ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM TA SYLLABUS
FALL 2012

David Hill
T.A.– Academic Support
Course # 7961-1
Class will meet Fridays from 8:00-9:00.
Room BCNF

TA RESPONSIBILITIES

The Academic Support Program Teaching Assistants (“ASP TAs”) work with the ASP for fall semester and receive two hours of graded credit. Each TA will conduct a series of skills-based workshops for a group of approximately 5-7 incoming 1L students. The overriding goal of the workshop sessions is to provide a structured, collaborative environment where first-year students can practice the skills necessary to succeed in law school.

All ASP TAs must perform the following general duties:

• Attend the ASP TA class as scheduled and work with the ASP Faculty Director to prepare for the workshop sessions.
• Conduct workshop sessions as scheduled.
• Prepare workshop reports for the ASP.
• Provide feedback to participants by reviewing their class notes, case briefs, outlines, answers to practice exams and hypos, etc.
• TAs may also be asked to perform additional duties to assist with the individual needs of ASP participants and the program as a whole, including help with the practice final exam session at the end of fall semester.

TA CLASS ATTENDANCE

All ASP TAs must enroll in the ASP TA course and attend the class as scheduled. The course is designed to provide TAs with the basic lesson plans and materials for use in their workshop sessions. The TAs will also be introduced to some basic teaching methodology, techniques for evaluating students and instruction on how to modify and implement lesson plans. The ASP TA class also provides an opportunity for the Faculty Director and TAs to discuss the progress of the workshops and address any administrative matters.

WORKSHOPS

TAs must conduct workshop group sessions as scheduled. The group sessions will be approximately 60-90 minutes long, depending on the nature of the weekly lesson plan and needs of participants. TAs must use the basic lesson plans provided in the TA course, but may modify the plans to meet the specific needs of their group and implementation style. TAs should conduct the workshop sessions with the following goals in mind:
• **Developing the Learning/Study Skills that are Unique to Law School:** TAs will provide basic instruction about reading and briefing cases, outlining for courses, preparing for class, participating in class, structuring exam answers for traditional law school exams, and time/stress management. The overriding purpose of this goal is to encourage students to become active (rather than passive) learners, which is essential skill in law school.

• **Developing the Basic Reasoning and Analytical Skills Necessary for Law School and the Practice of Law:** Beyond studying and learning skills development, TAs will also assist students to develop the basic analytical and reasoning skills needed to succeed in law school and the practice of law. These skills will be developed through group discussions, the study of examples and most notably through the opportunity to practice these needed skills by solving hypothetical problems in a collaborative environment. The skills that will be focused on include identifying and formulating rules and holdings, organizing case law by issue, analogizing and distinguishing cases, spotting and articulating issues, framing exam answers around issues, crafting arguments and counter-arguments, and the use of policy.

• **Providing Feedback on Case Briefs and Outlines:** TAs will be a source of much needed feedback for students in their first year of law school. While conducting workshops involving reading/briefing cases and outlining for courses, TAs will provide feedback on the briefs and outlines created in those sessions. Additionally, TAs will review a few case briefs and outline sections created by participants for their specific doctrinal courses. TAs may also be asked to evaluate the class notes taken by group participants.

• **Practice Midterm Exam:** The ASP TAs will also assist students to develop the exam taking skills necessary to succeed in law school. The goal of these workshops will be to highlight the skills necessary to prepare for and take the exam, including the use of outlines on an exam, issue spotting and structuring an exam answer. The TAs should carefully evaluate the exam answers in writing and provide feedback each study group participant individually. The participants should also be encouraged to rewrite their answers, incorporating the feedback from TAs.

• **Reviewing Substantive Topics and Answering Questions:** Although the ASP workshops are not associated with specific doctrinal courses, the groups will incorporate various substantive doctrines typically taught in the fall semester. These doctrines will include substantive issues from torts, contracts and civil procedure. In the process of using these doctrines to practice basic study and reasoning skills, TAs will provide some review of the substantive doctrines and respond to questions from group members.
**WORKSHOP REPORTS/LESSON PLANS**

TAs are required to submit a copy of their workshop reports/lesson plans and any additional materials used in their group sessions upon completion of each workshop session. Reports/Lesson Plans should be emailed directly to me. The report should include the names of all group participants, a record of their attendance and any additional information about the progress of the individual group members.

