



Adjunct Faculty Handbook

Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Atlanta's John Marshall Law School
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Atlanta's John Marshall Law School
Handbook for Adjunct Faculty

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Role of Adjunct Faculty.

Adjunct Faculty members serve a critical role in ensuring our school graduates highly competent and practice-ready students who will serve the community with the highest levels of professionalism and moral fortitude. Adjunct Faculty members bring current, relevant, and practicable knowledge and skills to our classrooms. As leaders in the local legal community, Adjunct Faculty members are uniquely positioned to impart to our students what it takes to succeed in today's highly competitive legal market.

Atlanta's John Marshall Law School (AJMLS) is extremely proud of, and sincerely appreciates, its Adjunct Faculty. For all of the time, dedication, tutelage, and mentoring they provide to our students, we sincerely thank them.

B. Appointment to Adjunct Faculty. Members of the Adjunct Faculty are appointed each semester by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The appointment will be in writing, will specify the course the Adjunct Faculty Member will teach, and the compensation for teaching the course. While the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will typically schedule well in advance for an Adjunct Faculty member to teach a course, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will not make appointments until after registration has begun for the semester and needs for the semester can be accurately evaluated. Other than compensation for the course, there are no additional benefits and no expectation of continued appointments.

C. Non-Discrimination. The Law School seeks to create and maintain an environment in which all members of the community are free from discrimination. It is the policy of AJMLS not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, disability, race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, marital status or on sexual preference in its employment practices, educational programs, admission policies, financial aid or other school-administered programs. Faculty are prohibited from discriminating against any employee, applicant for employment, prospective student, student or other faculty of the Law School.

D. Sexual Harassment.

It is the policy of AJMLS that no person may sexually harass another. Unwelcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Such proposals or conduct take place under circumstances which suggest that personnel or academic decisions subject to the influence of the person making such proposals or initiating such contact are dependent upon one's response;

- Such proposal or conduct have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance, career opportunities or learning; or,
- Such proposals or conduct create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or classroom environment.

Sexual harassment includes the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of students in a manner which impairs those students' full enjoyment of their education benefits or opportunities.

E. Diversity. It is the policy of AJMLS to expose students to diverse views that enhance the students' educational experience and their appreciation for the need to provide justice in our society. In addition, AJMLS endeavors to provide mentoring opportunities and examples for our students to follow.

F. Academic Freedom. Adjunct Faculty members enjoy the freedom to create an atmosphere conducive to free inquiry and exploration of alternative viewpoints, limited primarily by the relevance to legal education.

II. TEACHING.

A. General. The Law School regards teaching its highest calling and the classroom as the core of its educational effort. A strong teacher challenges and motivates students to learn. While sound teaching is often difficult to evaluate, it involves, at the very least, mastery of the subject matter and thorough preparation. A strong teacher possesses the skills to introduce, exchange, and explore ideas between and among the teacher and students. Excellent teaching includes communicating with students in clear and concise terms. A strong teacher develops the analytical skills of the students and maintains a rigorous academic environment in the classroom.

B. Course Design.

The Master Course List provides an overall description of all approved courses. In preparation for teaching any particular course, the professor should refer to the Master Course List description to ensure the professor is familiar with the course description, and to ensure the professor teaches the course within the parameters of that description.

All courses must have a syllabus. The Syllabus is analogous to a contract between the Professor and the students, addressing goals for the course, student learning objectives, requirements, expectations, schedules, assignments, evaluation measures, office hours for the professor, and attendance requirements that may be more stringent than AJMLS's Attendance Policy, etc. Professors must develop student learning objectives for the course and list those objectives on the first page of the syllabus. Student Learning Objectives should be specific, observable, and measurable. Professors should design each class to address one or more Student Learning Objectives. A PowerPoint presentation on developing Student Learning Objectives is in the Appendix at Tab A, and a sample syllabus is in the Appendix at Tab B.

C. Books. Faculty Coordinators can assist Professors in obtaining complimentary copies of textbooks from the publishers. AJMLS is required by the Department of Education to have required texts posted at the time of registration for the students. To comply with DoE's regulations, Professors must provide a book request form to their Faculty Coordinator at least 8 weeks prior to the semester start. Faculty Deadlines are in the Appendix, TAB C.

