Blog prompt #1: response due 8:00 a.m.  
January 22, 2018

As you proceed through law school and in the first few years of practice, you will be forming your professional identity as a lawyer, whether you do so consciously or not. “Professional identity” may be a new concept for you.

Every lawyer has a set of guiding principles – an ethos – that consciously or unconsciously will shape decisions, big and small. These principles become so ingrained that they become part of the lawyer’s character, a kind of “default setting.” They form a deep sense of self in role. This is what we mean by “professional identity.”

Describe the professional identity you hope to develop as a lawyer. Write about your guiding principles – your ethos – and why those principles matter to you and why you believe they will matter to you as a lawyer. Describe any obstacles you anticipate that you will encounter as you form this professional identity.

Blog prompt #2: response due 8:00 a.m.  
January 29, 2018

Read Chapter 8 of the "Life in the Law" book, entitled "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.

Blog prompt #3: response due 8:00 a.m.  
February 5, 2018

You have read the assigned materials related to access to justice, including Chapters 2 and 4 of Life in the Law (“Our Responsibility to Justice” and “Rediscovering Our Calling”), Chapter 16 of Essential Qualities (“Pro Bono and Public Service”), and Chapter 9 of Legal Ethics Law Stories (“In Re Arons: The Plight of the Unrich”). You have also listened to my online lesson about access to legal services. In light of this background, reflect on these questions. Do you believe that lawyers have a special responsibility (greater than other citizens) to try to ensure access to legal services? What, if anything, do you plan to do about the problem once you are a lawyer? Should the bar require lawyers to do a certain amount of pro bono service every year?
Blog prompt #4: response due 8:00 a.m.
February 12, 2018

You have heard us several times say that an important part of professionalism is the cultivation of good habits. You have now read chapters 17, 18 and 19 of The Essential Qualities of a Professional Lawyer. You have also read chapters 7 and 12 of A Life in the Law. Now reflect on the habits you have and the habits you plan to cultivate as a lawyer. Specifically address habits of health and wellness (which might or might not include mindfulness and/or avocations). Also specifically address financial habits and habits of organization.

Blog prompt #5: response due 8:00 a.m.
February 19, 2018

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.

Blog prompt #6: response due 8:00 a.m.
February 26, 2018

NOTE: You may not respond to this prompt until after your section meeting for the week of February 19. You read "Bohatch v. Butler & Binion" AFTER the section meetings in which we discussed Problem 5, on whistle blowing. Problem 5 is obviously based on the true events described in Bohatch v. Butler & Binion. Having been through the section meeting's discussion, and having read about the actual case, reflect on the course of action that you believe the younger lawyer should have taken. Is this course of action different from what you first thought was the right thing to do? Did your mind change in light of the class discussion or in light of the slightly different facts in the real story? If so, what changed your mind and why?
Blog prompt #7: response due 8:00 a.m.
March 5, 2018

NOTE: You may not respond to this prompt until after your section meeting for the week of February 26. You read "Sleazy in Seattle" AFTER the section meeting in which we discussed Problem 6, on discovery. Problem 6 is obviously based on the true events described in "Sleazy in Seattle." Having been through the section meeting's discussion, and having read about the actual case, reflect on the course of action that you believe the defense lawyers should have taken. Is this course of action different from what you first thought was the right thing to do? Did your mind change in light of the class discussion or in light of the slightly different facts in the real story? If so, what changed your mind and why?

Blog prompt #8: response due 8:00 a.m.
March 12, 2018

NOTE: You may not respond to this prompt until after your section meeting for the week of March 5. You read “Spaulding v. Zimmerman: Confidentiality and its Exceptions” and “Legal Ethics, Narrative, and Professional Identity” AFTER the section meetings in which we discussed Problem 7, on confidentiality. Problem 7 is obviously based on the true events of Spaulding v. Zimmerman. Having been through the section meeting's discussion, and having read about the actual case, reflect on the course of action that you believe the defense lawyers should have taken. Is this course of action different from what you first thought was the right thing to do? Did your mind change in light of the class discussion or in light of the slightly different facts in the real story? If so, what changed your mind and why?

Blog prompt #9: response due 8:00 a.m.
March 19, 2018

You now have significant background regarding lawyers and unpopular causes and clients. You have read EITHER “Race, Ethics and the First Amendment” OR “Representing the Unabomber” (both in Legal Ethics Law Stories). You have also read Just Mercy, by Brian Stevenson, and the Grand Jury Presentment regarding Jerry Sandusky. Suppose that a judge assigns you to represent Mr. Sandusky. Assume that you are competent to do so and that the representation will not cause you undue financial burden. 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 and explain why you have done so, despite the terrible things that Mr. Sandusky apparently did.
Blog prompt #10: response due 8:00 a.m.  
March 26, 2018

You may not respond to this prompt until AFTER your section’s meeting for the week of March 19. You have completed reading Just Mercy, and you have participated in your section’s discussion of it. Pick out at least one passage or story from the book that you believe conveys an important lesson for new lawyers. Quote the passage, or identify the story, and reflect on the lesson that you believe it conveys.

Blog prompt #11: response due 8:00 a.m.
April 16, 2018

You have completed your assigned interview with a local lawyer or judge. Identify your subject and then reflect on the following. What did you learn about the legal profession or professionalism from your subject? What do you want your classmates to know about your subject or about one thing that he or she said? Relate your discussion with your subject, if you can, to one or more topics that we discussed, or that you read about, in this course.