

Law Practice Management – FALL 2023  
(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 partner/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 in law firms of all sizes.

**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, manage a practice area as a partner, or become a financially productive and successful member of a firm.
- 3) Have confidence in understanding what it really takes to open and operate 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.

There will be one written group assignment during the semester, and each student will prepare a business plan for your firm and/or practice area team as the final project. There will not be a final exam.

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

Homework for Class 1: How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 1-2

- (1) Course overview - 8/21/23
  - 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
  - f. Homework
    - i. E-Myth – Part I
    - ii. How Successful Law Firms Really Work – chapters 3-5
  
- (2) Allocating Resources and Human Resources – 8/28/23
  - a. What is the best use of your limited resources
  - b. Who should be on you team
  - c. Handling your most valuable asset – your team members
  - d. Homework
    - i. E-Myth – Part II
    - ii. How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 6-7

- (3) Training and Managing Time – 9/11/23
  - a. Making your team efficient and productive
  - b. Managing your time – vacation, money making, and prep time
  - c. Homework
    - i. E-Myth – Part III
    - ii. How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 8
- (4) Clients – 9/18/23
  - a. Ideal Client
  - b. Building a profile of your ideal client
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 9
- (5) Marketing – 9/25/23
  - a. Getting clients
  - b. Developing a message
  - c. Identifying your target audience
  - d. Persuading potential clients to retain you
  - e. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 10
- (6) Managing clients – 10/2/23
  - a. How to service your clients
  - b. How to keep your clients
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 11 and 12
- (7) Legal Services and Ethics – *TUESDAY* 10/10/23
  - a. Your product
  - b. How to deliver your product efficiently
  - c. How to stay out of trouble
  - d. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 13 and 14
- (8) Finances – 10/16/23
  - a. Billing and collections – how will you get paid
  - b. Budgeting and managing your money
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 15
- (9) Technology – 10/23/23
  - a. What technology do you need
  - b. How do you keep up with technology changes
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 16 and 17
- (10) Systems and Procedures – 10/30/23
  - a. What systems and procedures do you need
  - b. How do you develop systems and procedures
  - c. How do you implement systems and procedures

- d. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 18
- (11) Office Environment – 11/6/23
- a. What does your office look like
  - b. How does your office operate
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 19, 20, and 21
- (12) Strategic Planning – 11/13/23
- a. Business vs. Profession
  - b. How to develop strategic plans for normal times and emergencies
  - c. Homework - How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 22
- (13) Review and Guest Speakers – 11/20/23
- 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