

## **Spring 2021 Registration FAQs for JD and Masters Students**

As we plan a spring semester that will continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we offer this document to address the questions that JD and Masters students likely have about the schedule and format of courses and exams. Part I of this document answers those questions that pertain to first-year JD students; Part II addresses upper-level JD students, and Part III addresses Masters students. Finally, Part IV addresses questions about the spring exam period, grades, and attendance, and pertains to all JD and Masters students.

### **I. First-year JD students**

#### **Will our spring courses use the same format as our fall courses?**

Yes. For day students, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Property and Academic Success will be conducted in the same simultaneous hybrid format that we used this fall. Students will remain in their same Lawyering Skills section with the same professor, and they will be assigned to either group A or B based on that section. The rotation schedule for each group is as follows:

Odd weeks (weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13):

- Mondays and Tuesdays: Group A in person; Group B online.
- Wednesday and Thursdays: Group B in person; Group A online.

Even weeks (weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12):

- Mondays and Tuesdays: Group B in person; Group A online.
- Wednesday and Thursdays: Group A in person; Group B online.

For evening students, your spring schedule will follow the same pattern as the fall semester: Monday and Wednesday nights will be in person, and Tuesday and Thursday nights will be online. One slight change, however, is that your Lawyering Skills sections will meet online on Tuesday and Thursdays.

#### **I am currently taking my fall courses remotely for reasons related to COVID-19. Can I continue to study remotely in the spring?**

If you currently have a remote semester accommodation for the fall, we will automatically extend it to the spring unless we hear from you that wish to change to in-person status. Please let Dean Buzuvis know by November 13 if you wish to change your status.

#### **I am currently taking my fall courses in person, but for COVID-19 related reasons, I wish to study remotely in the spring. Can I change my status?**

If you currently do not have a remote semester accommodation but wish to arrange one for the spring, please email Dean Buzuvis by November 13. Your email should explain the reason you seek an accommodation to take your classes remotely, and that reason must be related to COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **What about Introduction to the Legal Profession?**

Introduction to the Legal Profession is an intensive 1-credit course for first-year students that is scheduled to run from January 11 to January 14. Except for students with a remote semester

accommodation, everyone will meet in the law school for the class sessions scheduled over those four days. Remote students will participate via Zoom. This applies to both day and evening students.

## **II. Upper-level JD Students**

### **Will upper-level students have the opportunity to take a remote semester in the spring?**

Yes. As in the fall, the spring semester will offer a mix of both online and in-person classes for upper-level students. A student who wishes to study remotely for the semester should register only for online classes.

### **Which courses will be offered online?**

*Required courses:* Evidence and Professional Responsibility will be online. ALA II will have an online section in both day and evening.

*Electives:* Advanced Criminal Law, Bankruptcy, Criminal Procedure Investigation, Entertainment Law, Federal Courts, Gender and Law, International Business Transactions, Labor Law, Real Estate Survey, Regulatory Compliance, Technology and Law Practice, and Trusts and Estates.

*Electives that count towards the upper-level writing requirement:* Business Succession Planning, Cannabis Law, Critical Race Theory, and Estate Planning.

*Electives that count towards the experiential learning requirement:* Business Succession Planning, Estate Planning, International Human Rights Clinic, and Negotiation, Mediation, and Arbitration. In addition, students enrolled in the Judicial or Law Practice Externship Seminar will have the opportunity to participate fully online.

Other than the courses listed here, the rest of the upper-level curriculum is scheduled to run in person.

### **How did you decide which electives would be offered online?**

Some courses were already scheduled to be online as part of our “Thursday night online” initiative, and would have been online regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we also moved some electives online to accommodate health and safety needs of the instructor. Others were selected for pedagogical reasons, where online instruction was more conducive to students’ learning in light of mask and distance requirements that now apply in the classroom environment. Finally, we factored in the high demand for online classes in the fall semester and determined that more online options should be available in the spring. We sought to provide a diverse array of options, and to ensure to the greatest extent possible that online classes are scheduled for times of day most convenient for students taking a mix of online and in-person classes.

### **The class I want to take is not offered in an online format. Can I take it in an online format anyway?**

We cannot accommodate this request and advise that you choose another class that is offered in your preferred format. We are doing our best to give people options for courses and options for format but we can’t do everything all ways. If you really want to take a certain course, you have to be flexible about its format. If you really need to take a remote semester, you have to be flexible about what courses you take.

