Week One Prompt: The Brass Ring

You have read "The Brass Ring," by former Chief Justice Sears. One challenge you will all face is the integration of your personal life and values into your professional life and your professional identity. Suppose you are writing a letter to your best friend from college, who is attending a different law school. In that letter, give that friend your best advice about how to integrate his or her personal and professional lives. Think about what conflicts your friend should anticipate, and advise about how to resolve those conflicts and be a good lawyer and a good person at the same time.

Week Two Prompt: The Values of Our Profession

You have read "The Values of Our Profession," by former Attorney General (and Judge) Griffin Bell. As you probably know, Judge Bell was an extraordinarily dedicated Mercer alum until his death a few years ago. Pick the one lesson or anecdote from Judge Bell’s article that you find most meaningful. Explain its significance to you as you envision how you will conduct yourself as a lawyer.

Week Three Prompt: The Courage to Try Cases

You have read "The Courage to Try Cases," by Judge William Duffey. Suppose that you are meeting with a family friend, an experienced lawyer who wants to help you get started the right way in your career. The family friend asks you whether you can envisage yourself doing trial or litigation work, as opposed to transactional or other types of work outside the court system. How would you respond to that question? Explain your answer.

Week Four Prompt: Pro Bono and Public Service

You have read Chapters 2 and 4 of Life in the Law (“Our Responsibility to Justice” and “Rediscovering Our Calling”). You have also read Chapter 16 of Essential Qualities (“Pro Bono and Public Service”). You are also aware from class discussions and other readings that many legal needs for the poor and middle class go unmet. Do you believe that lawyers have a special responsibility to try to close that gap? Why or why not? If you do so believe, what do you plan to do about it once you are a lawyer?

Week Five Prompt: eProfessionalism

You have read "ePROFESSIONALISM" in the Essential Qualities book. Suppose that you are a new lawyer at a firm whose other lawyers are all a generation older than you. The senior partner in the firm asks for your advice about the policies that the
firm should adopt for the use of social media by the firm, its individual lawyers, and its staff. Respond to the senior lawyer with your advice about how the firm and its lawyers should use social media to promote the firm and its services and about what restrictive policies the firm should have with respect to its lawyers’ and staff members’ personal use of social media.

Week Six Prompt: Professionalism and the Large Law Firm

You have read "Bankrupt in Milwaukee: A Cautionary Tale." At the end of that chapter, the author writes, "The ambitions and anxieties that motivated Gellene’s decision, however, likely mirror those of many lawyers in large major law firms." Reflect on what those ambitions and anxieties may have been and discuss how Mr. Gellene could have overcome them and maintained his professionalism.

Week Seven Prompt: Origins and Responses to Incivility

You have watched three video vignettes: "The Judge Ordered Us (part 1)," "Discovery Conference" and "Just a Small Favor." For "The Judge Ordered Us" and "Discovery Conference," reflect on whether any of the lawyers in those videos displays incivility. With respect to each such lawyer, reflect on why the lawyer engages in such conduct. Then imagine yourself as the opposing lawyer and reflect on how you would respond to the incivility. For "Just a Small Favor," put yourself in Amy’s shoes and describe how you would respond to your friend’s request.

Week Eight Prompt: Representing Unpopular Clients

You have read EITHER “Race, Ethics and the First Amendment” OR “Representing the Unabomber” (both in Law Stories). You are also prepared to refer, as necessary, to the indictment of Dzhokar Tsarnaev (although you are not required to read all 74 pages of the indictment). Suppose that a judge assigns you to represent Mr. Tsarnaev. If you wish to decline the representation, write a letter to the judge and explain why. If you accept the representation, write a letter to a friend from Boston and explain why you have done so, despite the terrible things that Mr. Tsarnaev apparently did.