

Preparing for Your Second Semester of Law School

- ▶ Professor Thompson
- ▶ kthompson@rwu.edu
- ▶ 401 254 4568 – Leave a message and I will call you back



FIRST SEMESTER GRADES WILL BE
RELEASED ON ROGER CENTRAL ON
FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021

Professor Thompson's Open Door Hours

I will hold open door hours on
**Friday, January 15 from 4:30 to 6
p.m. EDT**

My zoom link:

<https://rwu.zoom.us/j/4636360694>

Dean Lalli's Open Door Sessions

- ▶ Tuesday, January 19 from 12-2 EDT and from 5-7pm EDT.
- ▶ This will be an open zoom and she will use the waiting room and admit students in the order that they join.
- ▶ Her Zoom meeting information:
- ▶ <https://rwu.zoom.us/j/4138214858>

FACT

▶ A grades are **much** less common than they were in college

FACT

- ▶ A B range grade is a very solid grade in law school.

FACT

- ▶ No one fails out or loses their scholarship based on first semester grades.

FACT



**Law school grades do not define
who you are.**

How you respond to your grades
will determine the kind of law
student and lawyer you will be.

If you are pleased with your performance, Congratulations!

- ▶ Celebrate the moment
- ▶ Reflect on strengths and weaknesses and set new goals
- ▶ Be compassionate to classmates who are not pleased with their performance
- ▶ Refrain from asking others what grades they received


If you are unhappy with your
performance

▶ *These grades do not
determine your future
success in law school or
as lawyers.*



They are a data point in time regarding how you did on one particular day during your first semester in law school.

Keep reminding yourself of that!



Here is some advice from some upper classmen who did not perform up to their potential their first semester of law school and who are thriving now.

Each of these students were on academic probation or supervision after their first semester and have substantially improved their GPA and their skills

From a 2L who found themselves on probation last year who is now thriving

- ▶ “Given my experience in both failing a class and being on probation I would like to give your students a little encouragement. I would also like to let you know if anyone needs to talk to someone who has been in their seats recently I will be glad to make myself available.
- ▶ I will be glad to let them know that a bad grade does not define you. A low GPA or a failed class does not mean you are not capable of succeeding. Work hard on improving no matter how much you want to give up and the grades will follow. Each semester is you versus your last; use this semester as a baseline and grow from here without shame.
- ▶ We all begin in different places and this just happens to be where you begin but shouldn't be where your belief in yourself ends. You earned your spot here, you belong.”

From a 2L who was on academic supervision last spring and who is thriving

- ▶ “Grades do not, by any definition, define who you are or how good of a lawyer you will be. And you will be a lawyer, so trust in yourself. The worst mistake I made in my first semester of law school was failing to get all the help I could. I thought I was alone, but I truly wasn’t.
- ▶ I cannot even explain in words how much Professor Thompson’s class helped me on my exams. If you put 100% effort in this class, you will be rewarded. I promise. After my first semester I felt as if my back was against the wall. Instead of feeling down or depressed, I broke that wall down. I’m a strong believer in creating your own fate, so don’t ever doubt yourself or the power you hold. And one last thing: the best quality you could have is knowing what your weaknesses are; once you strengthen those weaknesses, you’ll be crushing your exams. All the best everyone!”

Legal Analysis & Writing Course

- ▶ If you are required to take my course, it is meant as an **opportunity for growth and development, and to provide a supportive learning community,**
 - ▶ **NOT a punishment!**

From another 2L who was on supervision after last fall and has succeeded inside and outside the classroom

- ▶ “ I would love to help and offer some advice and words of wisdom.
- ▶ 1. It is normal to feel shocked, frustrated, angry, annoyed, embarrassed, ashamed, and even numb. Your feelings are valid and normal. Offer yourself a two minute "pity-party."
- ▶ 2. At the third minute brush yourself off and get back to work. Find your inner strength and propel yourself forward.

This Student's Advice Continued. . .



3. Do not waste your time by being prideful. The school offers many resources to include: Professor Thompson, Dr. Kishbaugh, Dean Goldstein, Dean Lalli, Professor Raposa, and your current professors. Accept the help the school is offering.

4. Ask to understand. Go to your current professors (no matter the grade), ask how you can improve and what you missed.

More from this student. . .

5. Go to Professor Thompson and ask for further clarification, feedback, and ways to improve based on the comments made by your professors. Usually, the mistake(s) you made on one exam carry over to other exams.

6. Learn to be flexible with IRAC because professors will want different things on an exam, just like different courts will want different things in the real world. Learn other methods like CRAC which may be more helpful to your understanding. Professor Thompson can provide you with different methods that are better suited to your style of learning and exam taking.

And more good advice. . .

7. Learn to use "here," "because," "hence," "therefore," and "thus." Dr. Kishbaugh is a great resource for learning how to get your point across in short complete sentences.

8. Forgive yourself, breathe, and move forward.

I hope this helps the 1Ls. Please, let them know that 2Ls and 3Ls are with them in spirit and are always available."

My Advice



DO

- ▶ Focus on learning
- ▶ Seek feedback and make adjustments
- ▶ Try to resolve confusion
– be curious

DON'T

- ▶ Compare yourself to others
- ▶ Focus on grades
- ▶ Give up
- ▶ Do It Alone

Resources Available to Help Your Growth this Semester

- ▶ Legal Analysis & Writing Class
- ▶ **One Credit/ Pass-Fail Course**
 - ▶ Required for some students
 - ▶ Online with Learning Modules with One Synchronous Session for twelve weeks on **Wednesdays from 4 to 5:15**

Academic Success Teaching Fellows

- ▶ Hali Bah – hbah824@g.rwu.edu
- ▶ Giuliana David – g david225@g.rwu.edu
- ▶ Sarah Kravetz – skravetz@g.rwu.edu
- ▶ Cory Lee – clee114@g.rwu.edu
- ▶ Ellen Moroney – emoroney069@g.rwu.edu
- ▶ Ruth Nwauche – rnwauche389@g.rwu.edu

More Resources

- ▶ Dean Lalli
llalli@rwu.edu
- ▶ Dean Goldstein
jgoldstein@rwu.edu
- ▶ Dir. Ralph Tavares
rtavares@rwu.edu
- ▶ Professor Thompson
kthompson@rwu.edu
- ▶ Dr. Kishbaugh
jkishbaugh@rwu.edu
- ▶ Professor Raposa
braposa@rwu.edu
- ▶ Your professors and other law school mentors

Some Links that May be Useful

- ▶ Ten Minute Meditation for Anxiety

<https://youtu.be/O-6f5wQXSu8>

- ▶ Ten Minute Meditation for Stress

<https://youtu.be/z6X5oElg6Ak>

- ▶ Meditation for Beginners

<https://youtu.be/U9YKY7fdwyg>

- ▶ RWU Counseling Center

<https://www.rwu.edu/undergraduate/student-life/health-and-counseling/counseling-center>

Action Steps for Growth for the Start of School

- ▶ Review Exams with Professors
 - ▶ Meet with me
 - ▶ Meet with Dr. Kishbaugh
 - ▶ Meet with an Academic Success Teaching Fellow
 - ▶ Meet with a Writing TA
 - ▶ Meet with a professor's Teaching Assistant
- ▶ [Reviewing Law School Exams Handout.docx](#)
 - ▶ [Self efficacy for Second Semester.docx](#)