

Syllabus Workshop

American University of Armenia

June 4, 2012

Agenda

- Welcome and Review of Agenda
- Activity: Reviewing a Syllabus
- Syllabus Policy Review
- Syllabus Template Review
- Methods of Evaluation
- Activity: Are Rubrics Necessary
- Developing a Syllabus
- What is the process for soliciting feedback
- Q&A
- Next Workshops

Activity: Reviewing a Syllabus

Review Syllabus: LW 140. Public International Law

Discussion:

What do you know about this course by reading the syllabus?

Describe this course. What kind of course is it?

What might be missing on the syllabus?

Syllabus Policy Review

From AUA Faculty Handbook

Effective with the review of program curricula in 2004, each credit-bearing course offered shall include certain standardized elements in the course syllabus/outline. These elements must be included in the materials distributed to students at the start of the course and must be consistent with the corresponding elements approved by the Curriculum Committee. Faculty shall submit a copy of their syllabi to the academic program office where it will be retained. The faculty member teaching the course shall prepare the syllabus in compliance with the academic program's curriculum and must include the following elements: Elements of course syllabus

A. Administrative

- a. Course title and number
- b. The number of credit hours
- c. Instructor information (name, contacts, etc)
- d. Instructor office location and office hours
- e. The prerequisites and co-requisites for the course
- f. Term
- g. Weekly/daily schedule of class sessions
- h. Assignment and test make-up procedures
- i. [Optional, but desirable] Objectives for each lecture/session

B. Academic

- a. Learning objectives
- b. Learning outcomes (i.e. list of competencies that the successful students should attain)
- c. Description of how the course will be taught (e.g. lecture, lab, lecture/lab, distance, etc.)
- d. Statement on how the students will be evaluated (e.g. class participation, assignments, exams, papers, etc.).
- e. Use of library and other information resources
- f. Reference to university policies (Grade Appeals, Student Code of Ethics)
- h. Provisions for special needs students
- g. Other relevant information

Syllabus Template Review

Discussion:

What are the components?

Why is each component included?

How do the different components related to baseline assessment?

Methods of Evaluation

Activity

Review Syllabus (LW 140). Review Learning Outcomes listed

Are the Course Learning Outcomes clearly defined?

Appropriate?

Are the Course Learning Outcomes matched to the Program Goals and Learning Outcomes?

Methods of Evaluation

LL.M. Program Goals

Each module and each course gives specific attention to the following as appropriate to the field:

- *Developing Practical Skills* : legal research, analysis, writing and policy based advocacy for issues and clients
- *Developing Practical Knowledge* : substantive and comprehensive learning of international legal rules and standards important to domestic legal development
- *Developing Practitioner Competency* : how to advise a client on the main issues that may arise in a typical transaction or dispute; how to explain to foreign clients, in a context that they understand, the requirements of Armenian law.

Methods of Evaluation

LL.M. Program Student Learning Outcomes/ Competencies

DEGREE COMPETENCIES

1. Legal Research

1.1. Sources

The ability to research, properly cite, and analyze primary and secondary sources of both Armenian and English-language foreign law, including constitutions, statutes, regulations, court decisions, and treaties or conventions.

1.2. Weight

The ability to assess the continuing validity, relevance, weight, applicability and use of sources of law in relation to the topic of research or the legal problem presented.

2. Legal Analysis

2.1. Statutory Construction

The ability to read, understand, and analyze a statute by:

- Employing standard rules of statutory interpretation
- Identifying the statutory elements which are subject to interpretation
- Identifying and applying case law precedent, regulations, and other sources of law to define statutory terms and general meaning
- Reading for underlying policy rationale.

2.2. Precedent

- The ability to read, understand and analyze a judicial decision by:
- Employing standard methods of case analysis (identifying relevant facts, applicable rule(s), issues, holdings and policy rationales)
- Comparing and contrasting cases, identifying lines of precedent, recognizing dicta, noting procedural posture, and reading for ratio decidendi.

2.3. Legal Problem-solving

- The ability to solve factual legal problems by:
- applying appropriate rules to factual situations, identifying rules that do not apply to a factual situation, forecasting decisions/results based on application of appropriate rules
- identifying standard legal arguments and policy rationales underlying a source of law and generating and evaluating the efficacy of counterarguments
- identifying gaps, conflicts and ambiguities among sources of law
- identifying factual evidence that supports or controverts a particular legal position, and assessing weight or value of evidence
- identifying a source of law that supports or controverts a particular legal position, and assessing weight or value of such law.

2.4. Law in Context

- The ability to explain a source of law and its implications by:
- generating hypothetical examples of when a rule would apply or not apply, and if it applies, the ability to forecast the result of application
- explaining legal concepts in their diachronic (historical/evolutionary) dimension, synchronic (systemic/functional) dimension, as well as in regard to economic, cultural and social justice perspectives.

3. Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy

3.1. Objective Writing

The ability to write an objective assessment of a factual legal problem, such as a client advisory letter or a legal memorandum.

3.2. Persuasive Writing

The ability to write a persuasive legal document.

