

# Professional Responsibility

## Syllabus (Spring 2026)

**Professor Thaddeus Mason Pope**

**Thaddeus.Pope@mitchellhamline.edu**

**www.thaddeuspope.com**

### Table of Contents

- I. Course Description
- II. Competencies & Learning Outcomes
- III. Required Text
- IV. Grading
- V. Module Design
- VI. Law School Policies
- VII. Calendar of Deliverables

## I. Course Description

This required 3-credit course covers the ethical responsibilities of lawyers as they engage in the practice of law. Discussion focuses on situations arising in practice that present important problems of professional conduct, especially duties of confidentiality, loyalty, competence, and communication. distinctive characteristics of the legal profession. Most of the course focuses on whether and how the bar imposes discipline on licensees. Smaller parts of the course focus on when lawyer conduct creates malpractice liability and on the conduct of judges.

## II. Course Competencies & Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Take and pass the MPRE, required for licensure in almost all U.S. jurisdictions.<sup>1</sup>
2. Articulate the *Model Rules of Professional Conduct*.
3. Articulate the *Model Code of Judicial Conduct*.
4. Assess the conduct of a lawyer in various situations, identifying which rules offer guidance, and determining whether the conduct risks bar discipline.
5. Assess the conduct of a lawyer in various situations and determine whether the conduct risks malpractice liability.
6. Assess the conduct of a lawyer in various situations and determine whether the conduct risks sanctions from a court or a governmental agency.
7. More specific competencies and learning outcomes are included within each of the fifteen modules.

## III. Required Materials

### A. Required Course Materials

There is no required text. Instead, a PDF reading packet is posted under each week's module. These are comprised primarily of excerpts from the *Model Rules of Professional Conduct* and the *Model Code of Judicial Conduct*.

We will read portions of the MRPC in the reading packet in each course module. We will read the MCJC in the final course module. By the end of the course, you will have read the complete MRPC and the complete MCJC. But read the MRPC (and perhaps also the MCJC) multiple times before the MPRE. Read not only the rules but also all the comments to the rules. Many MPRE questions are based on the comments.

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<sup>1</sup> While this course is designed to prepare you to take the MPRE, you should still take one of the many free review courses offered by bar exam review companies like Bar-Bri.

In addition to the MRPC and the MCJC, the required reading packets for some weekly modules also include other materials like rules of Evidence (e.g., attorney-client privilege, work product doctrine), a little substantive Criminal law, Contract law, Tort law (e.g., legal malpractice), Agency law, and key court cases. We include these other materials because they are tested on the MPRE.

## B. Optional Study Guide Materials

The following materials are optional study guide resources. They may be useful for solidifying your understanding of *Professional Responsibility*. These resources should be useful not only for the Spring 2026 course taught by Professor Pope but also for the MPRE exam in August 2026 (or whenever you take it).

Since *Professional Responsibility* is a required course in 200+ U.S. law schools, many legal publishers have published a variety of hornbooks and other study guides directed to law students. I offer these with two caveats. First, I have not had the opportunity to review all these materials. Second, many hornbooks and study guides on *Professional Responsibility* go far wider than what we are doing in this class. These books address the role of lawyers in society and question the ethics of the rules themselves. We are more narrowly focused on the *ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct* and on material tested on the MPRE.

1. **Recommendation 1:** Two well-regarded books in this wider category are Ronald Rotunda, *Legal Ethics in a Nutshell* (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2018) and Deborah L. Rhode & Geoffrey C. Hazard, *Professional Responsibility and Regulation* (2d ed. 2007).
2. **Recommendation 2:** W. Bradley Wendel, *Professional Responsibility Examples & Explanations* (Aspen Publishing 7th ed. 2024). I like this E&E series which offers a book for most required law school subjects. In addition to black letter explanations of the key rules, this book offers (as the title suggests) not only clear, succinct summaries but also problems with careful explanations.
3. **Recommendation 3:** Dru Stevenson, *Glannon Guide to Professional Responsibility: Learning Professional Responsibility Through Multiple Choice Questions and Analysis* (Aspen Publishing 4th ed. 2023). This book focuses on MPRE content.
4. **Recommendation 4:** Dru Stevenson, the author mentioned immediately above, also has an entire YouTube video series covering *Professional Responsibility*. <https://www.stcl.edu/about-us/faculty/dru-stevenson/>
5. **Recommendation 5:** *CALI Lessons*, <https://www.cali.org/content/lessons-subject-outline-professional-responsibility>. These are interactive legal tutorials written by law professors and geared towards law students.

