



FALL 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 394-001

Course Title: Law Practice Management

Credit Hours: 2.0

Grading Mode: Letter Grade

Meeting Day(s)/Time(s): Thursdays 6:05-8:05 p.m.

Meeting Mode: In person

Exam Day(s)/Time(s): Paper

Final Exam Mode: Paper

Prerequisite(s): None

Corequisite(s): None

Instructor(s): David Ginsberg (founding partner in a family law firm – Cooper Ginsberg Gray in Fairfax, Virginia); and Robert Feisee (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.

Contact Information: dginsber@gmu.edu and rfeisee@gmu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment upon request. You may contact either professor directly to meet to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have regarding the class.

Course Overview

This course was created to teach students how to effectively operate their own firm or serve as a managing partner of a firm or firm department. 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.

Course 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.

Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

How Successful Law Firms Really Work by David Ginsberg and Robert Feisee; and Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business by Gino Wickman

Grading Policies

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 70% 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 10% of your final grade.
- 3) Class participation: Your class contributions and attendance will constitute 20% of your final grade.

Participation & Preparation:

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.

Classroom Policies

Attendance: Per AR 3-1.4, "maintenance of matriculation requires regular class preparation, participation and attendance, registration in the course of study required for the student's program (full-time or part-time), successive registration for each fall and spring term of each academic year until study is completed, and compliance with all other relevant requirements."

Absences: Per AR 4-1.1, "if a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session."

Use of Technology & AI: Generative AI tools may be used in this course for the following purposes, and with the following guidelines. Students may use AI in this course to brainstorm and explore, but may not use AI as the primary source for text of written assignments. Students must use AI tools responsibly, verify facts presented by AI, disclose when AI tools are used to create course work product, properly cite any AI tools utilized, and should be prepared to produce the transcript of prompts and responses upon request. Misuse will be treated as a violation of academic standards.

Course Schedule & Assignments

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

(1) Course overview - 8/20/26

- 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: How Successful Law Firms Really Work – chapters 3-5; and Traction – chapter 1

(2) Allocating Resources and Human Resources – 8/27/26

- 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
- d. Homework: How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapters 6-7; and Traction – chapters 2-3

(3) Training and Managing Time – 9/3/26

- a. Making your team efficient and productive
- b. Managing your time – vacation, money making, and prep time
- c. Homework: How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 8; and Traction – chapter 4

(4) Clients – 9/10/26

- a. Ideal Client
- b. Building a profile of your ideal client
- c. Homework: How Successful Law Firms Really Work chapter 9

(5) Marketing – 9/17/26

- 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 – 9/24/25

- 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 – 10/1/26

- 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; and Traction – chapter 5

October 8 – Fall Break – No Class

(8) Finances – 10/15/26

- 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; and Traction – chapter 6

(9) Technology – 10/22/26

- 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 – 10/26/26

- 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; and Traction – chapter 7

(11) Office Environment – 11/5/26

- 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; and Traction – chapter 8

(12) Strategic Planning – 11/12/26

- 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; and Traction – chapters 9 and 10

(13) Review and Guest Speakers – 11/19/26

- 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

Student Resources

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-993-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[University Life](#)