3.3. Routine Documents

The ability to draft in English basic legal documents like due diligence reports on companies or transactions, powers of attorney, legal entity charters, corporate resolutions, employment agreements, sales agreements, and other contracts.

3.4. Oral Presentation and Advocacy Skills

The ability to make objective oral presentations as well as engage in oral argumentation in support of a legal position.

4. Practitioner Competencies

4.1. Issue Spotting

- The ability to advise a client regarding:
- The principal issues likely to arise while undertaking a particular transaction
- The principal issues likely to arise during a particular dispute
- The relevant documents and information which will be needed during representation
- The likely scenarios, outcomes and future consequences.

4.2. Comparative Law Advising

- The ability to advise and explain, both local and foreign legal requirements, in a manner which is most understandable to either a local client or a foreign client, depending on their legal frame of reference, for:
- common matters such as incorporation, purchases of real property or shares, loans, secured transactions, employment agreements, etc.
- basic tax issues
- basic intellectual property rights issues
- basic environmental issues (e.g., zoning, pollution and toxic disposal, nature protection, public and worker safety)
- basic criminal law and criminal procedure matters (e.g., basic elements of crimes, standards of proof, right to counsel, limitations on detention, rights of suspect and accused, basic phases of criminal investigation and proceedings)
- basic compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and other anti-corruption measures.

4.3. Outside Expert A

The ability to identify the involvement of outside experts in regard to compliance with a

4.4. Negotiation

The ability to prepare for the resolution of a conflict

4.5. ADR

The ability to advise clients on dispute resolution options, to evaluate pros and cons of various fora and choice of law provisions and methods of dispute resolution (courts, arbitration, mediation).

4.6. International Disputes

The ability to advise clients involved in international disputes on choice of forum (arbitration, litigation in foreign court) and on the enforceability of decisions of such fora.

4.7. International Relief

The ability to advise clients on availability of relief in international fora (e.g., ECHR) and under international law, as well as applicability of international law in RA.

4.8. International Best Practices

The ability to assess local practice in common situations in light of international best practice, identify differences and causes of differences, and explain differences to local and foreign clients, and policy and law makers.

4.9. Professional Ethics

The ability to identify situations involving professional ethics issues, including conflicts of interest, matters beyond one's competence, and unethical behavior by parties involved in a matter, to know when and how to document and disclose matters to colleagues, to seek specialized advice, and to advise clients in situations raising ethical issues.

5. Substantive Knowledge

5.1. Due Process

The ability to understand, to recognize elements and to identify violations of, both criminal and civil due process.

5.2. Fundamental Substantive Law

Owing to sufficient familiarity with fundamental norms of substantive law, the ability to cite and/or paraphrase the major legal norms without special research and the ability to identify issues and to efficiently focus on the relevant details of these norms for closer examination

- The Armenian Constitution
- The U.S. Constitution
- Armenian Criminal Code
- Armenian Civil Code
- Armenian Joint Stock Company Law
- Armenian Tax Legislation
- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

4.2. Comparative Law Advising

* The ability to advise and explain, both local and foreign legal requirements, in a manner which is most understandable to either a local client or a foreign client, depending on their legal frame of reference, for . . .

Methods of Evaluation

Reviewing the Learning Outcomes in LW 140

What assessment methods might be used?

What would they assess?

How would they assess?

Utilizing

Course Description

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes

Methods of Evaluation

Choosing Assessment Methods. Are the methods:

- Appropriate
- Feasible
- Varied
 - tests, reports, presentations, group/individual work, writing, etc.
 - formative/summative
- Clearly defined

Methods of Evaluation

Is the method clearly defined?

One method of evaluation: Class Participation:

Is the method of evaluation clearly defined?

How might it be more clearly defined?

How might a student receive **feedback** about participation /progress before the final grade?

Methods of Evaluation

Why are clear definitions important?

- Provides students tools for self evaluation
- Provides Faculty tools for criteria-based assessment
- Provides Faculty tools for formative assessment to provide feedback to students
- Provides program with guidelines for student grades and program evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

Is the method appropriate?

Other factors in determining methods of evaluation:

Tests

Curves

Are they appropriate? Do they test the course based Student Learning Outcomes?

Are they clear (for instance when using a curve)?

Tools: Are Rubrics Necessary

Why are rubrics important?

Does your rubric provide enough detail?

Is there adequate distinction between levels of proficiency?

Is scoring reliable?

Are expectations clear?

Is the rubric shared/explained to students?

Developing a Syllabus

- University Mission Statement
- Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Map
- Catalog Course Description
- Course Outline, if exists
- Syllabus Policy
- Syllabus Template

- Consultation with Program Chair

Process for Feedback

Things to think about:

What is the process for faculty in your program to provide feedback (if the course description, curriculum map, student learning outcomes ... seem “off”)?

Or do faculty just “change” the course description on the syllabus?

Questions and Answers

What questions arise when you developing a syllabus?

What questions were not answered today?

Next Workshops:

Reviewing and Revising Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Coming back to Rubrics

Suggestions?