

MEMORANDUM

To: All Faculty of Law
From: Shannon Penn, Law School Registrar
Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2011

SUBJECT: SPRING 2011 FINAL EXAMS, GRADING AND GRADE SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Exams are a month away! This memo provides you with general exam and grading guidelines for the spring semester.

I. DATES

Exam Period

The Spring 2011 examination period begins Saturday, April 16, 2011, and ends Saturday, April 30, 2011. Exams will not be administered during the University of Dayton Easter recess, Friday, April 20 through Monday, April 25. Exams will resume Tuesday, April 26.

First year exams are scheduled by the administration and must be taken on the day and time published. Upper level exams are "self-scheduled" by the student and must be taken within the exam period. Upper level exams will begin at 8:30 AM on any given day of the exam period and first year exams begin at 1:30 PM as scheduled. Exams will not be proctored.

Please Note: There may be students in your classes who will be using assistive technology for exams (e.g., WYNN or JAWS--software which reads the exam to the student). If so, you will be notified separately and we will need your exam in electronic format (either a text file or Microsoft Word document).

Exam schedules can be found at the following link:

http://community.udayton.edu/law/academics/exam_information.php

Exams Due

Friday, April 8, 2011
Monday, April 11, 2011

Upper level exams
First year exams

If you are able to submit your exams before the above deadlines please do! You will have our deepest appreciation.

Grades Due

Spring grades are due by Monday, May 23, 2011, 4:30 PM.

II. EXAM PRACTICES

A. Exam Preparation

If you have not already done so...it would be very helpful to our planning and exam preparation efforts if you could supply us with the following exam information as soon as possible. (If you already sent us your exam details, you do not need to do so again).

- Is your exam open or closed book? If open, what materials will your students be permitted to have with them during the exam? (See below for details)
- Is your exam essay or multiple choice, or a combination?

Please deliver the final draft of your exam to the School of Law faculty secretaries, Kim Bertke and Maribeth Mulhern for duplicating, allowing sufficient time to meet the above deadlines. Your exam copy must be final when given to the faculty secretaries for duplication. The exams will be copied, delivered to the Registrar's Office, and readied for dissemination to your students when the exam period begins.

B. Your Exam Instructions

In General

We have encountered a number of problems regarding terminology used in the exam instructions which appear simple on the surface, but have caused confusion. Here are a few suggestions to help avoid confusion:

Discuss your exam instructions with your students before the exam period begins--consider giving them a copy of your instructions.

Your instructions should be easy to follow, as clearly and briefly stated as possible.

You must clearly state on the cover page of the exam the amount of time the student has to complete the exam--PLEASE, e.g., "You have three hours to complete this exam." We ask that you **not** include odd minutes in the exam time (e.g., 3 hours and 15 minutes). Students are required to monitor their time and the odd minutes often create confusion. **Please** keep your time to 30 or 60 minute intervals. Do not try to control how long a student spends on a particular part of the exam by stating that the student must turn in a part of the exam before the exam time expires. The entire exam will be picked up by the student from the Exam Distribution Table before the beginning of the exam and turned in at Exam Distribution Table at the end of the exam. You are encouraged, however, to offer recommendations of the length of time a student should spend answering each question or part of the exam.

If your exam includes a multiple-choice component, PLEASE clearly state whether the student is required to answer on the standard answer sheet--the form a student uses to provide the answers to multiple choice questions is the **Scantron Answer Sheet** (not computer card, computer form, bubble sheet etc.). While we prefer you use the scantron form, you may, if *you* prefer, ask your students to list their responses to the multiple choice questions in their bluebooks or in the SofTest exam file. If you decide not to use the scantron form, you will hand score the multiple choice answers. The scantron forms are machine scored. **Whichever method you use, please be sure your instructions clearly state how your students are required to record their answers.**

The number that is assigned to each student for use as identification on all final exams is called the Exam Number (not Student ID Number, Identification Number, PIN, etc.). Please provide a space on the exam instruction page of your exam questions for the student to write his or her exam number and instruct the student to write the exam number in the space provided. This helps us ensure that all exams are accounted for when materials are turned in at the end of the exam.

Open Book? Closed Book? It is very important to include in your exam instructions any limitations on supplies and materials the students are permitted to bring with them and use during the exam. If the exam is closed book, you need only state: "This is a closed book exam." If the exam is open book, or limited open book, list the

materials students are permitted to use. Most students will use their laptop computers for all applicable essay exams. They are required to use ExamSoft software, SofTest. A standard generic exam answer template has been established for students using their laptops for exams. The format allows for up to 25 essay responses. If you opt for an open book exam students using their laptops to take the exam will not have access to their hard drives or the internet. All laptop exams are taken in secured format. **The software blocks access to anything beyond the exam answer template.** Any materials you permit the student to bring to your exam **must be in hard copy only. We will consider an exam "open book" and students will sit for the exam in one of the open book exam rooms, if the students are permitted to bring any material with them to the exam--even if it is just a 3x5 card with notes, 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper with notes, or only specific supplements or texts.**

If you will permit students to use a calculator, please state this in your instructions.