D. Office Hours. AJMLS has designated faculty offices for the use of Adjunct Faculty. Professors should feel free to use that space to prepare for class or to meet with students. You may gain access by contacting your faculty coordinator. Please ensure that the school is scheduled to be open during any time you plan to meet with students. Students must be provided a method of adequately communicating with professors. That communication may occur over the telephone, via email, or by providing office hours for the students to visit the professor in person. Adjunct Faculty are encouraged, but not required, to have office hours on campus.

E. TWEN Site. While professors are not required to maintain a TWEN site for the course, AJMLS highly encourages it. Faculty Coordinators can assist Professors in creating and managing the site.

F. Accommodations. All accommodation requests must be made to the Office of the Associate Dean of Academics. Generally, students are not permitted to record classes, but the Associate Dean of Academics may grant permission for a student to do so as an accommodation. In such cases, the student agrees to use the recording only for their own personal use, and agrees not to place it in any type of social media. In addition, if professors plan to conduct any written quiz or written evaluation during the class period (outside a regularly schedule mid-term or final exam), the professor must notify the Associate Dean of Academics to ensure accommodation students receive their accommodations. Certain accommodations are intended to be confidential, such as extra time of exams.

G. Exams.

All courses must have a final examination, unless the course is designated as a "Pass/Fail" course or is an advocacy course. Take home exams are NOT permitted, unless approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. A maximum of one-third of the exam may be objective; a minimum of two-thirds of the exam must be essay. Professors are encouraged to use the 1/3 Objective and 2/3rds Essay mix, to provide students an opportunity to practice both objective and subjective test taking skills for the Bar Examination. Objective questions cannot be True/False or fill-in the blank questions. Rather, all objective questions must be multiple-choice and should be in a format that requires the student to use analytical skills as well as apply substantive knowledge.

Examinations must be rigorous, commensurate with preparing students to be successful on the Bar Examination as well as prepared to practice in the relevant area of law. The length of the exam is directly correlated to the amount of credit hours for the course. A two-credit hour course will have a two-hour exam, and a three-credit hour course will have a three hour final exam.

Professors must turn-in an Exam Profile sheet and proposed exam to their respective faculty coordinator no less than 3 weeks prior to the exam (Sample Exam Profile, Appendix Tab D). If Professors desire to keep their exam confidential, professors should check that block on the exam profile sheet (otherwise the exam is provided to the students when they receive their graded exam responses).

Unless the course is designated as a seminar or skills course, grading should be anonymous. In other words, to the extent practicable, all written examinations are graded anonymously. Professors shall not purposefully uncover the identity of any Blind Grade number prior to verifying their grades. But if a student divulges their blind grade number identity to professors, professors shall seek the assistance of their Faculty Coordinator and take appropriate actions in an attempt to maintain anonymous grading to the extent practicable.

Professors do not proctor exams and professors are not required to be on-campus during the exam, only to be available by phone. Professors should NOT visit the classroom prior to or during the exam.

Professors are required to personally grade exams. Grades are due thirty days after the exam during the Fall and Spring semesters, with the exception of exams for graduating students (which are due one-week prior to graduation). For the Summer Semester, grades are due 3 weeks after the exam. Intersession grades are due the week following the intersession. Turning in grades is a two-step process. First, professors assign a grade to the grade roster, sign and date it, and give it into the Faculty Coordinator. Second, Professors will then receive a grade verification sheet. Professors should ensure the grades are accurate, sign and date the verification sheet and give it (along with the attendance sheet) to the faculty coordinator.

H. Grading.

There is no forced curve at AJMLS. Professors are to use their reasonable discretion in assigning grades. Professors must explain in their syllabus the work which will constitute the students' grades. If factors such as class participation, attendance, etc., will affect a student's grade, the Professor must announce that in the syllabus and explain how it will affect grades.

If class participation, or any other factor that does not use the anonymous blind grade system, will affect a student's grade, professors should utilize their faculty coordinator to assist in calculating final grades to maintain confidentiality of the students' blind grade numbers. Faculty coordinators are experienced in methods that maximize student anonymity.

