



SUMMER 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 298-R01

Course Title: Professional Responsibility

Credit Hours: 2

Grading Mode: Letter Grade

Meeting Day(s)/ Time(s): TUES & THURS, 6:00–7:50 PM

Meeting Mode: ONLINE

Exam Day(s)/ Time(s): August 13, 2026 at 6 P.M. EST

Final Exam Mode: ON CAMPUS

Prerequisite(s): N/A

Corequisite(s): N/A

Instructor(s): JAMES BUTLER

Contact Information: jbutle26@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Please request and arrange office hours via email

Course Overview

This course provides an overview of the legal ethics rules governing lawyers. It introduces students to core principles of professional responsibility, including duties to clients, courts, and the legal system, while also preparing students for topics tested on the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and apply key Rules of Professional Conduct
- Analyze conflicts of interest scenarios
- Understand duties of confidentiality, competence, and diligence
- Evaluate ethical obligations in litigation and transactional contexts

Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

Ethical Problems in the Practice of Law, Sixth Edition, Lerman & Schrag
ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct

Grading Policies

Grades will be based primarily on a final examination. Class participation may be used to raise final grades. The final exam will consist of issue-spotting, short answer, and analysis of fact patterns.

Attendance:

Per AR 3-1.4, regular attendance and participation are required.

Absences:

Students absent more than 20% of sessions are not eligible for credit. Put another way, A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session. That means I can't pass you and you will NOT receive credit for the course.

Participation & Preparation:

Consistent participation may improve final grades. I will call upon any student at random in each session and sometimes use the Socratic method to discuss topics.

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:

The use of generative AI tools is NOT permitted for any coursework in this course. Unauthorized use 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: **Tuesday (6/23):**

Topic: **Introduction to Professional Responsibility**

- Course overview
- Chapter 2, pp. 63–89

Date: **Thursday (6/25):**

Topic: **Regulation of the Legal Profession**

- Chapter 1, pp. 17–40
- Chapter 2, pp. 89–121

Week 2:

Date: **Tuesday (6/30):**

Topic: **Confidentiality**

- Chapter 4, pp. 215–258

Date: **Thursday (7/2):**

Topic: **Confidentiality (continued)**

- Chapter 4 (continued discussion & problems)

Week 3:

Date: **Tuesday (7/7):**

Topic **Lawyer–Client Relationship**

- Chapter 3, pp. 137–154; 168–176

Date: **Thursday (7/9):**

Topic: **Lawyer–Client Relationship (continued)**

Chapter 3, pp. 188–202; 207–213

Week 4:

Date: **Tuesday (7/14):**

Topic: **Conflicts of Interest I**

- Chapter 6

Date: **Thursday (7/16):**

Topic: **Conflicts of Interest II**

- Chapter 7, pp. 365–387; 395–397

Week 5:

Date **Tuesday (7/21):**

:Topic: **Conflicts of Interest (continued)**

- Chapter 7, pp. 412–417

Date: **Thursday (7/23):**

Topic: **Legal Fees & Duties to Clients**

- Chapter 9, pp. 463–505

Week 6:

Date: **Tuesday (7/28):**

Topic: **Duties to Courts**

- Chapter 11, pp. 597–621

Date: **Thursday (7/30):**

Topic: **Duties to Courts & Adversaries**

- Chapter 11, pp. 646–655; 587–590
- Chapter 12, pp. 673–706

Week 7:

Date: **Week 7 (August 4)**

Tuesday (8/4):

- Topic: Advertising & Solicitation: Chapter 13, pp. 760–772
- Judicial Ethics: Chapter 10, pp. 555–586
- Course Review

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](#)

[University Life](#)