

Thaddeus Mason Pope

Teaching Statement

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This document describes my approach to teaching. It is divided into two sections: (1) effective classroom teaching, and (2) mastery of subject area, keen analytical ability, and accessibility to students.

1. Effective Classroom Teaching

I love teaching law students. Not only have I become quite good at it, but I am also working to further hone my abilities. To most clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of my classroom teaching, I have organized my accomplishments into the following eleven categories: (1) the scope of my classroom teaching, (2) my student evaluations, (3) zero lecture problem solving, (4) the development and growth of my teaching, (5) my assessment of students, (6) my teaching in seminars, (7) my use of PowerPoint, (8) my reading packets, (9) my use of video podcasts, (10) my use of film clips, and (11) my use of other teaching materials.

1.1 Scope of Classroom Teaching. I have been a full-time law professor since Fall 2005. I taught for two years at the University of Memphis School of Law (2005 - 2007). I taught for four-and-one-half years at the Widener University School of Law (2007 - 2011). I taught at Mitchell Hamline for eleven years (2012 - 2023). My teaching package has been comprised mostly of health law courses and the core required classes *Torts*, *Professional Responsibility*, and *Business Associations*.

1.2 Student Evaluations. My teaching evaluation scores have been steadily rising since I first started teaching. In each of the past several years, my evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive and high. For example, scores have included 4.9/5.0 (Health Quality & Liability) and 4.4/5.0 (Torts), and 4.8/5.0 (Health Finance & Organization).

I have also received very nice narrative evaluation comments. For example:

“Pope was incredibly organized and accessible. . . I wish all professors had his teaching style.”

“Great teacher. Best one I’ve had in law school so far.”

“Loved the class. Professor Pope is so knowledgeable on the subject matter and is very passionate.”

I also receive similar comments through student emails and in thank you cards.

1.3 Zero Lecture Problem Solving. I create and post background video lectures on the class website. That means that we can devote the synchronous to applying those rules and principles to novel factual situations. In other words, almost all class time is devoted to problem solving, to active learning. Most of these problems are drawn from new and emerging legal matters before courts, legislatures, and agencies.

1.4 Development & Growth of Teaching. While both my students and I are pleased with the effectiveness of my classroom teaching, I am continuously developing and honing my teaching skills and abilities. I do this in six main ways. First, I pay close and regular attention to the growing literature on law school pedagogy, especially the *Journal of Legal Education* and the new materials distributed weekly both through the *Legal Education Journal* on SSRN and through the “Tomorrow’s Professor” listserv. Second, I participate in law school pedagogy sessions at most of the academic legal conferences that I attend each year (*e.g.*, ASLME, AALS, SEALS).

Third, I have participated in several of the much-acclaimed law teaching workshops produced by Michael Hunter Schwartz and Gerry Hess of the Institute for Law Teaching and Learning. (at Elon, Widener, and AALS). Fourth, I have participated in workshops offered by Hamline University’s Center for Teaching and Learning. Fifth, I follow the strategies and science of pedagogy as reported daily in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Sixth, I have invested significant time into learning about distance learning. I have done this both because of HLI’s new iPad-based Compliance Certificate and because of Hamline’s imminent M.L.S. program.

1.5 Student Assessment. I try to incorporate lessons and strategies from all these various teaching development sources into my courses. Most notably, in addition to the “summative” assessment of a final examination, I always administer: a midterm exam, more than ten online quizzes, and multiple in-class exercises. Plus, in addition to small group discussions, we often do 5 to 10 Zoom poll quizzes in class (for blended and Hy-Flex format classes).

By the first few weeks of the semester, the students have already taken several multiple choice quizzes. They have also participated in an online discussion board. And they have prepared flowcharts that graphically organize legal doctrines. These two exercises alone produced 50 pages of material for me to review and evaluate. In addition to constituting “formative” assessment, these several quizzes and exams also encourage students both to actively engage with the material and to “keep up with” the course.

To assure both validity and reliability, my exams include MBE-style multiple choice quizzes, short essays, and long essays. This permits testing for substantive knowledge, analysis, synthesis, as well as issue spotting, prioritization, and the ability to form and organize an argument.

I provide thorough feedback memos for all major assessments. This feedback typically consists of: (i) the argument outline and scoring matrix, (ii) model answers, (iii) model answers of what *not* to do, (iv) citations to the cases on which the problems are based, and (v) every other exam in the course. I also provide years of old exams and feedback memos at www.thaddeuspope.com. And I review practice exams and prepare podcast reviews.

1.6 Seminar Papers & Theses. In courses involving papers, I work with students at every stage of the research and writing process. I help them find a topic that relates to their interests. The students then submit multiple drafts and outlines on which I provide extensive oral and written feedback. To ensure active engagement at all stages, I weigh more than 50% of the grade on the consecutive submission of: a thesis statement, outline, bibliography, section draft, full draft, and revised full draft. I have supervised student writing not only in seminars but also in other capacities. For example, students have asked me to (formally or informally) advise their law review notes, independent study projects, LL.M. theses, and S.J.D. theses.

1.7 PowerPoint Slides. I prepare over 100 PowerPoint slides for each class session. These are overwhelmingly graphical slides: pictures, flow charts, diagrams, graphs, and other visual reinforcement. I rarely use more than five words per slide. I use more text only when we are specifically focusing on contractual, regulatory, or statutory language. I always post the slides to the course site before class, so that students can print, annotate, or otherwise use the slides before, during, and after class. The first 10 or 15 slides recap matters from the previous class and provide orientation.

1.8 Reading Packets. I prepare my own materials (e.g., cases, regulations, pleadings, articles). I collect them into a single PDF document. Most importantly, I begin each packet with a 3-page introduction to the learning objectives and a summary of the key rules and principles.

