



The Judge Advocate General's School Master Curriculum Plan: Advanced Trial Advocacy Course

Course Code: ATA

July 2012

Instructions: *The Master Curriculum Plan is the charter for the course. Course Directors use the Plan to make decisions about curriculum content, including preparation of new lessons and revising existing ones, evaluation methods, identifying support requirements, and constructing course schedules. The Plan is available for review by JAGC members, their supervisors, CLE and other accrediting authorities, and others seeking information about JAG School courses and methods.*

A. General Information

Location: The Judge Advocate General's School, Maxwell AFB AL [or state other location].

Length of course: 4.5 days.

Student quota and profile: 24 (set by contract; may be exceeded with contractor approval). Air Force judge advocates assigned, pending assignment, or considered for assignment in the near future to senior trial counsel and senior defense counsel positions.

B. Strategic Course Direction

Instructions: *Set out the elements of the Strategic Course Direction as provided below. Consider them carefully, as each decision on the course must be consistent with the stated mission, vision, and values.*

Mission: To provide experienced criminal litigators with instruction in advanced courtroom communications techniques.

Vision: An innovative, "outside-the-box" experience in courtroom persuasion, emphasizing demonstrations and student experiential exercises – learning first by observing and then by doing.

Values: Fostering expertise in trial advocacy, client service, and effective courtroom communication.

C. Instructional Areas and Strategic Learning Objectives

Instructions: *Determine the broad subject areas (blocks) to be covered by the course. Determine the overall learning objectives for each block, setting out the cognitive level of learning. Include affective objectives, if appropriate. Consider these carefully, as they will your guide in planning the individual lessons within each block. See AFM 36-2236, Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, and consult the Academic Development Division.*

1. Block I: Course Introduction, Administration, and Graduation (series 100)

Block objectives:

Comprehend the mission and learning objectives for the Advanced Trial Advocacy Course (ATAC).

Know the administrative, logistical, and academic requirements for students attending ATAC.

Characterize attentive, active, and constructive participation in ATAC as important to success as a senior trial counsel or senior defense counsel.

2. Block II: Legal Skill Sets for the Senior Trial and Senior Defense Counsel: Advanced Courtroom Communication (series 200)

Block objectives:

Comprehend storytelling, visual focus, establishing relationships, and other advanced communication techniques in voir dire, opening statements, and arguments.

Comprehend methods of controlling the story and witnesses on direct and cross-examination.

Apply advanced communication techniques in courtroom exercises.

Respond positively to instruction in advanced courtroom communication techniques.

3. Block III: Professional Situational Awareness for the Senior Trial and Senior Defense Counsel (series 300)

Block objectives:

Comprehend supervisory perspectives of the Chief of the Trial Defense Services Division and the Chief of the Government Trial and Appellate Counsel Division, and issues of special interest to senior trial and defense counsel.

Respond positively to the special responsibilities placed on senior trial and defense counsel.

D. Methods of Instruction, Faculty, and Evaluation/Assessment

Instructions: Describe who will teach the course, how they will teach it, and how student performance will be evaluated. If there is no evaluation, so state. See AFM 36-2236, Guidebook for Air Force Instructors, for information and guidance on selection of teaching methods. Consult the Academic Development Division as needed.

The principal instructor for ATAC is an adjunct faculty contractor, supplemented by adjunct or resident AFJAGS faculty recruited by the contractor and guest speakers.

Methods of instruction will be informal lectures, faculty demonstrations, and student exercises.

There are no academic requirements for ATAC graduation. Accordingly, participant performance is not formally evaluated, although instructors will provide contemporaneous feedback on performance during exercises. Attendees are expected to participate attentively, actively, and constructively.

Assessment of instructional effectiveness may be by diagnostic survey or examination of participants at the start of the course followed by summative survey or examination at the close of the course, an end-of-course participant critique, and alumni and supervisor surveys approximately six months following graduation.

E. JAG Corps Major Knowledge Areas

Instructions: This section contains descriptions of the JAGC Corps Major Knowledge Areas identified by TJAG. It remains the same for each Master Curriculum Plan and serves as a reference for completing Sec. F.

Professional Legal Knowledge. Knowledge of the law and processes involved in JAG Corps fields of practice.

Legal Skill Sets. Knowledge of the lawyering skills that attorneys and paralegals must maintain or be able to support (e.g., advocacy, client services, discovery management, interviewing, investigating, legal and factual research, legal writing, and litigation).

Universal Skills. Skills required by all who (1) lead and work with people and (2) manage and use resources. These skills include communications, information technology, interpersonal skills, leadership, mentoring, office management, and personnel development.

Professional Situational Awareness. Knowledge that provides context on national security issues and on JAG Corps, unit, command, and Air Force history, missions, organizational structures, and perspectives.

F. Lesson Fields

Instructions: Summarize the subjects addressed in the course and tie them to the appropriate JAG Corps Major Knowledge Areas described in Sec. E, above. Examples from the Defense Orientation Course follow.

Professional Legal Knowledge Fields

Military Criminal Law

Legal Skill Set Fields

Trial Advocacy

Universal Skills Fields

Oral Communication

Visual Communication

Professional Situational Awareness Fields

JAIG and JAJD Leadership Perspectives

G. Student Selection

Student selection will be made by The Judge Advocate General from nominations for the field. Students are currently serving, pending assignment, or considered likely candidates for senior trial or senior defense counsel positions.