



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL *of* LAW

LAW 809
BAR ESSAY WRITING
Section 1
Fall 2017

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND BAR READINESS

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COURSE BOOKS & MATERIAL

There is no *required* textbook for this course.

INSTRUCTOR* CONTACT INFORMATION

PLEASE DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING OR COURSE CONTENT TO THE DEPARTMENT DEAN.

NAME: Ronda Harrison, Assistant Dean for Academic Support and Bar Readiness

TELEPHONE: 713-313-1366

EMAIL: magriggs@tmslaw.tsu.edu

OFFICE LOCATION: Room 241

ACADEMIC SUPPORT OFFICE HOURS:

	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
Ronda Harrison Room 241 (713) 313-1366 roharrison@tmslaw.tsu.edu					
Kevin Christiansen Room 109 (832) 453-3786 kevinwadechristiansen@gmail.com					
Room 108					

*This course is taught by the Academic Support department faculty.

NOTE FROM THE DEAN:

This course is designed to help you develop the problem solving and analytical writing skills necessary for you to maximize your scores on the essay portion of the Texas Bar Examination. Formats presented in this course may be inconsistent with UBE jurisdictions.

BELOW ARE GENERAL ESSAY WRITING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEXAS BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS

- Carefully read the question and the “call of the question,” (what the question asks you to do.)
- **Pay attention to the facts presented without assuming additional facts.**
- Include more than a mere conclusion when asked to explain the answer fully.
- **Respond to the “call of the question”** (what the question asks you to do) and stay on track.
- **Practice writing in complete sentences and composing paragraphs.**
- **Organize your responses, and answer subparts, if any, in the order asked.**
- Strive for clarity and good communication in writing.
- **Avoid lengthy or unnecessary discussion of general or extraneous matters.**

Texas examinees should read and be familiar with the Texas statutes and rules pertaining to the Texas essay and procedure and evidence exam-tested subjects. This is recommended regardless whether you have access to commercially-produced outlines or review materials.

http://www.ble.state.tx.us/exam_info/selected_answers/main_selected_answers.htm

COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OUTCOMES

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will teach you how to answer the types of essay questions that will appear on the bar exam. It will show you what the rules frequently tested by the examiners and the essential components of a high scoring answer. You will gain experience writing answers to actual bar essay questions and you will receive personalized feedback on your essays with instruction on how to improve your writing.

This course is not intended as a substitute for a commercial bar review course. This course is designed for students preparing to sit for the Texas Bar Examination. Students should take this course during the semester immediately preceding law school graduation and bar study. Specific emphasis will be given to the frequently tested areas of the Texas Bar Exam.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The main objective of this course is to facilitate the development of competency required to pass the essay portion of the Texas Bar Exam.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this course with a passing grade, each student should be able to:

1. understand the format of the Texas Essay Exam and the legal rules most frequently tested on the exam;
2. construct essay answer templates by combining Texas statutes with previously tested subject matter; and
3. competently answer simulated exam questions under test conditions.



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CLASS FORMAT & GRADING

In-class essay exams

During most class sessions, the instructor will administer an in-class essay. Students will have 30 minutes to complete the essay in class. We will provide or review any Code provisions or reading assignment prior to the in-class essay. All Texas statutes are available online at www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us. Normally, essays will be submitted using SoftTest (ExamSoft).

Grading matrix

	# Offered	# Required	Max. Points Available
In-class essays	12	10	100
Out-of-class essays	12	10	100
Comprehensive Exam	1	1	800
			1000 points

Grade scale

Grade	Cumulative Points
A	800-1000
A-	776-800
B+	751-775
B	726-750
C+	701-725
C	676-700
D	0-675

The table above is only an estimation of final grade calculation.

Comprehensive exams

Students will take one comprehensive semester exam containing 6 essay questions.



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ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations, please fill out the necessary forms with the Dean's office. Your application and documentation will remain confidential. Your prompt attention will allow the law school to accommodate you, as soon as it has been made aware of your situation.