**EQUAL ACCESS**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to Barbara Dickey, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, and to the Center for Disability Services (CDS) to make arrangements for accommodations. CDS is located at 200 S Central Campus Drive (Union Building), Room 162 or you can call 801-581-5020.

**WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

**READING AND BRIEFING CASES WORKSHOP: AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 7**

- **TA CLASS/TRAINING SESSIONS**
  - ASP TA Class/Training Session (Saturday, August 18; 10 to noon, Room 105)
    - Overview of Program, Syllabus, Workshops and TA Course.
    - Discuss how to conduct Reading/Briefing Cases Workshop. Overview of lesson plans, exercises and materials for three workshop sessions.

- **GROUP SESSIONS**
  - Prepare for and conduct three workshop sessions during first two to three weeks of semester as scheduled by you and your group.
    - First Session:
      - Provide overview of study group goals, expectations, etc.
      - Discuss general studying strategies for law school.
      - Discuss strategies for reading cases in context.
    - Second Session:
      - Case briefing exercises.
      - Using case briefs for effective note taking and preparing for class.
    - Third Session:
      - Refining rules, holdings and issues in case briefs.
      - Identifying types of rules, framing issue statements.
      - Applying case law from briefs to hypothetical problem.
OUTLINING WORKSHOP: SEPTEMBER 17–OCTOBER 5

❖ TA CLASS/TRAINING SESSIONS

❖ ASP TA Class/Training Session (September 14, 8:00 am)
  ➢ Recap of first workshop, discuss how to conduct outlining workshop. Overview of lesson plans, exercises, and materials for all three sessions.

❖ ASP TA Class/Training Session (September 21, 8:00 am)
  ➢ Finish discussing how to conduct outlining workshop. Overview of lesson plans, exercises and materials for all three sessions.

❖ GROUP SESSIONS

❖ Prepare for and conduct three sessions during the two to three weeks prior to fall break as scheduled by you and your group.
  ➢ First Session:
    • How and why to create an outline.
    • How synthesizing rules and cases will help to understand substantive material and create study aid for exams.
  ➢ Second Session:
    • Gathering materials.
    • Synthesis
    • Creating and organizing outline.
  ➢ Third Session:
    • Completing outline.
    • Flowcharts.

EXAM TAKING-WRITING EXAM ANSWERS WORKSHOP: OCTOBER 22–NOVEMBER 9

❖ TA CLASS/TRAINING SESSIONS

❖ ASP TA Class/Training Session (October 19, 8:00 am)
  ➢ Recap outlining workshop, discuss how to conduct exam-taking workshop. Overview of lesson plans, exercises and materials for all three sessions.

❖ ASP TA Class/Training Session (October 26, 8:00 am)
  ➢ Finish discussing how to conduct exam-taking workshop. Overview of lesson plans, exercises and materials for all three sessions.

❖ GROUP SESSIONS

❖ Prepare for and conduct three sessions during the two to three weeks following the week after fall break as scheduled by you and your group.
  ➢ First Session:
    • Discuss basics of law school exam—problem solving.
• Spotting Issues
• IRAC and other structures.

➢ Second Session:
  • Basic legal analysis
  • Applying rules to facts
  • Analogizing/distinguishing cases
  • Using critical facts

➢ Third Session:
  • Continue basic legal analysis: problem solving.
  • Using policy
  • Arguments and counter-arguments
  • Multiple Choice Exams

EXAM TAKING-STRATEGIES WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER 30

◆ TA CLASS/TRAINING SESSION

◆ ASP TA Class/Training Session (November 16, 8:00 am)
  ➢ Recap exam-taking workshop, discuss how to create practice exam.
  ➢ Discuss how to conduct exam strategies workshop, questions regarding practice exam, details on how to proctor practice exam.

◆ GROUP SESSION

◆ Prepare for and conduct one final group meeting during the last week of the semester as scheduled by you and your group.
  ➢ Final Session (wrap-up ASP group):
    • Preparing for exams
    • Types of exam questions
    • Finalizing outlines
    • Practice hypos.

PRACTICE FINAL EXAM: DECEMBER 1

◆ ASP Practice Final Exam will be Saturday, December 1, at 9:00 am.
  ➢ Help proctor exam and assist students.