THE BUSINESS OF BEING A LAWYER (BBL) 
COURSE INFORMATION AND SYLLABUS

I. Professor and Contact Information

Professor: Pam Pierson  
Office: Room 336  
Telephone: 348-1139  
Office Hours:  
Email: ppierson@law.ua.edu

Feel free to stop by my office at other times but it would be helpful if you scheduled an appointment first.

II. Course Material

Required: Course materials which are available in the law school bookstore.

III. Course Description

This is a one-credit Ethics course, mandatory for all students, beginning with the entering class of 2013. This course is recommended but optional for students who entered UA law school prior to 2013.

The Business of Being a Lawyer (BBL) is designed to help students navigate the legal profession and law related professions. It covers the following: (1) The changing economics of the legal profession and resulting consequences for graduating law students. (2) Personal financial planning basics. (3) Emotional Intelligence (“E.Q.”): an overview of predictable life crises in adulthood, particularly for attorneys, and psychological tools and resources available for handling such crises. (4) “Free agency”: how to market oneself throughout one’s working life, given the fact that the average attorney changes jobs seven times in a career.

This course is offered in five modules. It is graded P, D, F. Course credit will be awarded in the semester in which a student completes his or her last module.

The first module will be offered for 1Ls on __________; it will be offered for 2Ls and 3Ls on __________. The first module, totaling 100 minutes of classroom instruction (provided in a twohour class session, with one tenminute break), provides an overview of the material to be presented in the BBL course. The four remaining modules will be offered on _________________. The format for last four modules is:

- Two hours, with one ten-minute break, of classroom instruction,
- Ten-minute break,
- Fifty minute seminar led by a practicing attorney, featuring a discussion format, and focused on selected topics. Each seminar will consist of 12-15 students and convene for 50 minutes. Students select which discussion group they will
IV. Class Requirements

1. Be on time.

2. Attendance is required. Class roll will be taken at the beginning and end of each module and at the seminar portion of each module. Students may miss class only for good cause as determined by me, in advance of the absence.

3. Satisfactory and timely completion of all course assignments.

If any of the above requirements cause you a hardship, please speak to me prior to class.

V. Grading Policy

This course will be graded P, D, F. Grades and course credit will be awarded in the semester in which students complete their last course module.

VI. ADA Accommodations

The Law School is committed to meeting the needs of students with physical, learning, and other disabilities, and provides appropriate accommodations and services tailored to each person's specific requirements. The Law School's assistant deans and the University's Office of Disability Services work together to help individuals with disabilities achieve and maintain individual autonomy. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Claude Arrington, Assistant Dean for Students/Academic Services at (205) 348-5751 or carrington@law.ua.edu so that the individual's needs for support services can be evaluated and accommodated in a timely manner.

VII. Uses of Technology

Students may use portable computing or other electronic devices in the classroom for education [or class] use pursuant to class policy. At no time shall students use portable computer or other electronic devices in an inappropriate manner during class. Inappropriate uses include any and all uses of a portable computing or other electronic device not directly related to the class in session. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: displaying web pages, receiving, reading, composing, or sending e-mail or instant messages, making or receiving phone calls, taking photographs or videos playing video in any format; recording or making audio tapes or files, and playing games. If you have any question about this class rule, please feel free to contact me.
THE BUSINESS OF BEING A LAWYER (BBL)
SYLLABUS

I. Overview of Course
pp. 1-40

II. Module One: The Changing Economics of the Legal Profession; Resulting Consequences and Opportunities for Law Graduates

pp. 41 - 65

A. Changing Economics of the Legal Profession
Overview of employment trends by legal employers, new billing paradigms, evolving sources of revenue and expenses of private law firms, government law offices, non-profit law organizations.

B. Consequences for Law Graduates
Discussion of how current economics in the legal profession lead to less stability in law firms, new opportunities in non-traditional practices of law and law-related professions, new employment patterns, an updated calculus of non-profit or governmental employment vis á vis private employment. Discussion also includes ethical issues presented.

Assignment: Submission of hypothetical business plan, in accordance with parameters provided in the course materials. Due within one week of completion of module.

III. Module Two: Personal Financial Planning

pp. 66 - 90

A. Basic Coverage of Financial Facts
This section will build on two facts: first, that working adults of the future increasingly will be personally responsible for their long term financial

All readings are from the prepared course materials which may be purchased in the law school book store.

1 Relevant Ethical Rules include ABA Model Rules 1.5 (fees) 4.1 through 4.4 (dealing with transactions with persons other than clients), 5.1 through 5.7 (dealing with Law Firms and Associations), ABA Model Rules 7.1 through 7.6 (dealing with conveying information about legal services, ie, advertising, direct contact with prospective clients, communication of fields of practice).

2 Relevant Ethical Rules include ABA Model Rules 8.1 through 8.5 (licensure discipline issues)
security, and second, the volatility of the legal market presents financial opportunities for those prepared to maximize them.

B. Topics Addressed
Topics include financial implications of different business models (ie, salaried law firm employee versus contract lawyer with an LLC); retirement planning and how such planning influences career choices; negotiating compensation packages with employers throughout one’s career; discussion of sample budgets demonstrating, in practical terms, how living within/ below/ above one’s means restricts, or liberates, one’s career decisions. Discussion also includes ethical issues presented.

Assignment: Submission of a hypothetical personal budget, in accordance with parameters provided in the course material. Due within one week of completion of module.

IV. Module Three: Principles of “Emotional Intelligence”

pp. 91 - 120

A. Basic Coverage of “Emotional Intelligence”
This section is based upon three assumptions: (1) life always presents challenges, (2) the practice of law presents unique but predictable challenges, and (3) developing skills for coping with these life and professional hurdles is necessary and possible.

B. Topics Addressed
Topics include an overview of strength and interest assessment taken by students and implications for career choice. Additional topics include discussion of strategies for relieving stress, achieving balance in one’s life, substance abuse and other addictive behaviors. Discussion also includes ethical issues presented. This section will address the importance of performing pro bono work, making the point that pro bono activities are an effective way to maintain balance, remind us why we became attorneys, and infuse meaning into our professional lives.

Assignment: Completion of online strengths and interests assessment. To be completed prior to attending Module Three. Results of the assessment are confidential and will be provided only to the student completing the assessment.

V. Module Four: How to Be an Effective “Free Agent” Throughout One’s Legal Career

pp. 121 - 159

A. Careers in the Legal and Law Related Professions

3 Relevant Ethical Rules would be innumerable, including ABA Model Rules 1.1 through-1.18 (client-lawyer relationship), 2.1 through 2.4 (role as counselor), 3.1 - 3.9 (role as advocate), 4.1 through 4.4 (transactions with persons other than clients), 5.1 - 5.7 (law firms and associations), 6.1 - 6.5 (public service), 7.1 through 7.6 (information about legal services) and 8.1 - 8.5 (maintaining the integrity of the bar).
This section focuses on issues of networking, rainmaking and marketing.\(^4\) It assumes that given the current and future legal market, and that fact that the average attorney will change jobs seven times in a career, attorneys need marketing skills to position themselves for multiple employment situations and transitions throughout their careers.

**B. Topics Addressed**

Topics include discussion of ways licensed attorneys may optimize their career building opportunities in: publishing, CLE instruction, bar and other professional organizations, and community involvement. Discussion also includes ethical issues presented.

**Assignment:** Submission of one’s free agency” plan, in accordance with parameters in the course material. Due one week within completion of this module.

\(^4\) Relevant Ethical Rules would include ABA Model Rules 4.1 through 4.4 (transactions with persons other than clients) and 7.1through 7.6(information about legal services).