Instruction page example...

This is an open book examination. Students may consult any written materials they have brought with them to the examination. However, "written materials" includes only handwritten, typed or printed materials. It DOES NOT include any materials which must be displayed on a computer screen or any similar electronic device. (Harry Gerla)

Whatever your instructions are going to be, please be sure your students understand what will be permitted and what will not be permitted well BEFORE the exam period begins.

If you plan to impose page/word/character limitations for each question or section of the exam--keep in mind that you will have both students writing in bluebooks and students using their laptops to type their exam answers. You must be very clear in your instructions what your limitations are and what sanctions will be imposed if the student goes beyond your established limits.

Estimated equivalencies for bluebook vs. typed exam follow-- these are rough estimates. Remember, you must decide what sanctions or penalties to impose if the student ignores your limits.

One handwritten bluebook page equals approximately 1,200 characters.

Approximately 19,200 characters equal one bluebook (16 pages, no skipped lines, both sides of the page)

ExamSoft's SofTest software will provide the student with an actual word count for each question if you would like to limit responses to a certain number of words--this will be difficult to translate into bluebook language; however. One hand written bluebook page, no skipped lines, is ***approximately*** 175 words.

Please do **not** request that the student limit the answer to a certain number of "typed" pages. They have no way of calculating this! Using the guidelines above, please base your limitations for students handwriting their answers on number of bluebooks, bluebook pages; for typists: the number of words or characters, and to answer each question under a separate number in SofTest.

If you impose limits, this information **must be clearly stated** in your exam instructions.

We would like to preview your instructions before they are released to your students in sufficient time to suggest changes if necessary. If you would like to see what the instruction page should look like, we are more than happy to supply you with a sampling of what we think are the better instructions faculty have created over the years.

Please release your exam instructions to your class, allowing your students to ask you procedural questions specific to your exam before the Quiet Period begins.

C. Professor Availability & Exam Discussion

Quiet Period Policy

Even though first year exams are scheduled, the "Quiet Period" Policy still applies to all first year students as well as upper-level students, covering a number of circumstances whereby the student does not sit for the exam as scheduled; such as the granting of an exam deferral to take the exam at a later date or time, permission to take an exam early, or some other accommodation which changes the timing of the exam.

BEFORE a student takes an exam, he or she may feel free to discuss legal concepts relating to the course with any classmate who has NOT taken the exam. Professors may or may not choose to accept questions during the exam period. (Traditionally, many professors have opted not to do so.) Whether and by what means a professor will respond to any questions is left to the sound discretion of that professor.

AFTER a student takes an exam, he or she may not discuss the exam OR any legal concepts relating to the course with any member of the UDSL community, including classmates and professors, until the end of the day Wednesday, May 4, 2011 (the exam period including the three day make-up period). For example, the student may NOT comment on what exam he or she has taken, how difficult the exam was, what concepts the exam covered, etc. If a discussion of a completed exam arises, the student is to immediately remove him or herself from the discussion. While students may discuss a completed exam with persons outside the UDSL community, the student must not do so when there is any danger of being overheard by a member of the UDSL community.

Prior to the beginning of the exam period your students will be permitted to seek information or advice from you.

D. Accommodations, Deferrals and Laptops

Students requesting accommodations or deferrals must make the request to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will approve the request for good cause or deny the request. If one of your students approaches you with a request to defer your exam or for special accommodations, please send the student to us, with a reminder that all requests must be directed to the Offices of the Associate Dean and Registrar to preserve student anonymity.

III. AFTER THE EXAM - GRADING

A. Delivery of Completed Exams

You may check in with us daily, beginning Monday, April 18th, to pick up the exams completed on the preceding day or days. Otherwise, we will not contact you until all your exams have been completed. Exams must be completed by Saturday, April 30th, Thursday, and will be available for pick-up on Monday, May 2nd. We will deliver completed exams to your offices unless you instruct us otherwise. If you prefer, we will FedEx your exams to you (please provide us with complete address information) or we will deliver

the exams to your office at the Law School if you are full-time faculty. Email us with your preference.

