

Law Practice Management – FALL 2021  
(2 Credit Hours)

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Professor Ginsberg is a founding partner in a family law firm (Cooper Ginsberg Gray) in Fairfax, Virginia. Professor Feisee is the founding partner in a trusts and estates firm (Insight Law) in Ashburn, Virginia. Both Professors are 1996 graduates of the George Mason University School of Law.

Required Texts: How Successful Law Firms Really Work by David Ginsberg and Robert Feisee; and The E-Myth Revisited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by Michael Gerber.

**OVERVIEW:** This course was created for students who plan to enter private practice as a lawyer or firm manager. The course is designed to help students identify and develop solutions to management and business issues that arise in law practices. The course offers practical advice and guidance regarding the management of your practice regardless of the firm size that the student plans to join.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the course students should:

- 1) Be able to draft a business plan for their own firm.
- 2) Understand basic business strategies to enable you to operate your own practice or become a financially productive and successful member of a firm.
- 3) Have confidence in understanding what it really takes to open your own firm.

**COURSE STRUCTURE:** Law Practice Management is a classroom course that will meet for two hours once a week. The course is designed to provide you with a foundation in law practice management and is organized into 13 learning modules. For each module, you should:

- 1) Complete the assigned reading
- 2) Attend the class session
- 3) Participate in class discussion on the session topic
- 4) Complete any assignments given to you by the Professors

**INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS:** Students are expected to attend class and participate in discussions. Absence or lateness will have a significant negative effect on your grade (excused absences are limited to religious observances, medical or family emergencies, and illness). Students are expected to complete required readings each week and any related assignments.

Written papers should be typed with one inch margins. Except for group projects, each paper must be your own independent work. There will be one written group assignment during the semester, and your final exam will be a paper.

**INTERNET POLICY:** If you are physically present in class, please do not access the internet or send emails or instant messages.

**GRADING POLICY:** Your final grade for the class will be based on the following components:

(1) Business Plan: At the end of the semester in lieu of a final exam, you will be required to submit a business plan for your proposed law practice. The business plan will be an individual project. This paper will constitute 60% of your final grade.

(2) Partnership Agreement: You will be assigned to a firm consisting of two to four students. Your "firm" will prepare a partnership agreement, which will constitute 20% of your final grade.

(3) Class participation: Your class contributions and attendance will constitute 20% of your final grade.

Office Hours: Office hours will be made available upon request. You may contact either Mr. Ginsberg or Mr. Feisee directly to meet to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have regarding the class.

**SCHEDULE:**

- (1) Course overview
  - a. Review grading policies and discuss class assignments
  - b. Student description of his/her career goals
  - c. Business of Law
  - d. Marketplace for Legal Services
  - e. Partners
  
- (2) Allocating Resources and Human Resources
  - a. What is the best use of your limited resources
  - b. Who should be on your team
  - c. Handling your most valuable asset – your team members
  
- (3) Training and Managing Time
  - a. Making your team efficient and productive
  - b. Managing your time – vacation, money making, and prep time
  
- (4) Clients
  - a. Ideal Client
  - b. Building a profile of your ideal client
  
- (5) Marketing
  - a. Getting clients

- b. Developing a message
  - c. Identifying your target audience
  - d. Persuading potential clients to retain you
- (6) Managing clients
- a. How to service your clients
  - b. How to keep your clients
- (7) Legal Services and Ethics
- a. Your product
  - b. How to deliver your product efficiently
  - c. How to stay out of trouble
- (8) Finances
- a. Billing and collections – how will you get paid
  - b. Budgeting and managing your money
- (9) Technology
- a. What technology do you need
  - b. How do you keep up with technology changes
- (10) Systems and Procedures
- a. What systems and procedures do you need
  - b. How do you develop systems and procedures
  - c. How do you implement systems and procedures
- (11) Office Environment
- a. What does your office look like
  - b. How does your office operate
- (12) Strategic Planning
- a. Business vs. Profession
  - b. How to develop strategic plans for normal times and emergencies
- (13) Review and Guest Speakers
- a. Course review and discussion of business plan
  - b. Guest lecture(s) – Lawyers who have opened their own firms and/or bankers who provide financing for law firms

FINAL EXAM – Business Plan