The practice of medicine is not an exact science and, unfortunately, physicians face legal issues related to their practice of medicine. No course can cover all of the legal aspects related to the practice of medicine but this course will focus on the liability risks faced by physicians. The topics will include, but are not limited to, the physician/patient relationship; consent issues; patient autonomy; surrogate decision-makers; involuntary holds; malpractice insurance; disclosing medical errors; and other topics of interest to physicians.

**Objectives and Goals:**

1. Review and discuss lawsuits that were instrumental in shaping the legal aspects of the physician’s legal environment.
2. Explore ways physicians can help protect themselves against legal liability.
3. Understand patient autonomy and the importance of informed consent as it pertains to the practice of medicine.
4. Analyze the scope of the physician/patient relationship – how it is established; boundaries; maintaining confidentiality; ending the professional relationship; etc.

**Expectations:**

This course is an academic course with substantive content intended to help students further their professional practice and understanding of liability risks. It will also include articles related to the subject matter for each session topic. As such, expectations are that you will attend lectures and complete the reading assignments in order to foster class discussion.

**Grades:**

This course, like all M4 electives, will be Pass or Fail. Pass/Fail is determined by:

1. Attendance and class participation (see Regular Attendance below).
2. Submission of brief write-ups on assigned subject matter – at least 75% must be completed as assigned.

**Assignments:**

The primary assignments in the class begin with reading classic legal opinions on cases related to informed consent and medical negligence. A list of cases will be provide to students to allow
ample time for review of the cases that will be discussed. For some readings, you will be asked to submit a short write-up of the material.

**Regular Attendance:**

Regular attendance is expected, and so the following rules are in place:

1. No one can miss more than three sessions.
2. If you cannot attend in person, you may use videoconferencing, Skype, etc. to connect in if necessary.
3. If it is necessary for you to miss a session, please contact the instructor beforehand via e-mail to let them know you will be unable to attend.
4. A student who misses a class may be assigned a “make-up activity” by the instructor.

Missing four or more classes will result in failing the course (also, see the policy on drop/withdrawal/incomplete, below).

**Qualification/Flexibility Clause:**

The course syllabus is a general guideline for the course and may be modified at any point during the semester. Any changes to the syllabus will be made via verbal announcement to the class or via e-mail. Student experience and interests will be considered in modifying the course in an effort to meet the needs of the students.

**Special needs:**

It is the policy of UAMS to provide accessibility to its program and activities and reasonable accommodations for persons identified as having disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the American Disabilities Act of 1990. Should a student with a documented and verifiable disability be unable to complete the course requirements as outlined, an alternative procedure will be developed. Students with defined needs should see the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be addressed.

**Classroom Courtesy:**

Courteous and professional conduct is expected in the classroom. This includes placing communication devices in silent mode (or turn them off) and to abide by the college’s dress code.
FOR COM STUDENTS

Per UAMS College of Medicine academic policies, students must abide by all academic requirements as enumerated in policy and the Student Handbook (including the honor code, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, etc.). All electives courses are graded Pass-Fail (P or F). All longitudinal humanities electives offered by the faculty of the Department of Medical Humanities & Bioethics are worth two academic credits in the fourth (senior) year of medical school.

Student grades are determined by the individual course instructor, in response to student performance regarding the assignments of each course, the learning objectives to be attained, attendance policies of the course, and any other requirements enumerated in the syllabus or other official communiques of the instructor (including, but not limited to, course material, letters, memos, emails, and changes to the syllabus itself).

Per COM policy, where possible, a student will be given adequate warning through written medium (email is acceptable) of a possible failing grade, except in cases where failure occurs at the end of term.

Grades, once posted with the registrar, are final and will only be changed if the course instructor was in error when determining the grade.

An "incomplete" grade may only be given if the student requests an "incomplete" before grades are turned into the registrar and solely at the course instructor's discretion.

Per UAMS policy, an instructor may only consider allowing a student to withdraw (with a withdraw-pass [WP] or withdraw-fail [WF]) from a course before the last session* of the course. (Also, per UAMS policy, a student can only drop a course within the first 5 days after the course has begun.)

* Exceptions to this part of the policy may be allowed for valid medical reasons with an accompanying physician's note.