

Introduction to Technology in the Law Office

Course Information, Spring 2008

Wednesdays 3 – 4:50, Room 4172

Ken Hirsh | Wayne Miller | Laura Scott

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.

Instructors

Ken Hirsh, Wayne Miller and Laura Scott will be the primary instructors in the course. Guest speakers will be integrated (using relevant technologies such as videoconferencing) where appropriate. For example, a law firm I.T. manager may give insight into particular practices in a firm, or a member of our practicing faculty may participate to ensure thorough and current coverage of case management or courtroom technology.

Outline

- Week 1 Introduction**
An overview of technology in law practice: historical development, current uses of technology including email, online research, case and document management systems.
- Week 2 Office Practice - Administrative Tools**
Timekeeping and Billing Systems, Client and Conflicts Management
- Week 3 Client Communications and Introduction to Ethical Considerations**
- Week 4 Knowledge Management**
Systems for organizing and sustaining the intellectual capital of a law practice: indexing and retrieving information contained in brief banks, memos, e-mails, and other firm internal documents.

- Week 5** **Large and Complex Case Management**
Document management, including data mining, electronic discovery, indexing and retrieval of information
- Week 6** **Information Literacy**
- Week 7** **The Internet Beyond Legal Research**
- Week 8** **Presentation Technology**
- Week 9** **Electronic Filing and Service**

Weeks 10-13 Student Presentations

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.

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 no more than three 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 5 (February 13). 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.