Podcast 16 – Resolving Disputes, Properly - Dispute Resolution and Professional Responsibility

PROFESSOR FORCESE: Welcome back. In this podcast, Professor Ellen Zweibel returns to speak about dispute resolution and professionalism, a core feature of the first year program and an elemental aspect of the practice of law.

PROFESSOR ZWEIBEL: I’m Professor Ellen Zweibel. I’m part of the teaching team for the Dispute Resolution and Professional Responsibility course. Of all the courses that you take in first year law, Dispute Resolution and Professional Responsibility is the one you will most likely apply the first moment you step into your first legal job, whether it’s an internship, working at the legal aid clinic, a summer job, your articling position, you name it, this course will be immediately relevant. And also it’s the course you will likely have the most fun in. We work hard but we have fun. I don’t want to say a lot about Dispute Resolution and Professional Responsibility. That would actually be out of character with how we teach the course. We do more activities than talking. Let’s put it this way: in this course, you take the legal analysis you are learning in all your other first year courses and use it directly to work out client problems with actual people. You will interview, problem-solve, negotiate, mediate, arbitrate, you’ll write a memo, you’ll write a client advice letter. You’ll experience legal problems through the eyes of a lawyer, a client, a negotiator, a mediator, and an arbitrator. You will also put your personal and professional ethical standards to the test in the context of real client problems. In this course, abstract problems and abstract ethical dilemmas become concrete. Another thing that makes this course special is the number of local lawyers who will work with you. Every year, over 50 local lawyers come in to do demonstrations and then to observe and discuss with you the ins and outs of your final, full-length 2-hour mediated negotiation. Like I said, we work hard but we have fun. We kick off the fall term with 4 courses, 2 in September and 2 in October, mostly focusing on the Professional Responsibility component of the course. That part runs through everything. Then we meet every day in the three-week January term. That’s all I have to say until September. Have a great summer.