UMKC School of Law Elective Course Information Fall 2012

COURSE NAME: Leadership in Disabilities Studies

COURSE NUMBER: Law 815 S, 3 credit hours

PROFESSOR: Bill Dittmeier

ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES: none

DESIRABLE PREREQUISITES: none

COURSE BOOKS: No required text book, a number of articles and other materials will be posted for students to read

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COURSE: The course provides an overview of the history of the treatment of individuals with disabilities by society and the law. The course takes a broad view of how individuals with disabilities have been regarded in the past and currently, the role of individuals with disabilities in society, and how the perception of individuals with disabilities is reflected in current legislation, policy, and funding for and availability of services for people with disabilities. The course generally has students from several disciplines (law, social work, education, etc.) who provide different perspectives on the issues discussed. The course includes an overview of the key federal statutes addressing the rights of individuals with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as well as key decisions by the US Supreme Court and other courts regarding the rights of individuals with disabilities.

COURSE CONTENT: The class is taught by Professor Dittmeier and a professor from UMKC’s Institute for Human Development. Their teaching is augmented by a number of guest lecturers to provide their perspectives on issues such as employment, access to medical services, physical accessibility requirements, guardianship, issues affecting persons with disabilities in the criminal justice system (both as defendants and victims), historical and current legal and societal issues regarding civil confinement of individuals with disabilities, guardianship, ethical issues, and how individuals with disabilities are portrayed in art, literature, and films. The perspectives of the students from the variety of academic disciplines are utilized in analyzing the statutory and regulatory rights afforded to individuals with disabilities.

METHOD OF GRADING & APPRAISAL OF STUDENT FOR GRADE: The methods used to determine students grades may include leading one or more class discussions; a team project where the team picks a disability-related topic, analyzes that topic and presents its findings to the class; 3 short (3 to 5 pages) written reflections on a topic presented in class; class attendance and participation; and a final exam.

RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR CAREER PURPOSES: The course is a required course in the Institute for Human Development’s Leadership in Disabilities Certificate program and is an approved elective course in the law school’s Child and Family Law concentration. The areas addressed in the course are applicable to a wide variety of areas and careers including human service providers, education law, guardianship, disability law, and elder law.

RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR MO/MULTI-STATE BAR EXAMINATION: None