**I am a second-year evening student. What should I do if I need to take my spring classes online for reasons related to COVID-19?**

Second-year evening students take Constitutional Law, Property, and one or two electives. Constitutional Law is already scheduled as an online course (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7:50), and you can choose electives that meet online. Only Property is scheduled as an in-person course (Mondays and Wednesdays, 6-7:50). Students with a remote semester accommodation may receive special permission to take that course remotely in a simultaneous hybrid format. If you are a second-year evening student and you need a remote semester accommodation for spring, please contact Dean Buzuvis by November 13. Please support your request for a remote semester accommodation with an explanation related to COVID-19.

**Do the online classes I am taking this year count towards the law school's cap on the number of credits that can be earned in online classes?**

No. Normally, Law School policy limits the number of credits that a student can earn from online courses to 29, so as to ensure compliance with ABA requirement. However, the ABA has waived this requirement during semesters affected by COVID-19. If you are trying to determine your compliance with this requirement, you do not need to count towards the 29-credit cap any class that went online after spring break in Spring 2020, or any online class taken in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, or Spring 2021. Beyond Spring 2021 we do not yet know how this requirement will be applied.

**III. Masters Students**

**What should I do if I need to take my spring classes online for reasons related to COVID-19?**

First, you should register for courses that meet in the simultaneous hybrid format (day sections of Constitutional Law, Property, Contracts) and/or courses that meet in an online format. If you have selected a hybrid course, you should contact Dean Buzuvis by November 13 and request a remote semester accommodation that will allow you to attend your hybrid course entirely online.

**If I am taking a hybrid course in the ordinary manner of alternating days between online and in-person, can I ensure that all my other classes are online and in person on the same days?**

Unfortunately, no. Please be aware that if your schedule includes both a hybrid course and another course, some of your days will have a "mixed" format. You may have to sometimes take your hybrid course online on the same day that your elective meets in person. Or your turn to be in-person in your hybrid class sometimes happens on the same day as your elective that meets online. The library can help you reserve space in the building if you need to take online classes while you are on campus.

**IV. All Students**

**What should I do if I have or suspect that I might have COVID-19? Will I be able to attend classes remotely while I await a negative test?**

First, if you have not yet been diagnosed, please arrange a test, whether from University Health Services or some other medical provider. Next, if you are taking in-person classes, please inform your professors and request the opportunity to attend class sessions remotely until you receive a negative test. In most

cases, they will be able to arrange either simultaneous online participation via Zoom or record class for your asynchronous participation. Dean Buzuvis and Dean Johnson are also available to assist as needed.

**Will exams be remote in the spring?**

Yes. As they did this fall, all professors will plan spring exams that can be administered in a remote and contactless format. This way, the exam period is protected from any changes or disruptions that would otherwise result from an increase in the University or statewide COVID alert level during the semester or exam period.

As they will this fall, students in the spring will use ExamSoft to download exams on their computers and upload their typed answers, according to the exam schedule created by your professor and published on the Registrar's web page. As long as building access is permitted by the prevailing COVID alert level, students will have the option, if they wish, to use space in the law school to take exams. But given the uncertainty surrounding COVID, everyone should plan for the possibility that they will need to take exams at home. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Dean Buzuvis.

**Will there be changes to the grading system?**

No. In Spring of 2020, the unexpected arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic created disruption and turmoil in the normal operations of the law school and in students' lives. For this reason, fairness required a one-time exception to the grading system that replaced letter grades with a Credit/No-Credit system. However, we returned to the normal grading system after the conclusion of the spring 2020 semester, and we have been operating under the usual system ever since.

Even though we are still affected by COVID, we are now operating under existing, known, and foreseeable constraints. Unlike last spring, we understand that it is possible that our operations might suddenly need to move online, and so we have planned already for remote exams this semester and next, in order to minimize the changes and disruptions that would occur as a result. Students are also planning and preparing for this possibility and arranging their personal affairs accordingly. So even if the COVID threat level rises and in-person operations are curtailed, we would not experience disruptions similar in nature and degree to those that occurred last spring that warranted changes to the grading system.

Now, is it possible that something *else* will happen that we can't foresee? Or that the COVID pandemic will take such a terrible turn that it would be inhumane and manifestly unfair to apply the normal rules of grading? If last spring's experience taught us anything it is that the unexpected can sometimes happen. So, we would not entirely rule out the possibility. But it would take a very serious and surprising new development to warrant even considering future changes to the grading system.