

**THURGOOD MARSHALL
SCHOOL OF LAW
STREET LAW
PROGRAM**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

**PREPARED BY:
LUCINDA R. DANIELS
EARL CARL INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL & SOCIAL POLICY INC.**

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INSTRUCTOR: Lucinda Daniels
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Phone: 713.313.1156

REQUIRED READING: See Packet Provided By Instructor

HISD LECTURE: **Day:** MWF
 Time: 1-2pm
 Location: TMSL Rom 211

OVERVIEW:

Street Law is designed to provide law students with the opportunity to apply and connect their classroom learning with real world practice under the close supervision of a law school instructor. Street law gives law students a unique opportunity to enrich their legal education while contributing to the education of high school students. In partnering with HISD, Harris County Juvenile Detention Centers and Community Organizations, law students will learn fundamental skills such as effective communication. With effective communication, law students are able to address social issues that plague youth in urban communities, as well as aid in their professional development. These experiences and their policy implications are explored during the weekly seminar.

GOALS OF STREET LAW FOR LAW STUDENTS:

Through a variety of activities, including classroom teaching, law school seminars, legal and policy research, and the planning and development of lesson plans, the Street Law program intends to meet the following goals:

- Educate law students in the practical applications and policy implications of legal concepts;
- Provide law students with an opportunity to develop, refine, and apply presentation and public speaking skills in the context of planning and conducting participatory learning activities aimed at conveying legal concepts;
- Provide law students the opportunity to practice time management and planning through the preparation of sequential, meaningful lesson plans;
- Provide law students the opportunity to develop an effective working relationship with the cooperating classroom teacher that can be transferred to work settings;
- Develop in law students an appreciation for the role of law in urban communities;

- Sensitize law students to the sources and resolutions of community legal problems that affect low-income and/or urban residents, particularly high school students; and
- Provide law students the opportunity to form teaching and mentoring relationships with the young students they teach, and to give the law students a chance to contribute to communities by serving as positive, caring role models for the elementary or high school students with whom they work.

Course Requirements

I. Street Law Seminar

A. Attendance and Participation

The Street Law seminar is designed to be a participatory class. The seminar is an opportunity for the professor and law students to work together to develop and refine effective lesson plans. Together, the professor and law students will discuss the substantive legal issues that law students will teach in their classrooms. These issues are of interest to high school students. Professor and law students will discuss classroom management and teaching strategies, and examine policy issues that affect urban education.

Law students are required to attend all seminar classes unless otherwise excused. Promptness is also expected. Law students who have an unavoidable conflict must e-mail the Professor prior to the seminar. The expectation is that it will not be a “last minute” email, unless unavoidable. The class sometimes works in groups or teams; advance notice of an expected absence is appreciated.

Active participation in the seminar is also required, including taking part in class discussions and other activities. Law students are expected to complete reading assignments and prepare for class discussions and activities. Sometimes, a written essay or reflections on the readings will be assigned. This assignment will be incorporated into your seminar grade. Most articles will be posted on TWEN. Some may be distributed in class. The course does not have a textbook.

You will sometimes be asked to bring your laptops to class because we sometimes use them for class research or projects. Unless we are using laptops for an in-class project, however, laptops are not to be open/used during our seminar.

B. Final Report or Class Project

Typically, each semester, law students will prepare a final report or participate in a final project and share their research and teaching experiences with the class through an oral presentation. The report usually focuses on a contemporary educational or legal issue that the class has studied during the semester in the seminar.

The written report should be three to five pages long and is expected to include a summary of the information researched by the student on his or her topic, including proper citations and footnotes. The oral report should be about five minutes long and is intended to educate the rest of the class regarding teaching, law-related education, or public education. Both the written and oral report will be part of the student's final grade.

Professor Daniels will provide more details about the final paper or project well in advance of the due date and will provide guidance in choosing topics.

II. Teaching

A. Required Teaching Hours

Street Law is devoted primarily to teaching law effectively to Houston Independent School District and Harris County Juvenile Detention students. Excellent and responsible teaching is the highest priority for this class. Law student instructors are held to high standards for responsible teaching performance.

Law students are assigned teaching sites based upon availability of sites, needs of the schools, background of the law student, law student class schedules, law student work schedules, and transportation issues. The schedules and placements for law student teaching are typically agreed upon within the first few weeks of the semester, and these placements may not be changed without prior permission from Professor Daniels. (Sometimes, changes in HISD curricular programming may delay placement. In the event this happens, the professor will work with you.)

In the past, the number of hours each law student spends teaching has ranged from 10-20. This number is influenced by many factors, including the amount of time spent at the beginning of the semester finding a suitable school placement for each law student; the HISD calendar and conflicts that arise within HISD, including standardized testing, strikes or furlough days, school field trips, career days, teacher scheduling changes, etc.; and the law school calendar (final exams, breaks, etc.). Your professor is aware of all of these issues, as well as the fact that law students are very busy people who have a variety of commitments.

Street Law is not, however, about "putting in your hours"; it is about creating an effective and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Thus, although there is a minimum requirement of 10 in-class teaching hours, law students are welcome and encouraged to spend more time than that with their students.

Typically, the law student is paired with a social studies teacher at the assigned school. The law class is usually an elective social studies class. This teacher will help the law student achieve his or her goals for the class and will, at the end of the semester, evaluate the law student on his or her performance. Lesson plans should be discussed with and approved by the classroom teacher prior to teaching them.

B. Weekly Lesson Plans

Law students are required to prepare a brief, written lesson plan prior to each class they teach. Each lesson plan should be submitted for evaluation to me at Irdaniels@tmslaw.tsu.edu no later than the next seminar class. Please note that your own self-evaluation of the success of each lesson plan must be included at the bottom of each lesson plan.

