

OPEN ENROLLMENT PERSPECTIVES COURSES

(LSM.856)

Course Descriptions

Spring 2026

AI and the "Jagged Frontier" (Instructor: Nicole Dyslewski)

Using Ethan Mollick's book Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI as a guidepost, this (mostly) online course will be a beginner's look into how generative AI works, and how it can work (and fail miserably) for us as lawyers. Through the course of this class, we will learn about several types of AI for both legal and non-legal tasks. We will discuss ways AI is being used in the practice of law. We will discuss the pitfalls of AI. Finally, we will work hands-on with several AI technologies and discuss the helpful (and possibly disastrous results) and how this relates to our duty of competence as a lawyer.

Evaluating Use of Force by Police- (Instructor: Daniel Guglielmo)

This class will closely analyze some of the most highly visible cases in the country involving police use of excessive force, for example the cases of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Kim Potter and Michael Brown. Before delving into the particulars of these cases, the class will offer a thorough background of the development of this area of the law over the last fifty years through Supreme Court decisions and applicable statutes. Additionally, this course will provide a brief review of criminal procedure to understand the travel of the cases from grand jury to indictment to trial. Following this study, the course will offer an in-depth analysis of the cases including; reading grand jury and trial transcripts, watching trial testimony and available video and reviewing some of the public commentary related to the cases. Finally, the course will examine some Rhode Island cases involving police officers' use of force.

International Peace Law – (Instructor: Greg Noone)

Students will work in teams to research and generate client-ready work product for international organizations and government clients that are facing peace-adverse challenges. The work product developed in this course will support clients in matters pertaining to accountability, negotiations, mediation, and commitment to human rights.

Negotiating Environmental Settlements – (Instructor: Chiara Trabucchi)

In recent decades, several environmental events have occurred, resulting in legal action and financial settlement. This perspectives course will examine the financial frameworks adopted in several key environmental settlements of the 21st Century. Topics explored will include, environmental and catastrophic event risk, the interplay between event risk and injury, and financial damages arising from environmental or ecological injury. This course will focus on experiential learning through case studies, with focused discussion of financial settlements involving recent environmental litigation. Students will acquire an understanding of environmental event risks, associated injuries, financial damages, and settlement strategies

Law and Bio Ethics- (Instructor: Stephen Erickson)

Course description coming soon

Legal History: Constitutional Law Stories – (Instructor: Judge Francis Flaherty)

This perspectives course will examine several historically significant US Supreme Court cases in the light of societal occurrences and changes at the times that the particular cases were being decided.

Legal Writing Projects – (Instructor: Justin Kishbaugh)

This one-credit course will consist of six two-hour classes that will meet bi-weekly over a total of twelve weeks to provide its students with consistent check-in points and feedback as they work through the process of composing a long-form written legal argument. Students may use this course as an add-on for their writing requirement, directed research, writing sample, or any other writing project they want to complete while in the course. Students are not however required to have identified an outside project prior to registering for the course; they may instead register and, while in the course, identify a legal writing contest whose topic is of interest to them and then complete a submission for that contest. In fact, all students who register for this course will be encouraged to identify and submit to a legal writing contest whose focus matches their paper's topic. Over its six bi-weekly meetings, this course will walk students through a writing process that begins with an outline and moves to paragraph structure before then addressing sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and proofreading. This class will also make direct connections between its materials and assignments and the types of writing its students will be expected to produce on the bar exam and, subsequently, in practice. Students will submit an assignment for each class meeting and will also have access to optional two-hour writing workshops that will take place during class time on the weeks when class does not meet. Students may use these workshops to write and receive immediate feedback on their projects.

Senior, Abuse, Neglect, Injuries – (Instructor: Anthony Leone)

Litigation involving nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and financial exploitation of the elderly is an expanding and complicated area of civil litigation. These cases provide a complex interaction between traditional tort law as embodied in medical malpractice cases along with contract issues, corporate law, access to the civil justice system and an understanding of state and federal regulations. This course will provide an academic and practical analysis of this complex niche practice area.