### C. Practice MPRE Problems

Almost every bar exam preparation company offers free materials to prepare for the MPRE. These companies offer free MPRE materials (e.g., books and videos) as a sample of their goods, so you might choose them to prepare for the bar exam. I have not had the opportunity to review all these materials. But here are some suggested resources.

1. **Recommendation 1:** BARBRI remains the industry leader. It is the oldest and largest, with more than 1.3 million lawyers having used the company's program since the 1960s.
2. **Recommendation 2:** Other larger and more established bar review courses include: Kaplan, Pieper, and Themis. I am less familiar with all the newer startups: AmeriBar, BarMax, Crushendo, Flemings, Helix, JD Advising, Marino, Quimbee, Rigos, and Supreme. But all or most of these offer MPRE courses with practice questions.
3. **Recommendation 3:** Apart from bar review courses, sample MPRE questions are available from: NCBE, Emanuel, and study guides like Leah Christensen, *The Weekend MPRE*.

### D. References Resources

If you want more in-depth treatment of a specific topic in Professional Responsibility, a reference resource may be better. These are directed toward practitioners, not law students. At the top of this list is the American Law Institute, *Restatement of the Law Third: The Law Governing Lawyers*.

## IV. Grading

### A. Overview

Your grade for this course is based on three types of assessments: (1) weekly quizzes, (2) a midterm exam, and (3) a final exam. All these assessments are formatted exactly like the MPRE. They are scenario-based multiple choice quizzes.

Weekly Quizzes: 40%

You have one hour to complete each of 12 quizzes. Each quiz has 15 MPRE-style multiple choice questions. These are designed to be completed in 30 minutes (2 minutes each), but you get 60 minutes. Each quiz is worth 3.33% of your course grade.

Midterm Exam: 20%

You have 4 hours to complete 60 multiple choice questions. These are designed to be completed in 2 hours, but you get 4 hours.

Final Exam: 40%

You have 4 hours to complete 60 multiple choice questions. These are designed to be completed in 2 hours, but you get 4 hours.

## **B. Midterm Exam**

**Why:** The midterm exam counts 20% of your course grade.

**When:** You may take the midterm exam during any 4-hour period within the midterm exam period (March 1 to March 10, 2026).

**Where:** The exam is an MPRE-style multiple-choice quiz available on Canvas.

**What:** The midterm consists of 60 MPRE-style multiple choice questions designed to be completed in 2 hours.

**How:** Complete the exam on Canvas. You may consult any materials you choose.

## **C. Final Exam**

**Why:** The final exam counts for 40% of your course grade.

**When:** You may take the final exam during any 24-hour period within the final exam period (May 8 to May 18, 2026).

**Where:** The exam is an MPRE-style multiple-choice quiz available on Canvas.

**What:** The midterm consists of 60 MPRE-style multiple choice questions designed to be completed in 2 hours. Unlike the midterm exam, the final exam is cumulative and tests material from the entire course.

**How:** Complete the exam on Canvas. You may consult any materials you choose.

## **D. Letter Grades**

Every student will have a numerical sum based on their quizzes, midterm, and final exam. Because the grades are curved, those raw scores do not directly affect your letter grade. Instead, the raw percentage matters only relative to the raw percentage of other students. For example, suppose a student earned only 83% of all the available points. That student would earn an 'A' if that were the highest score in the class.

Furthermore, according to the *2024-2025 Catalog*, Mitchell Hamline School of Law “mandates a mean of between 2.7 and 3.3 for all Upper Level (non-1L) classes.” That means that the average grade must be about a B+.

### **E. MPRE Substitution**

Most students in this class will take the MPRE in August or November 2026. But some will take the MPRE in March 2026. You may use your actual MPRE score (on that 2-hour exam) instead of the (4-hour) final exam in this course. Or you may take both exams and count only the higher score toward your letter grade. I need a PDF of your NCBE report.

Since you will get only a “scaled” score, it must be converted to an actual score. The generally accepted conversion factor is as follows.

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| 130 = 83% | 95 = 66% |
| 125 = 81% | 90 = 63% |
| 120 = 78% | 85 = 60% |
| 115 = 76% | 80 = 58% |
| 110 = 73% | 75 = 56% |
| 105 = 71% | 70 = 54% |
| 100 = 68% |          |

## **V. Module Design**

### **A. Sequence of Modules**

The course consists of 14 modules.