I. Canceling Class. Generally, Professors should never cancel or reschedule class unless it is an unexpected, last-minute emergency that prohibits obtaining a substitute for the class. Our preference is to conduct class at the scheduled time, always. Substitute professors/guest speakers are preferable over canceling/rescheduling classes. Many of our night students are employed and have other classes during the semester, making it unfeasible to reschedule. While obtaining a guest speaker is preferable to canceling class, guest speakers teaching class should be the rare exception. If an Adjunct Professor has a scheduling conflict that will require their absence for more than once class a semester, the Adjunct Professor should decline teaching for that semester. In all cases when an Adjunct Professor is unable to personally teach their assigned class, they are required contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

J. Class Length. Two credit hour classes do not have a scheduled break. Three credit hour classes have a fifteen minute scheduled break that the professor may use at their discretion. Classes should last the entire scheduled time. Letting students go early should be the rare exception.

K. Student Attendance.

AJMLS and the ABA limit absences for courses to a maximum of 20%. All absences count (professors have no discretion on this matter). Students who miss more than 20% of any course will receive an automatic grade of “W/F.” For a class that meets once a week, the maximum allowable absences are two (2); for a class that meets twice a week, the maximum is five (5). Professors must notify faculty coordinators when a student reaches their maximum allowable absences. If a student goes over that maximum, Professors must again notify their faculty coordinator.

Once a student goes over the maximum, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will send them a letter automatically withdrawing them from the course with a grade of “W/F.” The “W/F” grade is essentially an “F.” Students have 15 days to appeal to the Associate Dean. If a student intends to appeal, they should continue to attend class. Moreover, once a student appeals, they should continue to attend class and take their final examination. The Associate Dean will make a decision on the appeal after final exams.

Students have the first week of classes to drop or add courses. After the first week, students may apply to the Associate Dean of Academics for a “Withdrawal” for extraordinary situations.

Given this policy, taking attendance is both required and significant. It is up to the Professor’s discretion as to how they take attendance, but attendance must be reflected on the JMLS “Attendance Sheet.” (Appendix, Tab E). Professors must announce how they will treat late arrivals, early departures, and unprepared students in their syllabus. AJMLS requests professors to remain vigilant in monitoring attendance and to report to the Associate Dean of Academics any concerns with student conduct that may violate the Code of Student Responsibility.

A copy of AJMLS Attendance Policy is in the Appendix at Tab F.

L. Evaluating Professors. The Associate Dean of Academics will visit the class of each new Adjunct Professor and provide a written evaluation. After that initial evaluation, the administration will ensure that Adjunct Professors are evaluated once a year. Adjunct Professors will also be evaluated by students at the end of each semester. (Student Evaluation, Appendix, Tab G). Please provide time during class, toward the end of the semester for students to complete evaluations on-line. The evaluations are anonymous. Once professors verify their grades, they will have access to the Student Evaluations.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

M. Faculty Coordinators. Faculty Coordinators are assigned a number of professors they are responsible for in providing administrative support. (Faculty Coordinator Contact Information, Appendix, Tab H). Faculty Coordinators provide a wide array of services. They are trained and ready to provide most, if not all, administrative needs of the professors, which are related to teaching at AJMLS. Professors should provide Faculty Coordinators with reasonable advanced notice of their needs, but should also not hesitate to ask for their assistance in those rare circumstances when an unexpected and emergent need arises.

N. Offices. AJMLS has a number of offices designated as “Adjunct Professor” offices on the 7th and 6th floor in building 1430. Professors need only coordinate with their Faculty Coordinator to access and use the offices.

O. Parking. Adjunct Professors will be provided a parking card for access to our parking facility during any semester the professor is teaching.

P. Research. Adjunct Professors have access to our library and its services. In addition, Adjunct Faculty will be provided WESTLAW and LEXIS passwords to use for educational purposes related to teaching at AJMLS and scholarship. Professors are not permitted to use WESTLAW and LEXIS for their practice.

Q. Scholarship. Adjunct Professors are invited to participate in all faculty scholarship events. AJMLS’s Associate Dean for Scholarship maintains a TWEN site that provides information concerning up-coming events, ideas, and research.

IV. **DEADLINES**. A schedule of the applicable deadlines for professors is in the Appendix, Tabs C & H.