Emphasis in Litigation

UMKC’s long tradition of educating distinguished litigators is an important reason that many students choose UMKC for their legal education. To enhance that tradition, the law school has established within the J.D. degree an Emphasis in Litigation, a program designed to help outstanding students focus on those courses that will give them the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the ever-changing world of twenty-first century litigation. In addition to taking a rigorous yet varied menu of required and elective courses, each student pursuing the Emphasis in Litigation works closely with an assigned faculty adviser and is provided with additional training in legal writing, litigation ethics, and legal research.

Admission

Selection of Students for Admission to the Emphasis in Litigation

A. Deadline for admission to the Emphasis in Litigation program: Students should apply not later than their fifth semester of law school. An application form will be available and must be submitted by the deadline for applications set by the litigation concentration advisors committee and circulated to the student body. Decisions as to whether a student will be admitted to the Emphasis in Litigation will be made in the semester in which the student applies.

B. Procedure and Criteria for Selection:

1. The maximum number of students who will be permitted to enter the litigation program each year will be set by the litigation advisory committee taking into account the ability of the advisors to provide adequate supervision and advising. Each litigation adviser may set a maximum number of students that he or she will advise.

2. The litigation advisory committee will select the students to be admitted to the program. Criteria to be considered may include previous general academic performance in law school, previous academic performance in courses seen as particularly relevant to litigation, level of interest in litigation, and ability to identify an adviser willing to advise and supervise the student.

C. Part-time Students and Other Students with Unusual Schedules: The litigation advisory committee is authorized to make appropriate adjustments in the deadlines for part-time students or other students.

General Requirements

Minimum Total Hours Required

1. To complete the litigation program, a student must take a total of at least 26 hours in approved courses. Approved courses are those listed as "Required Courses," "Grouped Required Courses," and "Elective Courses".
2. No more than three hours of courses used by the student to satisfy the UCC or Jurisprudence requirement may count toward the required 26 hours.
3. A course (including Law 746) used to satisfy the student's writing requirement (see below) may be counted toward the total hours requirement even if it is also used to satisfy the student's Research and Writing Requirement.

Writing Requirement
1. Each student in the litigation program must complete a written project, approved by a supervisor, on a topic dealing directly with litigation.
2. The written project must be of a scope and quality that would satisfy the law school's research and writing requirement for a J.D. degree.
3. The written project may satisfy both the requirement of the litigation program and the J.D. requirement.

Practical Skills Component
All students in the litigation program must take at least two of the following courses:
• Advanced Legal Writing: Litigation Drafting
• Appellate Advocacy II
• Appellate Advocacy III
• Appellate Advocacy IV
• Trial Advocacy I
• Trial Advocacy II
• Trial Advocacy III

Ethics Component
1. Each student in the litigation program must participate in at least one, substantial, non-credit workshop on ethical issues for litigators.
2. Workshops will be organized by the litigation advisers and conducted by faculty, practicing lawyers, or judges.

Research Component
1. Each student in the litigation program must participate in at least one, substantial non-credit workshop on research materials and sources frequently consulted by litigators on issues directly related to the litigation process, or must complete the course Advanced Legal Research-Litigation.
2. Workshops will be organized by the litigation advisers and the librarians. They will be conducted by faculty, librarians, practicing lawyers or judges.

Supervising and Advising Component
1. Each student in the litigation program shall be assigned an adviser.
2. Each student in the litigation program shall meet with his or her adviser not less than twice a semester.

Curriculum Requirements

Distribution of Courses

A. Required Courses: All students in the litigation program must take each of the following courses:
• Civil Procedure I
• Civil Procedure II
• Criminal Procedure I
• Evidence
B. Grouped Required Courses: All students in the litigation program must also satisfy the Core Course Requirement, the Advanced Course Requirement, and the Skills Requirement set forth below:

1. Core Course Requirement: All students in the litigation program must take at least two of the following core courses:
   - Conflict of Laws
   - Federal Jurisdiction
   - Remedies
   - Criminal Procedure II

2. Advanced Course Requirement: All students in the litigation program must take at least one of the following advanced courses:
   - Alternative Dispute Resolution
   - Applied Evidence
   - Applied Federal Criminal Procedure & Evidence
   - Civil Rights Litigation
   - Complex Litigation
   - Criminal Trial Techniques
   - Mediation
   - Missouri Civil Procedure
   - Professional Malpractice Litigation

3. Skills Requirement: All students in the litigation program must take at least two of the following courses:
   - Advanced Legal Writing: Litigation Drafting
   - Appellate Advocacy II
   - Appellate Advocacy III
   - Appellate Advocacy IV
   - Trial Advocacy I
   - Trial Advocacy II
   - Trial Advocacy III

C. Electives: The following electives will be counted in determining satisfaction of the minimum total hours requirement:

1. Clinics and Externships
   - Bankruptcy Court Clerkship
   - Child and Family Services Clinic
   - Death Penalty Clinic
   - Department of Labor Clinic
   - Family Law Clerkship
   - Federal Court Internship
   - Federal Public Defender Externship Clinic
   - Innocence Project Clinic
   - Jackson County Prosecutor Clinic
   - Jackson County Prosecutor Clinic - Family
   - Legal Aid Clinic
   - Missouri Attorney General Clinic
   - National Labor Relations Board Clinic
   - Public Defender Trial Clinic
   - United States Attorney’s Office Law Clinic

2. Electives & Other Coursework
   - Administrative Law
   - Advanced Legal Research - Litigation
   - Advanced Lawyering Processes (second semester only)
   - Criminal Trial Techniques
• Criminal Sentencing Law Practice & Procedure
• Employment Discrimination
• Family Law Practice
• Famous Trials
• Global Legal Systems
• Independent Study (if approved by student's litigation adviser on the basis that the course of study relates directly to litigation)
• Introduction to the Resolution of International Commercial Disputes
• Jury Selection
• The Jury: Practice and Perspectives
• Law Review (if approved by student's litigation adviser on the basis that the student's note or comment relates directly to litigation)
• Legal Research (if approved by student's litigation adviser on the basis that the student's writing relates directly to litigation)
• Missouri Supreme Court and Constitution
• Post Conviction Remedies
• Seminar in the Ethics of Criminal Advocacy
• Trans-National Litigation
• Wrongful Convictions
• Any other course if the students obtains written approval from the student's litigation adviser. Such approval shall not be granted unless the adviser find that, in light of the student's other courses and the student's litigation-related goals, the course will advance the student's study of litigation to an extent equivalent to other litigation electives.

D. Courses may be added or deleted from the lists contained in sections A through C above with approval of the litigation advisory committee and the faculty.

**Graduation**

For a student to be recognized as having graduated with an Emphasis in Litigation, the student must have fulfilled the following requirements:

1. The student must have satisfied all general and curriculum requirements set forth above.

2. The student must have achieved a grade-point average of at least 3.0 in the field. This grade-point average shall be computed considering all Required Courses, Grouped Required Courses, and Elective Courses in the emphasis taken by the student, including any that exceed the minimum hour requirements for the Emphasis in Litigation.