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week) after the absence, as long as the student has properly notified me. The policy of the University of Texas at Austin is that the student must notify the instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates that s/he will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holidays that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given by the end of the first week of classes.

Illness. Please do not come to class if you think you are contagious. Do please email me if you are unable to attend class for this reason.

While you do not receive a formal grade for attendance, it is a factor in your participation grade, as discussed below. Multiple unexcused absences may result in a reduced or failing grade in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Students will be required to intern for a minimum of 9 hours per week, for 12 weeks during the semester.

As discussed below, students will also be required by their host supervisor to complete at least one written assignment while at their internship. Successful completion of the internship portion of the course will be ultimately decided upon by your host supervisor and the course instructor. Students will also be required to complete journaling exercises for class reflecting on their internship work, complete at least one written report summarizing your internship (with due respect for confidentiality concerns), and participate in classroom discussions.

The Legal Internships clinic will be graded on a +/- system. The breakdown of those grades will be on a 3-4-3 basis. For example:

100-93: A	82-80: B-
92-90: A-	...
89-87: B+	...
86-83: B	62-60: D-

Written Assignments and Other Grading:

Final grades will be calculated based on the following components:

Internship

Successful completion of your chosen internship will count for **50%** of your course grade. In addition to the hours spent in class, you are required to complete a minimum of 9 hours at the internship site for a minimum of 12 weeks between the first and last class days of the semester. You are expected to finish your internship. If you leave the internship or quit during the semester, automatic failure of the course will result; however, if the employer ends your internship for reasons beyond your control, Prof. Levy will work with you to secure a new internship so that you can continue in the course. You will also be required to complete at least one writing assignment while at your internship, to be assigned and reviewed by your host supervisor.

If you fail to properly adhere to the work schedule you set with your internship host, fail to comport yourself in a professional manner while at your internship, or fail to fulfil your obligations under the "Agreement & Consent" section of your application form, the host supervisor or Prof. Levy may determine that you have not successfully completed your internship.

Written Submissions

Your written submissions will count for **40%** of your grade.

You will submit **four journal entries, which together will count for 20% of your final grade** (or, 5% each). Each journal entry must be at least 750 words. Journal entries will be personal reflections on the work you've been doing during the previous two weeks of your

internship, comparisons with other pre-professional experiences you've had, and what during that time surprised or inspired you. Emphasis should also be given to how that work relates to classroom discussion and reading topics.

In lieu of a final exam, you will submit a **final paper, which will count for 20% of your final grade**. The final paper must be at least 1,500 words. The final paper will be a summary of the work that you've done during the semester, both in the internship and in class. The paper should be thematic, not a summary of each assignment you completed at your internship.

Students should familiarize themselves with their agency's confidentiality policy. For all written submissions, please take VERY SPECIAL care to avoid disclosing any information that would violate the attorney-client privilege your host agency has with its clients, disclosing the identity of or sensitive personal information about any client of your agency, or any other information your host agency considers confidential. If you are in doubt of what constitutes this sort of information, please ask your host supervisor before submitting your written submission.

The journal entries and final paper are due by 5pm on the class dates listed below. Materials submitted within the first 24 hours of the due date and time will receive a 10-point deduction, 20 points in the second 24 hours, and 30 points in the third 24 hours. Materials will not be accepted after three days late without Prof. Levy's approval.

Class Participation

Class participation will count for **10%** of your final grade. I expect all students to regularly participate in class discussions.

Academic Honesty

The discussion and exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. You are encouraged to consult with your classmates when you select paper topics or prepare for your on-call class sessions. Though you may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic.

You must properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you are unclear on what citations or assistance constitute plagiarism, here is a helpful link to the University's guidelines on plagiarism. You may also, obviously, ask me related questions, and I will do my best to answer:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/index.html>.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties. For more information, please visit <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

The **University of Texas Honor Code** and the **Code of Conduct** provides as follows:

As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Students with Disabilities Policy

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSB 4.104) at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-232-2937 (video phone). For more information, visit www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/.

I look forward to the semester and hope that we all enjoy the course.

Schedule of Classes, Topics, and Assignments

Week	Date	Topics of Discussions, Guest Speaker, and Assignments Due
Week 1	August 31	Court System
Week 2	September 7 CLASS MEETS BY ZOOM	Court System
Week 3	September 14	Criminal Law 3 rd Court of Appeals Justice Chari Kelly
Week 4	September 21	Criminal Law Journal Entry #1 Due (5pm)
Week 5	September 28	Criminal Law Criminal Defense Atty. Raman Gill
Week 6	October 5	Consumer Protection Law Consumer Protection Division Chief Jenny Jackson Journal Entry #2 Due (5pm)
Week 7	October 12	Lobbying & Law Texas Star Alliance's Eric Knustrom
Week 8	October 19	Politics & Law Journal Entry #3 Due (5pm)
Week 9	October 26	Legislative Affairs & Law
Week 10	November 2	Immigration Law RAICES Atty. Fernando Candil Journal Entry #4 Due (5pm)
Week 11	November 9	Legal Aid TRLA Exec. Dir. Robert Doggett
Week 12	November 16	
Week 13	November 23	NO CLASS
Week 14	November 30	Final Paper Due Dec 3 (5pm)