Please see:

http://www.tsulaw.edu/student_affairs/docs/2011-2012AccommodationsHandbook.pdf

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE

See Students' Rules of Matriculation for details on absences and grade reductions.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

1. Mobile and cellular phones must be powered off or **fully silent** during class times. (No vibrations, alarms, text or message signals, or flashing lights).
2. Please do not eat breakfast, lunch or heavy snacks in the classroom during class time. Food, gum and snacks may create an unwelcome smell and noise distraction during exams and lessons.
3. Please refrain from coming to class late or departing during class instruction. It is disruptive, and disrespectful to your instructor and classmates.
4. Permissible laptop usage is limited to writing and submitting essays.
5. When e-mailing your professor, be appropriate and professional in your communication. Begin the e-mail with a greeting and address me by title and surname. Use a subject line that clearly denotes the purpose/topic of your message. Close the message with your full name and contact information. Do not "reply" to a message sent from your instructor with an unrelated topic without first changing the subject line. **I reserve the right to ignore non-compliant messages.**

ACADEMIC CALENDAR



THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2017 – 2018

FALL SEMESTER 2017 (SEVENTY DAYS OF CLASSES)

Orientation	Monday-Friday	August 14-18, 2017
First Day of Class	Monday	August 21, 2017
Last Day to ADD/DROP	Friday	August 25, 2017
Labor Day (NO CLASSES)	Monday	September 4, 2017
Purge of all unpaid course selections	Thursday	September 20, 2017
Mid Term Examinations	Mon – Fri	October 16-20, 2017
VETERANS DAY (NO CLASSES)	Friday	November 10, 2017 (tentative)
Thanksgiving Holiday	Thurs – Fri	November 23-24, 2017
Last Day of Classes	Thursday	November 30, 2017
Last Day to Drop a Class	Thursday	November 30, 2017
First Year Professors' Grades due	Thursday	November 30, 2017
Reading Period (NO CLASS)	Friday • Sunday	December 1-3, 2017
Final Examinations	Mon – Fri	December 4 • Dec. 15, 2017
Commencement	Saturday	December 16, 2017

SPRING SEMESTER 2018 (SEVENTY DAYS OF CLASSES)

School Opens	Tuesday	January 2, 2018
First Day of Class	Monday	January 8, 2018
Last Day to ADD/DROP	Friday	January 12, 2018
M L K Holiday (No Classes)	Monday	January 15, 2018
Purge of all unpaid course selections	Wednesday	February 7, 2018
President's Day Holiday (No Classes)	Monday	February 19, 2018
Mid Term Examinations	Mon – Fri	March 5– 9, 2018
Spring Break	Mon – Fri	March 12 – 16, 2018
Good Friday (No Classes)	Friday	March 30, 2018
Last Day of Classes	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
Last Day to Drop a Class	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
First Year Professors' Grades due	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
Reading Period (No Classes)	Thur. – Sun	April 26 • 29, 2018
Final Examinations	Mon- Fri	April 30 – May 11, 2018
Hooding Ceremony	Friday	May 11, 2018
Commencement	Saturday	May 12, 2018

Please note that the calendar events and /or dates are subject to change.
TMSLAW REGISTRAR
Approved 5/31/2017

SYLLABUS

Class period	In Class Assignment	Assignment to be completed before next class
Week 1 January 8-12	Introduction to the course IRAC essay formatting	Review Guardianships
Week 2 January 15-19	Guardianship Lecture In-class Guardianship Essay	Complete out-of-class Guardianship Essay Review Family Law/SAPCR

Week 3 January 22-26	Family Law/SAPCR Lecture In-class SAPCR Essay	Complete out-of-class SAPCR Essay Review Community Property
Week 4 January 29-February 2	Community Property Lecture In-class Community Property Essay	Complete out-of-class Community Property Essay Review Intestacy
Week 5 February 5- 9	Intestacy Lecture In-class Intestacy Essay	Complete out-of-class Intestacy Essay Review Wills
Week 6 February 12-16	Wills Lecture In-class Wills Essay	Complete out-of-class Wills Essay Review Trusts
Week 7 February 19-23	Trusts Lecture In-class Trusts Essay	Complete out-of-class Trusts Essay
Week 8 February 26-March 2	Review	Review Partnerships
Week 9 March 5- 9	Partnerships Lecture In-class Partnerships Essay	Complete out-of-class Partnerships Essay Review Corporations
Week 10 March 12-16	Corporations Lecture In-class Corporations Essay	Complete out-of-class Corporations Essay Review Commercial Paper
Week 11 March 19-23	Commercial Paper Lecture In-class Commercial Paper Essay	Complete out-of-class Commercial Paper Essay Review Secured Transactions
Week 12 March 26-30	Secured Transactions Lecture In-class Secured Transactions Essay	Complete out-of-class Secured Transactions Essay Review Oil and Gas



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Week 13 April 2-6	Oil and Gas Lecture In-class Oil and Gas Essay	Complete out-of-class Oil and Gas Essay Review Consumer Law
Week 14 April 9-13	Consumer Law Lecture In-class Consumer Law Essay	Complete out-of-class Consumer Law Outline
Week 15 April 16-20	Review Essay Formatting and Substantive Law Review	Essay Assignment Due May 9, 2018
Week 16 Finals	Comprehensive Exam (6 Essay Questions)	