Spiritual Dimension of Lawyering – (Instructor: Colleen Murphy)

This course will be taught by Professor Colleen Murphy explores a lawyer's identity and purpose beyond the "material" aspects of practicing law. The readings in the course, evidencing a variety of religious and secular perspectives, address topics such as the integration of deeply-held personal values into the practice of law; clients who have deeply held values that are in tension with the dominant values of the legal system; exploring with the client whether justice, peace, or reconciliation is the client's true goal; and the extent to which a lawyer might engage the client in moral conversation.

Standards of Review – (Instructor: Judge Francis Flaherty)

What is “on the table” during the course of an appellate case? This course will examine what appellate courts consider during the consideration of various types of appeals.

Starting & Managing a Law Firm – (Instructor: Anthony Leone)

Law Office Management is a practical course to explore starting, running, and growing a law practice. Students will create a business plan and draft various documents essential to any law practice. A broad range of practice management topics will be discussed, including the choice of entity, practice specialization, business development, marketing, and various ethical issues.

The Amistad and Abolitionism – (Instructors: Bernard Freamon and Jonathan Gutoff)

This course has five objectives. First, students will learn about and master the facts of an episode described in the American legal history as “The Amistad Affair” Briefly, the episode involved a slave revolt on a two-masted schooner called “L’Amistad” (“friendship”), while sailing off the coast of Cuba during the summer of 1839. Portuguese slave hunters had captured a large group of Africans (53?) from Sierra Leone and shipped them to Havana, Cuba, where they were sold to two Spaniards, Pedro Montes and Jose Ruiz, who were plantation owners. The Spaniards put the Africans on board L’Amistad for shipment to a plantation near what is today Camaguey in Cuba. The Africans revolted, killed the captain and the cook. They took charge of the ship, and directed two of the surviving crew members and Montes and Ruiz to return them to Africa. Being unknowledgeable concerning navigation on the high seas, the Africans were not able to accomplish this and, for various reasons, the schooner ended up off the coast of Long Island, near Montauk. An American naval vessel captured the ship, its cargo, its surviving crew members and its African passengers and transported all of them to New London, Connecticut.

The first part of the course (the first two or three weeks) will be a study of the legal proceedings that ensued from the capture, including legal claims by the governments of Spain and the U.S., the crew members of the naval ship, the plantation owners, and various other parties, including the Africans. The matter was litigated up to the U.S. Supreme Court, resulting in an opinion authored by Justice Joseph Story. Study of this famous opinion will be the centerpiece of the course and we will explore its importance for our jurisprudence, as outlined below. There were also several other ancillary proceedings arising out of the episode and, if time permits, we will look at those as well. In studying all of these legal proceedings, we will learn the facts of the episode and also get some understanding of the law applicable to those facts.

This study of the law will constitute the second objective of the course. In our view, there are a number of areas of law that students will necessarily have to gain familiarity with to understand the proceedings and achieve a good grade in the course. These include aspects of admiralty law, maritime law, criminal law, the international and domestic law on slavery, other aspects of international law, including the law governing treaties and relations between states, federal jurisdiction, and specific aspects of federal and state appellate procedure. In our exploration of the factual and legal issues in the case, we will also learn some of the methods of legal history. This is the third objective of the course and it will involve examination of some of the documents

and other historical artifacts in the case and an assessment of their importance. We hope, by our examination of these materials, to show students how one goes about conducting inquiries in legal history.

The fourth and fifth objectives of the course are more general. As suggested above, we will explore the lessons for legal history and jurisprudence that flow from the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion in the Amistad case. We will also examine the larger meaning of the case for the development of abolitionism and related concepts, as well as its legacy in African American history, American history more generally, and its place in popular culture. As is well known, the "Amistad Affair" is the subject of many plays, novels, school curricula, films (including Steven Spielberg's famous film), operas, and music. As a result, the word "Amistad" now has a much larger meaning in our culture. We will close the class with a discussion of these facts and engage in a debriefing that may have relevance for contemporary issues that are of concern in our society.