



SPRING 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: Law 639-001

Course Title: Disability Law Seminar

Credit Hours: 2.0

Grading Mode: Letter grade

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

Meeting Mode: On campus

Exam Time(s): TBD

Exam Mode: Final Paper

Prerequisite(s): None

Corequisite(s): None

Instructor(s):

Elizabeth McDonald and Jennifer McDannell

Contact Information and Office Hours:

emcdon3@gmu.edu

jmcdanne@gmu.edu

We do not hold regular office hours but are available by appointment. We will answer all emails within 48 hours.

Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

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.

Course Overview:

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).

Course 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.

Grading Policies:

Participation %: 20

Final Exam/ Paper %: 50

Additional Content %: 30 - 3 class assignments

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.”

Participation & Preparation:

Class Participation: Class participation is mandatory and accounts for 20% of your final grade. We 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, we remind you to do so in a polite and professional manner.

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 research and study, but may not use AI for original drafting or editing, as the primary source for text of written assignments, during any quiz or exam, or during Socratic dialogue. 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.

Use of Electronic Text Books During Exams:

Students are permitted one laptop computer for exam taking purposes. Additional laptop computers or any other electronic data storage devices are not allowed in an exam room, unless permitted by the course instructor's *written* exam instructions. Electronic text books (e-books) may be used during exams that are designated as open book by the instructor, and the instructor allows text books to be used during the exam and allows access to a student's computer files during the exam (open exam). E-books may not be used in exams where the instructor does not allow students to access their computer files during the exam (secure exam) even if the instructor permits access to text books. If the instructor has blocked access to the internet or computer files, you must bring a hard copy of the allowed text book(s) you wish to consult. Students will need to borrow or otherwise locate a hard copy of the e-book or print resources needed from the e-book to take into the exam room. The instructor determines the length of the examination and whether or not it is secure or open and what, if any, study materials are permitted during the exam. Students are responsible for adhering to the instructor's standards for all examinations, which are included in the examination materials.

Course Schedule & Assignments

Week 1:

Date: **Jan. 20, 2026**

Topic: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Introduction; Overview of ADA, Section 504, and IDEA; Statutory Coverage

Assignment(s): Weber 1-8, 15-46 (Chapters 1.01-1.03, 2) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 2:

Date: **Jan. 27, 2026**

Topic: Employment Discrimination

Assignment(s): Weber 47-81 (Chapters 3.01-3.05) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 3:

Date: **Feb. 3, 2026**

Topic: Employment Discrimination

Assignment(s): Weber 81-105 (Chapters 3.06-3.11) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 4:

Date: **Feb. 10, 2026**

Topic: Public Accommodations Discrimination & Telecommunications

Assignment(s): Weber 149-160 (Chapter 5.01-5.03[A]); Weber 241-246 (Chapter 7.03) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 5:

Date: **Feb. 17, 2026**

Topic: Public Accommodations Discrimination

Assignment(s): Weber 160-177 (Chapter 5.03[B]-5.07) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 6:

Date: **Feb. 24, 2026**

Topic: Discrimination in Government Services and Federally Funded Programs

Assignment(s): Weber 179-216 (Chapter 6) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 7:

Date: **March 3, 2026**

Topic: Discrimination in Government Services cont. and Federally Funded Programs cont.: Olmstead & the Integration Mandate

Assignment(s): Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 8:

Date: **March 17, 2026**

Topic: Educational Discrimination: Primary & Secondary Education

Assignment(s): Weber 107-132 (Chapter 4.01) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 9:

Date: **March 24, 2026**

Topic: Educational Discrimination: Post- Secondary Education

Assignment(s): Weber 133-148 (Chapter 4.02) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 10:

Date: **March 31, 2026**

Topic: Housing

Assignment(s): Weber 217-231 (Chapter 7.01) Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Apr. 7

Week 11:

Date: **Apr. 7, 2026**

Topic: Transportation & International Law

Assignment(s): Weber 231-241, 251-252 (Chapters 7.02, 7.04[C])

Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 12:

Date: **April 14, 2026**

Topic: ADA and Opioid Use Disorder

Assignment(s): Supplemental Reading (TWEN)

Week 13:

Date: **April 21, 2026**

Topic: Presentations

Assignment(s): In-Class Presentations on Paper Topics

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

703-991-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Life](#)