LAW B598 – Legal Research and Writing Seminar: MPT Bar Exam Practice  
Winter Quarter 2014

Class Times and Location

Tuesdays, 10:30-12:20 in room L201

Contact Information

Professor Sarah Kaltsounis | sarahfk@uw.edu | 206.543.4947 | W.H. Gates Hall Room 309
  Office Hours: Fridays after 12:30, or by appointment

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Course Website | https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/889405

Course Description

Welcome! The Multistate Performance Test (MPT) Bar Exam Practice Seminar is designed to help you succeed on the MPT. Many state bar exams (including Washington’s) require the MPT, which involves 90-minute questions that require you to analyze a simulated fact pattern, distill legal principles from a provided case file of authorities, apply those rules to the facts, and produce a written work product like a memorandum, pleading, letter, or contract. Techniques you learn in this course will help you pass the MPT or the California Performance Test (which involves the same test structure but a longer time limit of three hours).

We will work together to enhance your exam-writing skills, including issue identification, analysis of legal authorities, use of facts, organization, writing for a specific audience, memorization, time management, stress management, and more. You will take several practice MPT exams under realistic bar exam conditions and will receive feedback on your progress. Please note: this course is not intended to serve as a substitute for a commercial post-graduation bar exam preparation course. We will not focus on the multiple-choice or essay portions of the bar exam, or on an extensive review of the substantive areas of law tested on bar exams. Enrollment in this course is restricted to 3Ls and LL.M. students.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- recognize legal issues presented in simulated client scenarios
- identify, synthesize, and apply relevant legal rules and principles from judicial opinions, statutes, administrative regulations, and other authorities
- identify and analyze relevant facts
- predict the likely outcome of a simulated client problem
- efficiently outline exam answers
- produce professional written communication in various forms, including both objective and persuasive writing
- manage time and stress effectively in a high-stakes exam environment
- identify ethical issues presented in simulated client scenarios
To assess the learning outcomes in this course, we will use simulated exam exercises. You will receive feedback from me, as well as conducting self-assessments of your performance and peer-assessments of each other’s work.

**Required Text**

There is no required text for this course. Readings will be posted on the course website.

**Course Grading**

This course is graded pass/fail. You must complete all assignments with reasonable, good-faith effort to receive credit for the course.

**Academic Policies**

**Attendance**

UW Law’s attendance policy requires you to attend at least 80 percent of our class sessions or I may drop your enrollment from this course after the fifth week of the quarter. This course will meet 10 times this quarter, so you may miss no more than two classes. You must make up all missed work.

**Disability Accommodations**

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS), 448 Schmitz Hall, (206) 543-8924 (V), (206) 543-8925 (TTY). If you have a letter from DRS, please present it to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need in this class.

**Using Computers and Other Electronic Devices in Class**

You may bring cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices to class so long as you mute any distracting sounds or vibrations. Please avoid using cell phones to send text messages unless you must attend to an important and time-sensitive matter (e.g., family emergency or illness, arranging transportation or childcare, etc.). If you bring your computer to class, use it to take notes or to access the internet for purposes germane to our learning (e.g., accessing the course website). Do not use your devices in a manner that inhibits your engagement in the class. I do not want to police your online activities during class, so I ask that you exercise sound judgment and courtesy.
Course Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Class 1 | January 7 | Introduction to the MPT; Developing Awareness of Reading and Learning Skills

Read before class
- Handout #1: 2014 MPT Information Booklet
- Handout #2: Judicial opinion

Class activities and discussion topics
- Welcome and introductions, administrative details
- Introduction to the bar exam in general
- Introduction to the MPT
- In-class diagnostic tests:
  - Reading speed assessment (Handout #3)
  - Learning styles inventories
  - Critical reading quiz (about the case in Handout #2)
- Discussion of how your personal learning and reading styles impact your bar exam study strategies

Class 2 | January 14 | Exploring the MPT and exam-taking strategies

Read before class
- Handout #4: Review example MPTs
- Handout #5: The Bar Exam in a Nutshell, Ch. 7

Class activities and discussion topics
- Explore components of the MPT in more detail
- In-class exercise: Critically evaluating types of MPT questions
- Learning to use MPT test-taking strategies (creating an outline, using an analysis chart)

Class 3 | January 21 | Simulated MPT

Read before class
- MPT #1 (read the instructions, case file, and library before class)

Class activities and discussion topics
- Large-group discussion: understanding MPT #1’s materials; creating outline and analysis chart for MPT #1
- Taking a simulated exam (MPT #1) (bring pen and paper or laptop)
Class 4 | January 28 | Debriefing Simulated MPT

Class activities and discussion topics
• Class discussion about feedback on MPT #1
• Small-group activity: creating outline and analysis chart for MPT#2 (handed out in class)

Class 5 | February 4 | Simulated MPT

Class activities and discussion topics
• Taking a simulated exam under timed conditions (MPT #2) (bring pen and paper or laptop)
• Debriefing MPT #2

Class 6 | February 11 | Giving and receiving feedback; editing and revision

Class activities and discussion topics
• Discussion: learning by putting yourself in the exam grader’s position and providing feedback to others
• Discussion: writing and editing techniques for clear, concise exam answers
• In-class activity: peer review of a classmate’s MPT #2 exam answer

Assignment #1: Revise your exam answer from MPT #1 or MPT #2, incorporating feedback from professor and/or classmate. Due at the start of class next week (turn in on the course website).

Class 7 | February 18 | Simulated MPT

Class activities and discussion topics
• Taking a simulated exam (MPT #3) (bring pen and paper or laptop)
• Debriefing MPT #3

Assignment #2: Draft written feedback to a classmate on his or her response to MPT #3. Use the checklist and feedback form posted on Canvas (Handout #6). Due at the start of class next week (turn in on the course website and bring a copy to class for your partner).

Class 8 | February 25 | Simulated MPT

Class activities and discussion topics
• Taking a simulated exam (MPT #4) (bring pen and paper or laptop)
• Debriefing MPT #4
Class 9 | March 4 | Simulated MPT

Class activities and discussion topics
- Taking a simulated exam (MPT #5) (bring pen and paper or laptop)
- Debriefing MPT #5

Class 10 | March 11 | Panel Discussion

Class activities and discussion topics
- Discussion with UW alumni who sat for Washington’s Uniform Bar Exam last summer
- Course evaluations