

**THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON  
SCHOOL OF LAW**

**Guidelines for 9200:850  
Intellectual Property Masters Thesis  
6 credit hours**

- **Course Description:** A capstone written experience in which the student chooses a suitable topic with an Intellectual Property Faculty Advisor, and works independently and with that advisor to produce a written project worthy of publication. Each student will also meet periodically with other LL.M. students to discuss their theses, thus gaining greater insight and creating a community of scholars. Topics must be approved by a faculty advisor in advance.

This course may be taken only with permission of Professor Jeffrey Samuels, Director of the Intellectual Property and Technology Center.

- **Choice of Topic:** The initiative in the choice of the topic is to be exercised by the student enrolled for credit. Thesis topics may well be developed during the internship/externship experience. Areas of interest might include polymers, biotechnology, technology transfer, integration of U.S. and international intellectual property laws and systems, international harmonization of law and practice, and intellectual property management issues and strategies. Thesis topics should address cutting edge issues, many of which are yet to be identified in such a fast-moving and changing area as intellectual property law. Possible topics looking at recent issues include:
  1. Should the U.S. adopt a “first to invent” patent system?
  2. Should we adopt a worldwide patent system?
  3. May developing countries require drug companies to license the use of certain drugs in order to meet public health and safety needs?
  4. Intellectual property in the digital era: the conflict between trademarks and domain names; downloading of copyrighted material.
  5. Which theory of intellectual property best explains the outcomes of actual cases?
  6. Should the Doctrine of Equivalents be abolished?
  7. A proposal to rationalize file-sharing with copyright law.
  8. Has the Federal Circuit met expectations?
- **Approval of Instructor:** The thesis topic must be approved by a full-time member of the faculty and be supervised by such faculty member. Normally, the thesis should be supervised by a member of the intellectual property law faculty. However, in special circumstances, the thesis may be supervised by another member of the full-time faculty. In such circumstance, the thesis topic also must be approved by a member of the IP faculty.
- **Required Form:**
  - a. Paper – the project must be typewritten on good quality, white bond, letter-sized paper (8 ½ x 11 inches).
  - b. Typeface – Copy must be clean, dark enough to be easily readable, and accurately proofread. Symbols and diagrams must be accurate.
  - c. Spacing –
    - i. The text of the paper must be double-spaced.
    - ii. Footnotes must be single-spaced and placed, in numerical sequence, at the end of the paper, or at the bottom of the pages.

- d. Margins – A margin of one and one-half inches (1 ½ inches) must be left at the left-hand side and at the top of each page. There must be a margin of at least one inch (1 inch) at the right-hand side and the bottom of each page. Only one side of the paper may be used.
  - e. Pagination – The Title Page is not numbered. Each page thereafter is to be numbered in Arabic numerals continuously throughout the paper (including appendices, exhibits, or other materials that appear at the end).
  - f. Title Page – The Title Page is to contain the information in the location as indicated on the sample page, which appears at the end.
  - g. Length – papers submitted as a thesis must have a minimum length of 45 pages and, generally, should not exceed 60 pages.
- **Style:** Although appropriate in other contexts, the style of the legal memorandum or brief is inappropriate for the thesis. Rather, the student should consult leading articles in leading law reviews.
- **Citations: Mode:** Students shall use a recognized form of legal citation. The use of ALWD Citation is preferred.
- **Special Note on Quotation and Citations: Avoidance of Plagiarism:** The writer must scrupulously avoid plagiarizing the words and ideas of others. Therefore, in his/her research, the writer should carefully include all cited materials upon which he/she relies, and should carefully delineate his/her ideas and words from the ideas and words of others.

Plagiarism may appear in several forms. Copying, in whole or in part, the work or words of another (whether or not copyrighted) is a form of plagiarism, unless the writer both cites the source of the material and uses quotation marks or the equivalent to indicate direct quotation.

The use of the exact words of another, without the use of quotation marks or the equivalent, constitutes plagiarism, even though the source of the words may be cited correctly.

Passing off as one's own the ideas of another is another form of plagiarism. When the ideas but not the exact words of another are used, full credit must be given by an appropriate citation. In other words, paraphrasing the work or works of another without proper citation to the source constitutes plagiarism.

- **Grading:** The instructor of record shall enter a letter grade predicated upon the student's demonstrated ability to follow the guidelines, formal and substantive, that appear in these Regulations.

A failing grade ("F") may be entered for substantial departures from the calendar (below) or from standards established for citations.

"INC" (Incomplete) grade may be entered as set forth in calendar section below.

The grade of “PI” (Permanently Incomplete) or “WD” (Withdrawn) may be entered, as set forth in the regulations of The University of Akron.

- **Research and Writing Guides:** The official guides established by these Regulations are:

ALWD Citation Manual

Turabian, K.A., A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations.

The Turabian work provides guidelines when ALWD is silent; therefore, if there is a conflict between the two guides, ALWD will control.

Helpful to the writer are the following:

Campbell, W.G., Form and Style in Thesis Writing, 15 (1954).

Fowler, H.G., A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (Latest printing);

Garner, B.A., The Elements of Legal Style (Latest printing);

Roget, S.M. (Ed.), Thesaurus (Latest printing);

Strunk, Wm., Jr., and White, E.B., The Elements of Style (1962).

For examples of outstanding articles see F. Shapiro, The Most-Cited Law Review Articles (1987),

- **Calendar:**

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND DEADLINES ARE RELEVANT TO NON-GRADUATING LL.M. STUDENTS.**

Subject to variations expressly approved by the instructor in charge, the student must observe the following calendar.

Selection & Approval of Topic: Prior to registration, but not later than the second week of class.

Approval of Outline: by Friday, sixth week of class

\*Completed Paper: by November 15 for Fall Semester  
by April 15 for Spring Semester  
by July 15 for Summer 1 10-week Session

For cause sufficient to the instructor in charge, students who have submitted an approved outline may request additional time to complete the project, and an “INC” (Incomplete) grade may be entered.

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND DEADLINES PERTAIN TO GRADUATING LL.M. STUDENTS:**

1. Students are encouraged to propose a topic and receive approval from the supervising faculty member within the first week of the Fall Semester but, in any event, **no later than September 15** of his/her last semester in law school if the student is expected to graduate in **December**, or within the first week of the Spring Semester but, in any event, **no later than February 15** of his/her last semester if the student is expected to graduate in **May**.
2. In unusual and compelling circumstances for which the student cannot reasonably be held responsible, the Associate Dean may waive the deadlines specified above.

Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, the thesis will be due the Monday of Reading Week in the term in which the course was taken. Since there is no Reading Week for Summer Session classes, the paper will be due on the Monday one week before the summer class is over.