Law 257 - Transition to Practice (Prof. Feldman)

Taught by a recently retired partner of a major law firm, this course will provide students with tools comparable to those developed by an associate in private practice. In the rush of major transactions in today's law firms, with cost-conscious clients, it is often difficult for associates to get the time of a partner to illuminate how the whole transaction or litigation is moving and why; this course will provide that framework for students to apply to both the practical experiences of this course and of real-world practice as they make the transition from the analytical law school experience to the demanding environment of practice in a law firm. The course will cover practical, basic expectations of a first year associate including how to run a meeting and a closing, drafting exercises, insights into negotiation from practicing lawyers, and other information needed for succeeding in the beginning stages of law firm practice. Moreover, the course will focus on the nature of the teams required to complete complex transactions and litigation so that students learn how the work of the junior associate fits into the entire transaction, how to play a role that is significant to the transaction, and how and when to bring in others with different expertise. We will also examine how law firms work, what is valuable to clients and why, and how an associate can develop professional skills, as well as how to manage real-world ethical challenges in the practice of law.

This course is required of Transition to Practice students but open to a limited number of other students. Students will earn two credits. There is no exam; students will write 3 short papers [5-7] pages on topics we explore. Each week's assignment will include one reading of about 15 pages and a reading to be chosen by the student from a selection of reserve readings on the topic. Maximum enrollment: 30. The course is pass/fail determined from the papers and class participation.