**The Legal Mind**
**Fall 2015**
**Professors Leary, Pritikin, and Rosenblatt**

**Section I:** Wednesdays, 3:00-3:50 p.m.
**Section II:** Thursdays, 3:40-4:30 p.m.

**SYLLABUS [REVISED 08/03/2015]**

**Course Description:**
This course will teach and reinforce interrelated concepts essential to success in law school and legal practice, including critical thinking, logical reasoning, self-assessment, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and professional identity and professional development.

Law school can challenge the very core of a student’s way of thinking and even the sense of self. This is, in some ways, a good thing: among the chief aims of law school is learning how to “think like a lawyer.” But the process of learning to think like a lawyer can also be unsettling and anxiety-producing. This course strives to alleviate those negative consequences by giving students the tools they need to understand and apply legal doctrine without losing equally necessary perspective and instincts. The course draws on extensive scientific study and experience to introduce students to mental skills needed for success not only in law school, but also in life after law school. These include the abilities to approach problems with structured analytical processes, to understand and formulate logical arguments, to make connections between ideas, to identify one’s own strengths and weaknesses, to understand when and how to trust one’s own instincts, to take in and process information, to understand and communicate ideas effectively, and maintain personal equilibrium.

Assigned reading will be drawn from Scott L. Rogers’ *MINDFULNESS FOR LAW STUDENTS* (2009) and from other resources to be distributed in photocopied or electronic form by the professors.

Laptops, iPads, and phones may not be used in this class. All note-taking must be done by hand.

**Learning Objectives, Assessment, and Grading**

We believe that the most important measure of success in this course is good-faith participation. The course is designed to alleviate anxiety, not to generate it. The course is also designed to give you the tools required to succeed in your other classes, and we believe that if you succeed in this class, that success will likely be reflected in the grades you earn in your other classes. Finally,
we believe that every student in this class is capable of excelling at it. Therefore, this is a pass-fail course. All students who attend class regularly as required by the school’s Policies and demonstrate good-faith participation in in-class exercises and good-faith completion of all assignments will receive a grade of “pass.” Failure to attend class regularly, or failure to complete all exercises and assignments in good faith, will result in a grade of “fail.” It is your responsibility to turn in all assignments on time and in the manner provided by the professor, and to sign in for attendance purposes at each class meeting you attend.

Do not mistake the pass-fail nature of this course as a message that it is unimportant. To the contrary, this class embodies principles that underlie all of your other classes. Therefore, the learning objectives for this course closely mirror the learning objectives for law school in general. Successful students in this course will demonstrate:

- Analytical problem-solving skills, including the ability to analyze problems using logical analysis;
- An understanding of the structure of law and legal analysis, and an ability to understand formulate, and express clear, structured arguments;
- The ability to understand and communicate ideas effectively, listen actively, and understand hypothetical clients’ needs, wants, and priorities;
- Professionalism, including punctuality, attentiveness, and thoughtful and courteous communication in class;
- Self-awareness and attention to their own needs and the needs of others;
- Ethical decision-making; and
- The ability to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and the ability to refine and act upon their own instincts, preferences, and common sense.

Students and professors will assess students’ achievement of these objectives through in-class observation, and through assignments to be completed outside of class. Students will also learn to evaluate their own abilities and progress through self-assessment exercises.

**Office Hours and Communication**

All students enrolled in this course must also register for this course on TWEN. To do so, visit [https://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen/](https://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen/) and add your section of the course to “My Courses.” We may use TWEN’s e-mail service to communicate with you, so make sure that you register with an e-mail address that you check routinely. We may also use your poets.whittier.edu account to communicate with you, so make sure that you either check that account routinely or auto-forward it to an account that you do check routinely. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive and review electronic communications in a timely manner.
We welcome and encourage both individual and group in-person meetings. Our walk-in office hours for this semester are:

- Professor Leary: Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Wednesdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- Dean Pritikin: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Professor Rosenblatt: Mondays, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

If these times are not convenient for you, feel free to contact Professors Pritikin (mpritikin@law.whittier.edu) or Rosenblatt (brosenblatt@law.whittier.edu) by e-mail or Professor Leary by telephone at (714) 444-4141 x 242, to schedule alternative times. (Please do not contact Professor Leary via e-mail, as she will not receive it. If you leave a message on her voice mail, she will return your call.)

**Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Please note, while this syllabus provides a guide to expected topics and assignments, we may change the order in which certain topics are presented and may change the due dates for assignments. We may also assign additional assignments above and beyond the readings and assignments listed here. Any such changes or additional assignments will be announced in class or distributed via e-mail or TWEN. **It is your responsibility to be aware of assignments, even if they are not listed on this syllabus, and to complete them in good faith and in a timely manner.**

Pre-Orientiation
In preparation for orientation: read pp. 1-28 of Mindfulness for Law Students

Orientation
Introduction to The Legal Mind (Professors Leary, Pritikin, and Rosenblatt)
For the next class: read pp. 29-56 of Mindfulness for Law Students

**August 19-20, 2015**
“This Is Your Brain On Law School” (Professor Pritikin)
For the next class: Watch Videos on Structure of Rule Statements, Challenging Rule Statements, and Articulating How Facts Apply, then answer quiz questions (to be posted on TWEN)

**August 26-27, 2015**
Logic (Professor Pritikin)
For the next class: read pp. 57-70 of Mindfulness for Law Students
September 2-3, 2015:
Critical Thinking I (Professor Leary)
For the next class: read pp. 71-88 of Mindfulness for Law Students

September 9-10, 2015:
The Emotionally Intelligent Brain (Professor Rosenblatt)
For the next class: Read pp. 88-116 of Mindfulness for Law Students

September 16-17, 2015
Ethical Decision-Making (Professors Leary, Pritikin, and Rosenblatt)
For the next class: Complete self-assessment assignment 1

September 23-24, 2015
Self-Assessment I: Facts, Reactions, and Narratives (Professor Rosenblatt)

September 30-October 1, 2015
Professional Development I (Professor Pritikin)

October 7-8, 2015
Being Kind To Your Brain (Professors Leary and Rosenblatt)

October 14-15, 2015
Mindfulness and Success in Law School (Professors Leary and Rosenblatt)
For the next class: Complete self-assessment assignment 2

October 21-22, 2015
Self-Assessment II: The Easiest and Hardest Flow-Chart (Professor Rosenblatt)

October 28-29, 2015
Professional Development II (Professor Pritikin)
For the next class: Complete professional development assignment

November 4-5, 2015
Critical Thinking II (Professor Leary)

November 11-12, 2015
Mindfulness and Law Practice (Professors Leary, Pritikin, and Rosenblatt)

November 20, 2014
Wrap-Up (Professors Leary, Pritikin, and Rosenblatt)