Eastern Illinois University New Course Proposal
PLS 25131, 25132, 25133, Moot Court I, II, III

1. Catalog description
a. Course number: PLS 25131, 25132, 25133
b. Title: Moot Court I, II, III
c. Meeting times and credit: (1-Arr-1)
d. Terms to be offered: F, S
e. Short title: Moot Court
f. Course description: A role-playing simulation in which students represent attorneys in simulated appellate court competitions. Students will attend at least one competition per semester of enrollment as determined by the instructor, with learning activities ranging from oral arguments to the preparation of written legal briefs. The course may be repeated for a total of six semester hours, but no more than three semester hours may count toward the Political Science major or the Political Science minor. Students may pay expenses associated with registration, travel, room and meal charges while attending competition.
g. Prerequisite: Restricted to students selected to represent EIU at the moot court competitions designated by the department; completion of the fall semester course or permission of instructor is required for registration in the spring semester course. h. Initial term: Fall 2005

2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation
a. Student learning objectives:
   1) To better understand the structure, operation, and function of the American legal system through hands-on simulated participation.
   2) To hone the ability to speak effectively, especially to respond to critical questions “on their feet.”
   3) To develop the ability to perform legal research and writing.
   4) To develop skills in critical analysis of legal subject matter, through in-depth examination and discussion of the legal area that is the topic of the annual moot court case.

b. Assessment and course grades:
   Course Grades and Evaluation:
   Fall Semester: A student will earn a grade of Credit versus No Credit if the student regularly attends class meetings (#1, #2, #3, #4), has completed assigned readings (#1, #3, #4), is prepared to participate in in-class preparation for the competition (#1, #2, #3, #4), competes in the competition in a manner that demonstrates that he or she is taking the competition seriously (#1, #2, #3, #4), and prepares a draft of a brief for submission to the Brief Writing Competition in January (#1, #3, #4).
   Spring Semester: A student will earn a grade of Credit versus No Credit if the student regularly attends class meetings (#1, #2, #3, #4), has completed assigned readings, is prepared to participate in in-class preparation for the competition (#1, #3, #4), competes in the competition in a manner that demonstrates that he or she is taking the competition seriously (#1, #2, #3, #4), prepares a satisfactory legal brief for timely submission to the Brief Writing Competition (#1, #3, #4), prepares a satisfactory paper for the class that evaluates the Moot Court experience (#1, #2, #3, #4), and completes the self-assessment instrument (#1, #2, #3, #4).

   Academic Assessment: As part of the department’s overall assessment of its three government simulations, the instructor will use an assessment instrument to assess the degree to which students have attained the above objectives; the students will also self-assess. These tools should allow the instructor as well as the student to assess their performance related to each of the learning objectives (i.e., knowledge of the legal system, speaking and verbal presentation skills; skills in legal research and writing; and general critical analysis skills applied to law and
3. Outline of the Course

a. Fall semester: 15 50-minute class periods over 15 weeks or the equivalent.
b. Spring semester: 15 50-minute class periods over 8 weeks or the equivalent.

Fall Semester

Week 1: Introduction to the American Collegiate Moot Court Association (ACMCA)
Discuss role and purpose of appellate advocacy in the American legal process
Distribution of the annual ACMCA case

Week 2: Discussion of the annual ACMCA case
Organize class into 2-member teams

Weeks 3-12: Work with the ACMCA case and engage in oral argument practices in preparation
for moot court competition.
Begin preparation of briefs to be submitted for the Spring semester moot court
competition.

Week 13: Attend intercollegiate moot court competition, for example, the Midwest Regional
Tournament at the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. (This academic year,
this tournament is scheduled for November 19-20, 2004).

Week 14: Analysis of performance at the moot court competition and discussion of
strategies for improvement.

Week 15: Critique drafts of written briefs to be submitted to Spring semester moot court
competition.

Spring Semester

Weeks 1-2: Preparation of briefs for Spring semester moot court competition.
Hone oral argument skills for Spring semester moot court competition.

Week 3: Attend intercollegiate moot court competition, for example, the National
Tournament at the University of Texas – Arlington. (This academic year, this
tournament is scheduled for January 21-22, 2005.)

Week 4: Critique performance at moot court competition.

Weeks 5-7: Discuss plans for improvement of individual performances, and EIU team
performance, at next academic year’s moot court competitions.

Week 8: Submit paper assessing how moot court has informed thinking about career
choices, and about the functioning of the legal process.

4. Rationale

a. Purpose and need: The purpose of the course is to offer an alternative to Mock Trial (PLS
2512) through a government simulation with a different set of academic challenges for pre-
law students. The skills developed through preparation for and participation in appellate
argument are different from the skills developed in preparing for and participating in a
mock trial. Mock Trial emphasizes role-playing of witness and attorney roles for both the
plaintiff and defense sides of a civil or criminal trial. Moot Court emphasizes legal
reasoning skills in appealing a trial ruling before a team of judges/justices. This emphasis
is fully consistent with how faculty members in the department generally cover court
cases—i.e., by focusing on key legal and constitutional arguments in appellate court
rulings such as those of the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition, the writing competition for
legal briefs in January develops research and writing skills that are extremely valuable to
the pre-law student. Having the option of Moot Court will enable the Political Science
department to provide its students with another applied learning opportunity in relation to
its commitment to experiential-oriented education that is connected to class-room learning.

b. Justification for course level and prerequisites: The three existing government simulations
offered by the Political Science department are at the 2000 level. No prerequisite (except for
instructor permission) will be required for Fall Semester in order to encourage participation from a wide range of students interested in pre-law. Participation Fall Semester is a prerequisite for participation Spring Semester, as one purpose of the course is to build upon skills acquired by preparing for and performing at a moot court competition.

c. Similarity to existing course: None.

d. Impact on program: No more than two semester hours may count toward the Political Science major or the Political Science minor.

5. Implementation

a. Faculty members to whom this course may be assigned: This course will initially be assigned to Karen Swenson, though other qualified faculty may be assigned to teach the course.

b. Additional costs to students: Students may be required to pay registration, travel, room and meal charges while attending competition.


6. Community College Transfer:
A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

7. Date approved by the department or school    November 10, 2004
8. Date approved by the college curriculum committee: December 3, 2004
9. Date approved by the CAA: January 20, 2005