Lesson plans should follow the standard lesson plan format that is available on TWEN. Each lesson plan should be devised prior to teaching, evaluated following the law student teaching the class, and turned in at the next seminar class or to me via email at Irdaniels@tmslaw.tsu.edu prior to the next class. The lesson should be designed to teach students about a specific legal concept and/or to develop a particular skill relevant to studying law.

Unless not allowed by your cooperating teacher based on school policies, law students should attempt to bring outside resources and opportunities to the classroom. This includes inviting in at least one guest speaker per semester. The guest speaker(s) should complement the lesson plans and enhance the learning experience for the high school students.

Additionally, law students are strongly urged to join classmate(s) at each other's schools, preparing a joint lesson and visiting each other's schools to teach the lesson. We will work in class on scheduling such visits so that they complement, rather than take away from, the young students' learning experiences and your teaching experiences.

In general, classroom teaching requires that the law student direct and lead the class through exercises and activities that are appropriate to learning law related concepts and skills. Teacher's classroom tasks may include:

- Presenting course concepts through a variety of participatory, interactive methods and exemplary or authentic substantive materials;
- Supervising the class when students work on activities; and/or
- Engaging students through the use of a variety of mediums, including audio/visual materials such as news stories, relevant online videos, movie clips, etc.

The use of activities that promote student involvement and skill development, such as role plays, mock hearings, case studies, hypothetical problem and small group discussions, should be an integral part of the Street Law teacher's classroom repertoire.

In addition to using the Street Law text and other materials provided by the classroom teacher or Professor Daniels, law student teachers should develop their own instructional materials and methods as part of their classroom activities. In particular, these may include assignments for high school students, supporting documents and forms, handouts, worksheets, exams, and special projects.

I. Weekly Lesson Plan Format

A good class is a well-planned class. In order to translate legal information, skills, and concepts into a class, law student instructors must prepare a lesson plan for each class taught.

A template of the format that should be followed is available under “Course Materials” on TWEN. The lesson plan should state:

- Overview (describing the general topic or activity of the class)
- Objectives (the core concept of what the students should learn)
- Materials (a list of material resources that will be used during class, i.e., handouts)
- Activities (a detailed list of activities performed during class in order to achieve the objectives)
- Self-evaluation (a brief post-teaching reflection on how the lesson planned worked out)

You may be asked periodically to submit copies of lesson plans at the Seminar following the class when the lesson was taught. The Professor is available to review your plans prior to teaching and invites you to email your lessons for review. Meetings also may be scheduled to discuss lesson plans.

You are encouraged to use teaching materials from the Street Law textbook, websites, and Model Lesson Plans. Feel free to make adaptations to suit your own teaching style or expertise.

NOTE: PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SOURCE IF YOU USE OR ADAPT PREVIOUSLY CREATED LESSON PLANS. WHEN USING OTHER LESSON PLANS, PLEASE MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR CLASSROOM AND STUDENTS.

III. Evaluation and Grading

For purpose of grading and evaluation, Professor Daniels will apply the following criteria, unless otherwise noted or announced in class:

A. Seminar

The law student must:

- Attend weekly class;
- Prepare for and participate in classroom discussions;
- Prepare for and participate in class activities; and
- Complete class assignments on time, including essays or other projects related to readings.

B. Lesson Plans and Teaching

The law student must:

- Attend class at the assigned school regularly and promptly on assigned teaching days;
- Identify clear and specific objectives in a written plan for each lesson;
- Prepare and organize methods and materials for each lesson;
- Coordinate and communicate effectively with the cooperating teacher;
- Present lessons that are relevant to students' lives and course curriculum in a manner that engages students;
- Promote the development of critical thinking skills;
- Promotes the development of reasoning skills;

- Emphasize use of local community resources by engaging in field trips and hosting guest speakers,
- Emphasize participation by young students, and
- Demonstrate a commitment to students' engagement and learning.

C. Oral and Written Report;

The law student must:

- Select a topic that is relevant to legal topics that young students care about or relevant to law related education in an urban setting or education in an urban setting;
- Write a clear and well-written 3-5 page paper with proper footnotes and citations; and
- Present to the class in a 2-3 minute oral report incorporating teaching methods that engage law students.

IV. Weight Given for Each Course Component

1. Teaching (law student's classroom teaching and lesson plans) 40%
2. Attendance, preparation for and participation in the Street Law Seminar 40%
3. Oral Report (may be alternative final assignment) 10%
4. Written Report (may be alternative final assignment) 10%

V. Legal Information v. Advice

Street Law involves law students teaching and providing general legal information to non-lawyers. However, law student instructors cannot give specific legal advice. To do so may constitute the unauthorized practice of law. For this reason, law students must notify their students that they are not lawyers and cannot give legal advice.

If a student poses a personal legal problem that seems to call for individual legal advice, law student teachers must refrain from giving legal counsel and refer the student to appropriate legal counsel or service agencies. There are many agencies in Houston that have trained attorneys who can provide pro bono assistance with specific problems, and there are also hotlines that people can call for legal assistance and referrals. If uncertain about the appropriate response, the law student can consult Professor Daniels for guidance. We will share and discuss these resources in a seminar class so that you can bring them to your young students, cooperating teachers, and classrooms.

The following is a possible script to use when a non-lawyer is seeking legal advice: "Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me about the situation you're facing. I cannot provide legal advice on specific cases because I am not yet a lawyer and the legal profession does not allow it. There are licensed attorneys in Houston, however, whom you can call to talk to about your situation. I am happy to provide you with those resources."