1.9 Video Podcasts. I follow-up most class sessions with a 15-20 minute audio or video podcast summary of the day's key lessons. But I have already prepared (and am continuing to prepare) videos for the benefit of my class. These are available on the Canvas Panopto site.

1.10 Film Clips. I regularly use film clips for two purposes. First, they often powerfully illustrate key concepts. For example, *The Verdict* has a great courtroom scene demonstrating the difference between the admissibility and the weight of expert witness testimony in a medical malpractice trial. Second, film clips are effective and efficient vehicles for posing interesting case hypotheticals for discussion.

1.11 Other Teaching Tools & Methods. I constantly experiment with new ways to encourage student participation and with new ways to evaluate students. I keep doing the things that work and stop doing the things that do not work. A few of the methods that I have found effective are clickers, and small group discussion.

2. Mastery of Subject Area, Keen Analytical Ability, and Accessibility to Students

I am a recognized expert in the subject areas that I teach. Significant evidence of my subject area mastery and accessibility to students includes: (1) my self-designed course materials, (2) my carefully constructed syllabi, (3) student evaluations, (4) student meetings, (5) publications, (6) speaking invitations, (7) editorial board and peer review invitations, and (8) consulting invitations.

2.1 Self-Designed Course Materials. Because I am very familiar with the material that I am teaching, I have stopped using bound printed casebooks. Instead, I select and prepare my own course materials. I have designed the TWEN site to ensure that its architecture is clear and easy to navigate. All the course materials, for example, are organized into clearly labeled hierarchical folders. I use the TWEN website to post statutes, regulations, cases, briefs, bills, and articles.

I do this for three reasons. First, health law is a rapidly evolving area. I want to use the most recent materials. In designing and revising my coverage, I consult not only casebooks but also practitioner treatises, CLE materials, journal articles, and clips from BNA and Westlaw. Second, I want to use local materials to the extent possible. For example, I have invited the students to attend oral arguments before the Minnesota Supreme Court. Third, I want the students to see the materials in their “native” format. For example, they read federal regulations unedited and as printed in the C.F.R.

2.2 Carefully Constructed Syllabi. Not only do I post the course materials into clearly organized and labeled online “folders,” but I also make the structure and sequence of the course transparent through an extensive and detailed 30+ page syllabus. I outlined the course coverage in detail. And I provide an extensive list of recommended supplementary materials and suggested strategies for success.

2.3 Student Evaluations. In my evaluations, students specifically commented on my mastery and accessibility. For example:

“Professor Pope is one of the most highly approachable law professors I have met, and his command of the materials is outstanding.”

“Friendly professor with a great deal of knowledge in the area.”

“Prof. Pope is very knowledgeable about this subject. He keeps the class interesting and well organized.”

Furthermore, my evaluation scores in these specific mastery and accessibility categories are among the highest of my teaching scores in any category: 4.8/5.0. On subject matter mastery, my Torts score was 4.7/5.0 and my Health Law score was 5.0/5.0. On accessibility, my Torts score was 4.9/5.0 and my Health Law score was 5.0/5.0.

2.4 Invitation to Students. I speak with students about class and related topics for hours each week. Moreover, I specifically invite this interaction. In all my syllabi, I include the following statement:

I look forward to talking to you outside class. There are several means of doing this:

- A. After class: I will remain in the classroom after each class for all trailing questions, until or unless we are kicked out by another class.
- B. Office: I can typically be found in my office before and after class. If this is not a convenient time, just let me know in class or by email and we can make an appointment with each other. You are welcome to drop in my office anytime, but it is best to confirm a specific time in advance. If you have a specific question, I recommend that you send me the question via email ahead of time. In this way, I can think about your question and offer my best assistance.
- C. Email: Feel free to e-mail me anytime at thaddeus.pope@mitchellhamline.edu. I will try to promptly answer any question as soon as possible.
- D. Lunch or Coffee: I have found that grabbing a quick lunch (or given the time of this class, coffee/tea) is a good way to get to know each other. If you and one or two other students want to share a bite/coffee/tea, please let me know.

I regularly speak with students in all these settings and answer dozens of emails each week. I took several students to breakfast before heading over to oral arguments in a medical malpractice case before the Minnesota Supreme Court.

2.5 Publications. I have published extensively on the same subjects that I teach: medical liability and bioethics. Not only is this a demonstration of my expertise but it also has made me a better teacher in this area. I am very comfortable with, and conversant on, the legal matters covered in my courses.

2.6 Speaking Invitations. Not only have I published on the subject matter that I teach but I am also invited to speak on these same subjects, often as a keynote speaker. I regularly speak at academic association conferences, law school symposia, professional medical conferences, and hospital grand rounds. In each of the past few years I have made around twenty or more CLE / CME presentations, over 400 altogether. These have been across the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

2.7 Editorial Board & Peer Review Invitations. I am regularly invited to serve on editorial boards and to serve as an external peer reviewer for: major grant makers (*e.g.*, NIH, Wellcome Trust), book publishers (*e.g.*, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge), journals, and promotion & tenure committees. Again, this demonstrates expertise in the subject areas that I teach.

2.8 Consulting Invitations. In addition to publishing and presenting, I have also done some consulting. In terms of policymakers: I have been asked to testify by the U.S. President's Council on Bioethics and by the Texas House of Representatives. And I was a primary drafter of do-not-resuscitate regulations for the Delaware Emergency Medical Services Agency.

In terms of the judiciary: I have submitted briefing and have advised appellate counsel on cases before the Supreme Court of Canada and before the Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court. And I was retained as an expert witness in state and federal courts across the country.

Further consulting, including for the American Thoracic Society (on conscientious objection and on non-beneficial treatment policies) and for Compassion & Choices (on physician aid-in-dying), is detailed in my Tenure Resume.