1. Regulation of lawyers
2. Attorney-client relationship
3. Competence
4. Fees & Advertising
5. Litigation duties
6. Advocacy duties
7. Midterm Exam
8. Confidentiality (part 1)
9. Confidentiality (part 2)
10. Conflicts of interest (part 1)
11. Conflicts of interest (part 2)
12. Law firms
13. Judicial conduct
14. Course review

## **B. Contents of Each Module**

Each module includes eight elements

1. PDF packet of reading materials
2. Learning objectives
3. PowerPoint videos
4. Required multiple-choice quiz (15 questions for credit)
5. Optional multiple-choice quiz (for practice)
6. Evaluation & Feedback on the quizzes
7. Zoom link for optional office hours
8. Optional materials

## **C. Lots of MPRE Practice**

The MPRE does not test knowledge directly. It almost always presents a scenario to which you must (1) determine which rules apply and (2) apply those rules. Consequently, it is not enough to read the *MRPC* and the *MCJC*. That is just “passive” engagement. You must also “actively” exercise your understanding of the rules by applying them to various fact situations.

To assist you to accomplish this active engagement, you will answer 300 MPRE questions in this course (180 from the quizzes + 60 from the midterm + 60 from the final). After all, the best way to prepare for the MPRE is to “take” an MPRE.

## **VI. Law School Policies**

### **A. Extension Policy**

All quizzes and exams must be submitted by the due date. To petition for an exception, email your professor. Absent exigent circumstances, you must request an exception in advance of a deadline. Exceptions will be granted only for extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances. This policy on timely submission of assignments balances the importance of your professional obligations with the reality that sometimes circumstances come up that are outside of your control.

### **B. Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism Policy**

Students must abide by the Student Code of Conduct found in the *2024-2025 Catalog*. The plagiarism policy applies to course discussion forums as well as all other assigned work.

### **C. Copyright Notice**

The content and materials in this course are provided to you pursuant to United States copyright law. They are available to you as an enrolled student in this course as an integral part of the instructional activities taking place both online and when you are on campus. This content and material may be subject to copyright protection. Unauthorized duplication or further dissemination to others is a breach of copyright law and a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **D. MHSL Disability Services**

Mitchell Hamline is committed to ensuring equal access and providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations in accordance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students with a documented disability who would like to request accommodation should contact Disability Services and Student Services in the Dean of Students office. Students will be asked to complete an accommodation request form, provide documentation regarding their disability, and meet with Disability Services and Student Services to discuss their request. For more information, contact [disabilityservices@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@mitchellhamline.edu).

### **E. Technology Requirements**

Getting equipped for online study (tech requirements). Review this guide.  
<https://mitchellhamline.edu/academics/getting-equipped-for-online-study-tech-requirements/>

### **F. Canvas Notification Settings**

Default Canvas Notifications are set to notify you via your Mitchell Hamline email each time your professor posts an announcement in Canvas. Do not change this setting. You will be responsible for timely viewing of any announcements from your professor.



## VII. Calendar of Assessment Deliverables

| TASK                | DESCRIPTION                        | DUE                                   | GRADE |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Quiz 1 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes <sup>2</sup> | Sat. Jan. 24, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| Quiz 2 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Jan. 31, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| Quiz 3 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Feb. 7, 2026                     | 3.33% |
| Quiz 4 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Feb. 14, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| Quiz 5 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Feb. 21, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| Quiz 6 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Feb. 28, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| <b>Midterm Exam</b> | 60 MPRE<br>4 hours                 | Sat. Mar. 1 to<br>Tue. Mar. 10, 2026  | 20%   |
| Quiz 7 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. Mar. 14, 2026 <sup>3</sup>       | 3.33% |
| Quiz 8 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. March 21, 2026                   | 3.33% |
| <b>Spring Break</b> | -----                              | Sun. Mar. 22 to<br>Sat. Mar. 28, 2026 | ----- |
| Quiz 9 of 12        | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. April 4, 2026                    | 3.33% |
| Quiz 10 of 12       | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. April 11, 2026                   | 3.33% |
| Quiz 11 of 12       | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. April 18, 2026                   | 3.33% |
| Quiz 12 of 12       | 15 MPRE<br>60 minutes              | Sat. April 25, 2026 <sup>4</sup>      | 3.33% |
| <b>Final Exam</b>   | 60 MPRE<br>4 hours                 | Fri. May 8 to<br>Mon. May 18, 2026    | 40%   |

<sup>2</sup> All the weekly quizzes consist of 15-multiple choice MPRE-style questions. They are designed to be completed in 30 minutes. But you have 60 minutes to complete them. You may drop your lowest quiz score, so that it does not count toward computation of your final letter grade.

<sup>3</sup> No quiz is due on March 7, 2026, because this is during the Midterm Exam period.

<sup>4</sup> No quiz is due on March 28, 2026, because this is Spring Break.