Course Syllabus Language: Generative AI

Understanding, Developing, and Regulating Legal Competence in a Technological Age

As legal education evolves alongside emerging technologies, so too must our classroom policies. These Generative AI (GAI) syllabus statements are designed to help professors adopt the approach that best aligns with their pedagogical goals. While each statement reflects a different level of permissiveness, all share a commitment to professional ethics, transparency, and the development of legal reasoning.

Please note: It is important to distinguish between **artificial intelligence (AI)** more broadly and **generative AI (GAI)** in particular. AI is already embedded in many tools we use every day, such as grammar checkers, Headnotes and Shephards, basic legal research systems, citation managers, spellcheckers, and document comparison tools in Microsoft Word and legal drafting software. These forms of AI are not typically the subject of concern or regulation in legal education, and no course policy below is intended to prohibit their use.

Generative AI, by contrast, refers to tools that generate new content—such as text, images, audio, video, or code—based on learned patterns. While many people associate GAI primarily with large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, Lexis+AI, or Copilot, the category also includes image generators (e.g., DALL·E, Midjourney), music generators (e.g., Aiva), code assistants (e.g., GitHub Copilot), and more. GAI is not limited to producing full documents; it can also be used for brainstorming, rewriting, summarizing, outlining, and citation generation. It is hiding in many programs that students use everyday like MS Word and Outlook (e.g. predictive text).

Sample Syllabus Policies on Generative AI (GAI)

Below are **four sample syllabus statements** that professors may adopt or adapt to suit their course goals and teaching philosophy. Each represents a different approach to student use of Generative AI (GAI), ranging from strict prohibition to open integration. These models are intended to help faculty balance the development of students' independent legal reasoning with the realities of an evolving professional landscape that increasingly includes GAI tools.

- **Option 1** is a **restrictive policy**, prohibiting GAI use in all coursework.
- **Option 2** takes a **moderate approach**, allowing GAI when explicitly authorized.
- **Option 3** is **judgment-based**, encouraging responsible student discretion.
- **Option 4** is a **permissive policy**, allowing open use with minimal restrictions.

Instructors are encouraged to choose and adapt the version that best aligns with their pedagogical aims, institutional policies, and the particular learning outcomes of their course.

Option 1: Restrictive Policy *(Original)*

Policy on Generative AI (GAI) Use

To maintain the integrity and rigor of this course, the use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is prohibited. This policy ensures that students develop and demonstrate their independent analytical abilities and legal knowledge without over-reliance on external assistance.

For the purposes of this policy, GAI use refers to the generation of substantial portions of text by tools such as Lexis+AI, ChatGPT, or any similar platform. The only exception to this prohibition is the use of minor autosuggestions provided by word processing or email software (e.g., Microsoft Word or Outlook). These autosuggestions are permitted as they do not substitute for the student's own legal analysis or writing.

This policy is designed to ensure that students' performance in this course accurately reflects their own understanding and abilities. By regulating the use of GAI tools, we aim to foster a fair and equitable learning environment, preparing students for the demands of the legal profession.

General Application

1. **Creating Outlines and Study Materials**: Students are prohibited from using GAI tools to generate outlines or other study materials. These materials must be created independently to ensure a thorough understanding of the course content.
2. **Submitting Written Work**: All submitted written work, including assignments, papers, and projects, must be the student's original work. The use of GAI tools to generate any part of the submitted text is strictly prohibited.
3. **Examinations**: The use of GAI tools is strictly prohibited during exams. Students must rely solely on their own knowledge and skills, reflecting the conditions of the bar exam where technological assistance is not available.

Strict adherence to this policy is required to uphold academic integrity. Any violation, including the unauthorized use of GAI tools, will be considered a serious breach of the academic integrity policy and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Option 2: Moderate Policy

Appropriate Use of Generative AI

In alignment with the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, which mandate that lawyers must maintain technological competence (Rule 1.1, Comment 8), this course will incorporate the use of Generative AI (GAI) for various purposes. As future legal professionals, it is imperative that students understand and are proficient in leveraging these advanced technologies to enhance their practice.

Throughout this course, students will engage with GAI tools[1] to assist with research, drafting, and other relevant tasks. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the analytical and critical thinking skills fundamental to legal practice cannot be substituted by any technology. Therefore, there will be specific assignments and assessments where the use of GAI is strictly prohibited. These activities are designed to

[1] For the purposes of this policy, GAI use refers to the generation of large portions of text written by tools such as Lexis+AI, ChatGPT, or similar platforms. This does not include small text autosuggestions in word processing or email software (e.g., Microsoft Word or Outlook).

ensure that students develop the necessary unaided skills essential for effective legal analysis and problem-solving.

I, the professor, will provide explicit instructions regarding when the use of GAI is expected or encouraged. If such explicit instructions are not given, then the use of GAI is prohibited. Any unauthorized use of GAI tools during prohibited assignments or examinations will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. The distinction between authorized and unauthorized GAI use will be clearly communicated for each assignment. Unauthorized use includes any instance where GAI generates substantial portions of text, whereas minor autosuggestions from word processing or email software do not fall under this restriction.

Use Prohibited on Exam: A key component of this course is an in-class examination that will be administered without access to GAI. This examination is designed to simulate the conditions of the bar exam, where students will not have the luxury of technological assistance. Consequently, students must be prepared to demonstrate their competency in core legal skills independently. This approach not only prepares students for bar readiness but also reinforces their ability to perform critical legal tasks without reliance on AI tools.

The integration of GAI in this course serves to balance the development of technological proficiency with the cultivation of independent analytical abilities. By navigating both aided and unaided tasks, students will emerge better equipped to meet the ethical and practical demands of modern legal practice.

Option 3: Student Judgment Policy

Use of Generative AI: Practice Good Judgment
Generative AI tools are not prohibited in this course. However, students are expected to exercise professional judgment in deciding whether and how to use them. The goal of this policy is not to ban technology but to encourage students to understand the tradeoffs involved in delegating tasks to generative systems.

GAI can help generate ideas, summarize content, or clarify structure—but if it replaces your own engagement with legal problems, you may not develop the skills you need to succeed on closed-book exams, in other doctrinal courses, on the bar exam, or in practice. You are responsible for ensuring that your use of these tools supports, rather than replaces, your learning.

General Guidance:

- If GAI use is allowed for an assignment, you may use it—but you are responsible for the results.
- If you're not sure whether a use is appropriate, you are encouraged to ask.
- On closed-book exams, GAI tools will not be available—your performance there will reflect the skills you've actually developed.

This policy recognizes that technological fluency is part of legal practice. So is discretion. Learn to use both.

Option 4: Fully Permissive Policy

Open Use of Generative AI with Disclosure Encouraged

This course permits and encourages the use of Generative AI (GAI) tools for legal drafting, research, and collaboration. As the legal profession increasingly adopts AI-enhanced tools—from Lexis+AI and Westlaw Edge to ChatGPT and CoCounsel—this course aims to help students become fluent in their use.

Students may use GAI for brainstorming, organizing, outlining, drafting, citation formatting, and more, provided that their final submissions meet the standards of accuracy, professionalism, and sound legal reasoning. Students are encouraged (but not required) to include a footnote or short explanation indicating how GAI was used.

Boundaries:

- GAI should support—not obscure—your own legal thinking.
- On in-class or closed-book exams, GAI use will not be permitted.
- You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of all content produced with AI assistance.

Students who wish to explore or test specific tools are welcome to consult with the professor about best practices or potential risks. This policy reflects the reality of modern legal workplaces and encourages responsible innovation.