

SYLLABUS

Description:

This two-credit course surveys federal law as it relates to people with disabilities. The primary focus is on discrimination in employment, education, government services, public accommodations run by private entities, and housing. Most of the class will focus on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental legal concepts underlying U.S. disability law.
- Students will understand how the law seeks to protect people with disabilities from discrimination, and will be able to analyze and critique its effectiveness in accomplishing that goal.
- Students will be able to apply established disability law concepts to current events and novel topics.
- Students will strengthen their legal research and writing skills.

Required Text:

MARK C. WEBER, UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY LAW, Fourth EDITION (2024)

Be certain to sign up on TWEN to receive announcements, updates, links, and other materials. In addition to the textbook reading assignments, supplemental reading assignments will be put up on TWEN throughout the semester.

The reading assignments are meant to be manageable and are designed to stimulate discussion. Unless otherwise noted, all reading assignments are mandatory.

Course Grading:

Your grade will be based on (1) a research paper (50% of final grade); (2) class participation (20% of final grade); and (3) three class assignments (30% of final grade together, 10% each).

Research Paper: Students will complete a research paper on a disability law issue of their choice. The paper should be a piece of original writing and legal research. You are expected to find a topic, craft an argument, and extensively research the issue. Your paper should not just discuss an area of disability law, but also a proposal for a solution to a problem, a resolution to a circuit split, a change you think should be made to the law, etc. The length of the research paper is expected to be around 20 pages and must be 15 pages at a minimum. The paper should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, and numbered at the bottom of the page. Please use Times New Roman font, size 12, on both the body of the paper and your footnotes. Please also use proper citations, grammar, and spelling. Please properly attribute all directly

quoted and paraphrased material in your paper. The research paper is due by midnight on Monday, April 28.

Please note that in addition to your research paper topic, thesis, and outline being due as one of your assignments (see below), I am happy to discuss paper topics at any point prior to the last scheduled class. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions regarding paper content.

Finally, you will be asked to provide occasional updates on your paper topic or research/writing progress during class time, beginning at our fourth class on Tuesday, February 11.

Assignment #1: A proposed topic, thesis, and outline for your research paper is due by midnight on Sunday, March 2. Example outlines are posted on TWEN. I will provide written feedback within the following two weeks. I am happy to then meet with you to discuss the feedback at a mutually agreeable time.

Assignment #2: If you could make one statutory change to the ADA, what would it be and why? Please describe the change in a thesis statement and explain your reasoning with supporting statutory, regulatory, or case law citations. The assignment should be between 1-2 pages long, single spaced. The assignment is due by midnight on Sunday, March 16.

Assignment #3: A presentation on your research paper topic will be given during class on Tuesday, April 22. Presentations will be between 5-8 minutes, depending upon the number of students enrolled in the class. You may include a PowerPoint as part of your presentation if you choose, but it is not required.

Class Participation: Class participation is mandatory and accounts for 20% of your final grade. I expect you to participate in every class. Participation means speaking during class in a way that demonstrates (1) you have prepared for class by completing the required reading assignments; and (2) you are absorbing the lecture and class discussion. When sharing your opinion and point of view, I remind you to do so in a polite and professional manner.

Notes about remote participation: This class is remote. Cameras must be turned on during class. I may use polling and other participatory video conferencing tools during class. Your responses will factor into my evaluation of your class participation.

Office Hours:

I do not hold regular office hours, but am available by appointment. I answer all emails within 48 hours. My email address is: jrobin68@gmu.edu

Reading & Assignment Schedule:

The following assignments may change as the semester progresses. I will notify you of any changes in advance.

Class	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	Jan. 21	Introduction; Overview of ADA, Section 504, and IDEA; Statutory Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 1-8, 15-46 (Chapters 1.01-1.03, 2) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
2	Jan. 28	Employment Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 47-81 (Chapters 3.01-3.05) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
3	Feb. 4	Employment Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 81-105 (Chapters 3.06-3.11) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
4	Feb. 11	Public Accommodations Discrimination & Telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 149-160 (Chapter 5.01-5.03[A]); Weber 241-246 (Chapter 7.03) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
5	Feb. 18	Public Accommodations Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 160-177 (Chapter 5.03[B]-5.07) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
6	Feb. 25	Discrimination in Government Services and Federally Funded Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 179-216 (Chapter 6) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
7	Mar. 4	Discrimination in Government Services cont.: Olmstead & the Integration Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
	Mar. 11	NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS	
8	Mar. 18	Educational Discrimination: Primary & Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 107-132 (Chapter 4.01) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
9	Mar. 25	Educational Discrimination: Post-Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 133-148 (Chapter 4.02) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
10	Apr. 1	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 217-231 (Chapter 7.01) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
11	Apr. 8	Transportation & International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weber 231-241, 251-252 (Chapters 7.02, 7.04[C]) • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
12	Apr. 15*	ADA and Opioid Use Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Reading (TWEN)
13	Apr. 22	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Presentations on Paper Topic

Law 639-R01 | Disability Law Seminar | Spring 2025 | 2 credits | Prof. Jennifer Robins
Tues. 8:10 - 10:10 pm EST | Final Exam: N/A

*This class will be rescheduled to April 7, 9, 10, or 11. A poll will be used at the beginning of the semester to find a workable time.