B. Grading and the "Curve"

In courses of Credit Type A (grading option A), the grades in each course section must meet the applicable mandatory mean:

For first-year courses - 2.80 +/- .05 (between 2.75 and 2.85)

For upper-level courses - 3.00 +/- .05 (between 2.95 and 3.05)

A section mean is determined by converting each letter grade to its numerical equivalent (A+ = 4.3, A=4.0, A-=3.7, etc.); then adding the equivalents for all grades awarded, and then dividing by the sum of the equivalents by the number of grades included. Incompletes, withdrawals, and grades other than Credit Type A (grading option A) will not be used in the calculation. If a grade is lowered for disciplinary reasons (i.e., excessive absences), the grade reduction will not be included in the calculation of the course section mean but will occur after grades are assigned and the course section mean has been calculated.

Sections with fewer than 25 students eligible for final grades are exempted from this requirement. However, the applicable mandatory mean normally should be used as a guide when assigning grades.

If one instructor teaches more than one section of the same course in a semester, and at least one of those sections has 25 students or more, paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be applied on a section-by-section basis; provided, however, at the option of the instructor, the requirements of paragraphs 1 and 2 be applied as if all such sections had been combined into one.

When a mandated mean applies, the instructor may deviate from the mean only with faculty approval upon a showing of exceptional circumstances.

C. Grading Materials

Excel Spreadsheets for grade submission by exam number are attached to this email. Official University Grade Sheets will be mailed to adjuncts and placed the School of Law mailboxes for full-time faculty sometime within the next few weeks. You will be receiving grading materials for each class according class type, as follows:

Exam Courses

You have received attached to this email two versions of the grade submission Excel spreadsheet that will calculate the mean GPA for your course and detail the number of grades in each grading category (A+, A, A-, B+, etc.). The spreadsheets will include the curve explanation in brief and target means. On the Grades Only version of the spreadsheet, you will simply enter your course information (your name and course title), enter the "mandatory norm" (2.80 for first year or 3.00 for upper-level) in the appropriate cell on the spreadsheet, and the student's exam number and grade, the spreadsheet will do the rest. By reviewing the "Mean as Reported" on the spreadsheet, you will see immediately if you need to make any adjustments. The more advanced spreadsheet allows you to set score ranges. You will simply enter your name and course title, the mandatory norm, as above, set your range in the score range key, and enter the student's exam number and score. The spreadsheet will enter the grade based on your preset range key and calculate the mean. Any necessary adjustments can be made to the key to alter the grades and meet the mean. If you need assistance with the spreadsheet, please ask. It is very simple to use and quite a time saver for all of us!

After you have completed the grading process, you will submit your curve compliant grades **electronically** to Linda.Cole@notes.udayton.edu, attaching the completed grade spreadsheet to the email. **NO HARD COPIES PLEASE.** If you cannot use the spreadsheet, submit your grades by exam number in a text file, Word or WordPerfect document. You will manually calculate your curve. When I receive your grades I will prepare the University grade sheet, converting exam numbers to names. Before the grades can be finalized and posted, you must sign the University grade sheet (or you will be able to give me permission to do so as part of the "signature" process in the grading spreadsheet).

Non-Exam, Graded Courses (Grading Option/Credit Type A)

The grading spreadsheet is available to you if you are required to meet the mandatory mean based on your class size or if you wish to use the course section mean as a guide. Assign grades on the University grade sheet you will receive in your mailbox or mailed to you if you are an adjunct faculty person, sign, and submit the completed University grade sheet and you are done!

Skills, or Credit Type (Grading Option) B and C Courses

You will receive only the University grade sheet. As above, just assign grades, sign and submit the sheet, and you're done!

On the University grade sheet, enter your grades in the brackets next to each student name in "Final Grade" column. To the extent possible, instructional grading information is printed at the top of the form.

(Credit type B: EX=Exceptional, S=Satisfactory, U=Unsatisfactory--no credit awarded; Credit type C: CR=Credit, NC=No Credit)

Independent Studies and Directed Readings

Those of you advising individual students in projects will receive an email from me. Just reply to the email with the assignment of a grade of CR (credit) or NC (no credit).

D. Posting and Release of Grades

All grades will be posted electronically and can be accessed by students via the Porches portal. I will not post/release grades until you have signed your University grade sheet **or** you have given me permission to release grades without your signature. Some of you may find it more convenient to ask me to sign your University grade sheet for you in your absence, if so, please indicate on the grade spreadsheet or by email. No grades will be posted before April 30, 2011.

Copies of your completed and signed University grade sheets will be returned to you.

IV. IN CLOSING

A recap... Communication is vital to the exam and grading process. Be sure your students understand what will be expected of them in the exam; be clear in the communication of your limitations and instructions. Good communication will help the exam and grading process run smoothly, and will significantly lower everyone's stress level!

Please let me know if you have any questions. As always, thanks so much for your patience and cooperation. It has been such a pleasure working with all of you!