



MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF LAW at ANDOVER
SYLLABUS FOR CREATING, MANAGING & MARKETING A SMALL FIRM
FALL 2025
Professor Daniel L. Hutchinson Sr.

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Text: We will use the *How to Start and Build a Law Practice, Sixth Edition*, by Jay G. Foonberg. Do not buy this book it will be provided to you by the professor via PDF.

Reading: Will be required before each class on the material that will be covered.
The Chapters are very short but contain lots of information.

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to have students develop an understanding of how to start and thrive in a solo practice as well as an understanding of working for an existing law firm.

Class Times: Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm

Course Objectives: The objective of this course is for the student to have a thorough understanding of starting and managing a solo law practice. The student will master this material in order to be better advocates, to resolve disputes to better serve their client's interests and to be excellent problem solvers and litigators. The student will also learn the importance of the client centered approach in order to grow a law practice and keep a client for life.

Grading Criteria: Attendance and participation in class, midterm examination, oral presentation, lack of class participation and final examination will all contribute to your final grade in this class. This is

your first step in the legal profession and you are expected to be fully prepared, professional and able to advocate for your clients.

Attendance: Class attendance is an important part of the class as there is a discussion amongst the class after discussing the reading assignments.

******If you need to miss a class I ask the you file a motion with me via email twenty four hours in advance. (More on this below).******

ASSIGNMENTS

We will be covering the problems in the book every class (4 per class). Please read the problems before class. Students will be called on randomly to cover the problem.

Students shall be graded on their performance in class of the scheduled assignments. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. By enrolling in class, students agree to the above terms and conditions of the course. The final grade shall be determined largely by the midterm and the final exam.

ASSIGNMENTS DUE FOR EACH CLASS

Class 1 08/20/25	Introduction to Starting a Solo Practice Introduction to the class. Chapter 9. Should You Start Your Own Law Practice. Chapter 10. Am I Competent to Give Legal Advice. Chapter 14. Earning A Living Between Graduation & Opening Your Practice. Class Discussion
Class 2 08/27/25	Chapter 19. Should You Specialize. Chapter 20. Naming Your Law Firm. Chapter 21. Solo Practice v Partnership. Chapter 22. The Written Business Plan. Class Discussion
Class 3 09/03/25	Chapter 35. Checklists Of Needs For A New Law Office. Chapter 41. How To Handle Friends & Relatives.

Chapter 42. Dignity & Respect.
Chapter 43. How to Market Your Services.
Class Discussion

Class 4
09/10/25

Chapter 46. Your Website.
Chapter 47. The Importance Of Accepting & Promptly Returning Telephone Calls.
Chapter 50. Managing Written Communications.
Chapter 51. Can You Get Clients From Organizations.
Class Discussion

Class 5
09/17/25

Chapter 56. How To Accept Personal Injury Cases.
Chapter 57. How To Accept Criminal Cases.
Chapter 65. How To Get More Work From Existing Clients By Mining Your Closed Files.
Chapter 66. How To Recognize Conflicts Of Interest.
Discussion about Mid-Term

Class 6
09/24/25

Chapter 67. How To Keep Clients.
Chapter 68. How To Satisfy A Client.
Chapter 69. How To Lose Clients.
Chapter 71. Cases And Clients That Should Be Turned Down.
Class Discussion and Mid-Term Preparation

Class 7
10/01/25

Chapter 73. Accepting Cases With Doubtful Or Unknown Merit.
Chapter 74. Damage Control If You Are Fired.
Chapter 75. The Fee And Representation Letter.
Chapter 77. Engagement Letters, Non-Engagement Letters and Disengagement Letters.
Class Discussion

Class 8
10/08/25

Chapter 79. How To Set Your Fees.
Chapter 81. Don't Quote Fees Or Give Legal Advice Over The Phone Or By Email To New Clients.
Chapter 82. Cash Up Front.
Chapter 86. The Importance Of Cash Up Front For Survival.
Class Discussion

Class 9:
10/15/25

MIDTERM EXAM

Class 10:
10/22/25

Chapter 88. Financing Your Practice With Bank Credit Cards.
Chapter 90. Getting Paid In Full.
Chapter 96. Typical Client Costs.
Chapter 98. Bedside Manner In Setting Fees.
Video in class on Client Centered Representation.
Class Discussion

Class 11:
10/29/25

Chapter 100. When And How To Withdraw From A Non-Paying Matter.
Chapter 101. Management Of The Law Office.
Chapter 102. Time Management 101, Finding Time And To Do Lists.
Chapter 103. Organizing Your Day And Your Life To Make More Money
By Planning And List Making.
Class Discussion

11/05/25

Class 12:

Chapter 104. Managing Communications - **RETURN THAT CALL!!**
Chapter 105. Organizing Your Desk To Make More Money.
Chapter 106. How To Keep Time Records To Make More Money
And Preserve Evidence Of Work Done.
Chapter 107. Getting Ready For Your First Clients.
Class Discussion

Class 13:
11/12/25

Chapter 110. Your First Court Appearance.
Chapter 111. How To Interview A Client.
Chapter 113. Interrupting Your Client To Prove You Are Listening.
Chapter 114. How To Conduct A Meeting.
Class Discussion - Final Exam Preparation

Class 14:
11/19/25

Chapter 118. Negotiating Skills.
Chapter 119. How To Maintain A Bank Account.
Chapter 120. Lawyer Trust Accounts.
Chapter 121. How To Maintain A Trust Account.
Chapter 122. Insurance Needs Of The New Lawyer - Malpractice
Class Discussion - Prep for Final Exam

Class 15: **Class Discussion to prep for final exams**
11/26/25

Class 16:
12/03/25 **Tentative date for final exam**

**** I understand that life sometimes gets in the way of your law school studies. That being said if you need to miss a class for some reason please draft a motion to be excused from class twenty four hours in advance of the class you are needing to be excused from. It does not have to be elaborate or lengthy. For those of you who may not have had the motions class yet, you can find samples of motions on Westlaw. Students that file their motion twenty four hours before a missed class will be excused without penalty. Motions for excused absence may only be filed once per semester.****