

**THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LIFELONG EDUCATION, ADMINISTRATION, AND POLICY**

**EDAP 7040: SCHOOL LAW**

Three semester hours

Course syllabus

**Spring 09** The course examines legal principles applicable to educational institutions, including federal and state constitutional provisions, legislation, administrative regulations, and case law.

The syllabus is a general plan for the course. The instructor will announce changes in the schedule that become necessary.

**Instructor:** Jack Parish, Ed.D., Lecturer  
The University of Georgia  
Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy  
850 College Station Road  
River's Crossing, Room 313  
Athens, Georgia 30602  
Phone: 706-542-0612; Fax: 706-542-5873  
[jparish@uga.edu](mailto:jparish@uga.edu)

**Text:** La Morte, Michael W. (2008). School Law: Cases and Concepts (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

**Meetings:** Thursday, August 21 through Thursday, December 11, 5:00 – 7:50 PM. Laptop computers are not needed for work during class. Cell phones should be turned off during class except in cases of pending emergency. Please notify the instructor prior to the beginning of class if you have an emergency. Being present and participating in class are significant expectations for students in the course.

**Course Objectives:**

In this course students will:

- Study the U.S. governance system and the role of the courts in education.
- Explore relevant theories of government, politics, and jurisprudential ideals.
- Study the role of law in the establishment and implementation of public policy governing educational institutions.
- Review applicable federal and state constitutional provisions.
- Review court decisions, statutory law, and administrative regulations concerning educational institutions, students, teachers, etc.
- Debate and reflect on legal principles and their application in educational institutions.

- Engage in legal research, and present and debate their findings on legal research problems related to educational institutions.

**Outline of topics to be covered:**

- Course introduction and overview
- Governance structures and the legal system
- Compulsory school attendance
- Church and State relations
- Student freedom of expression
- Student discipline and due process
- Corporal punishment
- Student/school searches
- Teacher freedom of expression
- Teachers' private lives
- Employment discrimination
- Employment contracts
- Teacher nonrenewal and dismissal
- Professional responsibilities and ethics
- Mandatory reporting statutes for abuse and neglect
- Torts
- School desegregation
- Special education law
- School finance/funding litigation
- School choice
- No Child Left Behind Act
- Meetings, records, contracts, other legal requirements
- Other legal issues selected by students

**A Culture of Honesty:**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in *A Culture of Honesty*, which states, "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." *A Culture of Honesty*, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>. All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

**Assignments:**

1. **Read the text** and additional materials provided by the instructor to become more familiar with the topics discussed during the course.
2. **Read six articles/cases** in an area or areas of school law. Prepare a one-page abstract of each article/case following the format at Attachment 1. Please see Appendix B – An Introduction to Research in School Law, for sources/references.

3. **Prepare a reflective journal** that records your thoughts and attitudes toward the major concepts and issues discussed in the course. Each week, identify one or two concepts, subjects, or beliefs that have occurred to you and that are related to the topics under discussion in class. You may use a format that fits your communication style, but consider the following four items as you write each of your entries. (You do not need to physically divide an entry into the four sections.)
  - a. Describe the learning event or belief in a few sentences.
  - b. Identify the new concepts or ideas this situation brought to you.
  - c. What were your beliefs about the topic prior to the time you experienced it?
  - d. What questions or ideas emerged from the new learning that challenged your former belief?

The partial journal and the complete copy are due on the following dates: Partial journal – October 2; Final journal – December 4.

4. **Individualized law project.** Develop a concept paper or explain an issue that demonstrates your knowledge of school law and its impact on educational institutions, students, teachers, etc. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length. Demonstrate scholarly work: a) use correct APA format, b) include several references from books, journals, court cases, and other related works, c) you may interview someone who is knowledgeable about your project area to obtain an “expert opinion,” d) identify the key elements of your project, and f) explain the elements and implications of your project. See idea starters for individualized law projects at Attachment 2.
5. **Make a formal presentation** of your findings to the class.
6. **Self-evaluation/final examination** that will indicate knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed during the course.
7. **Class participation.** Each student is expected to participate in all class meetings. Opportunities will be provided for you to work individually and as a member of groups throughout the semester.

