

## **Teaching Law by Design: Engaging Students from the Syllabus to the Final Exam, 2nd edition**

By Michael Hunter Schwartz, Sophie M. Sparrow, Gerald F. Hess. (2017) 340 pages, ISBN: 9781611637014. \$44

**Subject:** How to be a better teacher

**Useful for:** Useful for new teachers, or for more seasoned teachers wishing to add new types of assessment or to refine their pedagogical design. Helpful for any type of class, but not designed for distance education.

**Format:** Chapters with index, a checklist at the end of every chapter, and appendices at the end with sample documents (e.g. syllabus, learning outcomes).

### **Reviewer's Comments:**

We have all been students at one time or another, so we all have opinions about what makes a good teacher. The real question is do we remember this when we step to the front of the classroom, or do we know how to emulate what seems to come so naturally to the best teachers?

Teaching Law by Design reveals the mystery behind creating a class that students not only like, but one that will also create a transformative learning experience for each student. The authors' extensive study of exceptional law teachers and what makes them so, described in What the Best Law Teachers Do (Harvard University Press 2013), is the basis for the advice found in this book. Therefore, Teaching Law by Design not only covers theoretical aspects of adult learning, active learning, and formative assessment, but it also includes specifics about how the design and management of a course affects students' perception of the course, the professor, and learning in general. The focus on students and their feedback on teachers is one of the features that distinguishes this text from others of its kind.

After the chapter focusing on student views of teaching and learning, this book goes through all of the steps for teaching a law class, from design and creating the syllabus to developing exercises and thoughtful assessments. The book also covers the specifics of conducting the class, including what to do at the beginning of every class, how to create an active learning environment, and more.

In addition to revisions of the previous chapters and appendices, the second edition has three new chapters. The chapter on experiential learning focuses on designing and implementing experiential exercises. The chapter on lasting learning discusses how to develop analytical and intellectual skills that will remain through graduation and beyond. By far the most practical, the new chapter on troubleshooting details common issues that every teacher faces, and provides suggestions on ways to handle those issues, explaining everything from handling multiple assessments to dealing with unmotivated students (not that any of my students have ever been unmotivated).

## RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

More than just a how to manual, Teaching Law by Design provides mentoring for the new teacher, and, for people who have been teaching a while, it gives some new suggestions on how to become one of the “best law teachers” too.

**Reviewed by:** Robin Schard, University of Miami, in 2018.