

# **Introduction to Technology in the Law Office**

Instructors: Wayne Miller and Laura Scott

Course No. 765.01 Spring 2009

## COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Technology is changing the practice of law in all fields and venues. This course will provide you with the theoretical and practical background to understand these changes and to positively impact your firm's or organization's responses to such challenges. Areas of special focus include case and client management; document management and electronic discovery; information literacy; and presentation technologies. Readings and guest speakers will address both general technological issues as well as specific legal ramifications. Students will participate through their course projects in creating materials for a field of legal education that is still in the process of forming.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Wayne Miller's office is Room 3215 in the law library, and his office telephone number is 613-7243. His email address is [wmiller@law.duke.edu](mailto:wmill@law.duke.edu). Wayne's office hours for the semester are by appointment, but he is often available in his office and invites you to stop by.

Laura Scott's office is Room 3186, and her office voicemail number is 613-8546. Her email address is [scott@law.duke.edu](mailto:scott@law.duke.edu). Laura's office hours for the semester are Tuesday mornings from 11:00-noon and at other times by appointment. The best way to reach Laura is by email.

TIME/LOCATION OF CLASSES: We will meet on most Wednesdays of the semester from 9:55-11:45 a.m. in Room 3171. We will not have class during Week 10 (March 25); instead, we will have small-group conferences with you about the progress of your course project.

NOTICES AND COURSE INFORMATION: We will use Blackboard, email, and your mail folders to communicate with you about this course. The Class Email List for this course is [techlaw@mailman.law.duke.edu](mailto:techlaw@mailman.law.duke.edu). You should have received a subscription notice on Tuesday, January 6. We have removed the email and discussion board functions from Blackboard; we will use the Class Email List for email communications instead.

COURSE MATERIALS: There is no required text to purchase for this course. Instead, each week's materials will be posted on the Blackboard course site, usually under "Course Documents."

STRUCTURE: For the first nine weeks of the semester, the instructors and guest speakers will cover the following topics:

**Week 1      Introduction**

Course overview and an overview of technology in law practice: historical development, current uses of technology including email, online research, case and document management systems.

**Week 2      External Communications and Introduction to Ethical Considerations**

Email, instant messaging and other forms of communication. Electronic documents and meta-data. ABA standards for privacy, security and appropriateness.

**Submit:** Names of group members for course projects.

**Week 3      Office Practice - Administrative Tools**

Timekeeping and Billing Systems, Client and Conflicts Management

**Submit:** 1) Proposed course project topic and 2) Meta-data stripping exercise.

**Week 4      Electronic Filing and Service**

E-filing systems, including court and real estate filings, among others.

**Week 5      Large and Complex Case Management**

Document management, including data mining, electronic discovery, indexing and retrieval of information.

**Week 6      Information & Media Literacy**

Law as an increasingly information-dependent profession; how lawyers can become more informed and effective users of information.

**Submit:** Outline of course project.

**Week 7      The Internet Beyond Legal Research**

Using online tools to do factual research in law practice, focusing on researching companies and people.

**Submit:** Negotiation exercise results.

**Week 8      Presentation Technology**

Courtroom technologies. Presentations - PowerPoint and beyond. Visual persuasion and standards of fairness and appropriateness.

**Submit:** Company research assignment.

## **Week 9      Overview of Knowledge Management**

Leveraging the knowledge within a firm to improve productivity, reduce costs, and provide better client service. Systems for organizing and sustaining the intellectual capital of a law practice: indexing and retrieving information contained in brief banks, memos, emails, and other firm internal documents.

**Submit:** Presentation exercise.

For the remaining weeks, students will prepare and present their course projects to the class.

**GRADES:** Your grade in this course will be based on your course project presentation (30%); course project paper (30%); completion of other work, including class simulations and exercises (25%); and participation in classroom discussions (15%). Class attendance is required, and active participation in class is strongly encouraged. Late submission of any assignment may impact your grade negatively.

The course project will consist of a 20-30 minute class presentation and a 15-20 page written report on a technology or legal practice concept of your choosing, in consultation with your instructors. Presentations and papers are to be done in groups of two people; individual presentations and papers may be possible after consultation. You must submit a proposal for your project topic to your instructors before the beginning of class in Week 3 (January 28). The project will be graded by the following criteria: timely completion, thoroughness, creativity, appropriate use of technology in the presentation, relevance and reflection on issues facing the legal profession, and appropriate selection and documentation of sources. Last year, we gave the highest grades to those projects that related technology most substantively to the practice of law and also that reflected collaboration among group members and integration of each member's contributions to the project.

**CONDUCT:** All work for this course must be completed in adherence to all Law School rules and policies related to academic integrity, the Honor Code, and Law School Data and Network security policies. Laptops are welcome and may be required for some sessions. We strongly discourage the use of laptops for non-class related activity during class time; instead, we expect you to be active participants in the class.