### **Assessments:**

1. Abstracts will be assessed on five factors:
  - a. accuracy and conciseness of the summary section
  - b. relevance to school law
  - c. grammar and spelling
  - d. personal evaluation of the article/case
  - e. submission by due date

2. Individualized law projects will be evaluated in terms of items a-f in item 4 above, and if the project is submitted on date due.
3. Formal presentations will be assessed on these items:
  - a. identification of the major points/issues
  - b. clarity of the presentation
  - c. length of the presentation – within or close to the time limit
  - d. solution proposed or issue analysis
  - e. questions from class members
  - f. presentation made as scheduled
4. Attendance and participation. Class attendance is very important. Absences will negatively impact the class participation score. An active discussion participant who is respectful of the time and rights of others is a good model for students and future leaders to follow.

The final grade will be determined from scores obtained on the products submitted on schedule and the class participation score.

#### **DETERMINING FINAL GRADES IN THE COURSE**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Maximum Points</u>
Abstracts	60
Reflective journal	40
Individualized Law Project	90
Oral presentation	50
Class Participation	80
Final Examination/self evaluation	80
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>400</b>

The University of Georgia is authorized by the Board of Regents to award plus-minus grades for work completed in all courses. This policy will remain in effect for three years and be reviewed at that time.

The following point ranges will determine the student's final grade:

<b>Points</b>	<b>Grade</b>
380-400	A
360-379	A-
344-378	B+
332-343	B
320-331	B-
304-319	C+
292-303	C
280-291	C-
240-279	D
Below 240	F

**Course Evaluation:** Students will evaluate the course by completing the College of Education evaluation instrument at the end of the semester.

**The Portfolio:** The Portfolio is a requirement of the Department of Educational Administration and Policy, and the student presents and defends the portfolio as the Comprehensive Exam. Complete guidelines for the portfolio can be found at: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/adminpolicy/medportfolio.html>.

Discussions and opinions shared in this class do not serve as legal advice nor do they substitute for competent legal advice should it be needed.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Abstract Report Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Abstract # \_\_\_\_\_

Biographic Entry (APA Style Manual, Fifth edition):

Summary Description of Article/Case:

Implications/reactions to the article's/case's main points:

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Idea Starters for Individualized Law Project**

1. School choice/school vouchers
2. Charter schools/systems in Georgia
3. Cyber-bullying and freedom of speech
4. Internet acceptable use policies (students and staff)
5. School safety
6. Employee free speech
7. Employment discrimination
8. Merit pay for teachers
9. Georgia's fair dismissal law
10. Criminal background checks
11. Fair Labor Standards Act
12. Use of eminent domain by boards of education
13. School board ethics
14. School re-segregation
15. Religion and schools
16. Books/instructional material censorship
17. Discipline of special needs students
18. Student/athlete drug testing
19. Legal requirements for the budget process in Georgia
20. School funding litigation

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Course Schedule (tentative)**

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
August 21	Course introduction; Governance structures and the legal system (Chapter 1)	X
August 28	Compulsory school attendance; Church and State relations (Chapter 2)	X
September 4	Student freedom of expression (Chapter 3)	Individualized law project topic
September 11	Student discipline and due process; corporal punishment; student searches (Chapter 3)	Two abstracts
September 18	Teacher freedom of expression; teachers' private lives (Chapter 4)	Two abstracts
September 25	Employment discrimination; employment contracts (Chapter 4)	Two abstracts
October 2	Teacher nonrenewal and dismissal (Chapter 4)	Partial journal
October 9	Professional responsibilities and ethics	X
October 16	Mandatory reporting statutes for abuse and neglect; Torts (Chapter 8)	X
October 23	School desegregation (Chapter 5)	X
October 30	Special education law (Chapter 6)	Oral presentations
November 6	School finance/funding litigation (Chapter 7)	Oral presentations
November 13	School choice (Chapter 7)	Oral presentations
November 20	No Child Left Behind Act (Appendix D)	X

December 4	Meetings, records, contracts, other legal requirements	Final journal
December 11	Final examination Student evaluation of course	X