

Civil Procedure sec. BC Course Evaluation Comments (Fall 2011) Stone, Suzanne

Professor should use a wristwatch and check time spent on a particular case, and when time's up, wrap up and move on. Ignorance of this teaching technique allowed cases to extend far beyond the professor's stated time allotment.

Don't let Prof. Stone teach Civil Procedure again. I like her as a person, and she's clearly very intelligent and able to explain in-depth very complicated issues, it's just not appropriate for this class. Civil Procedure is already compressed into a shorter time period at Cardozo than many schools, and it needs someone who's going to be able to prepare well and fly through subjects quickly, which is unable to do. Also, being late for every class is extremely unprofessional.

A tragic class. Professor Stone clearly means well, as she availed herself frequently during the semester, was gracious in answering questions, and even said we could Skype her while she was out of the country during finals, in case we had any last minute queries. However, this doesn't come close to making up for her lack of organization, clarity, and ability to explain new concepts to completely ignorant students. It was as if she thought we already knew civil procedure, and this was simply a 'reminder' course. Admittedly, it may be difficult to separate the inherent difficulty of civil procedure from the inability of a professor to teach it well. But after this semester, I believe an unfortunate amount of that difficulty was due to Professor Stone, not the subject.

Professor Stone has an unbelievable grasp of the subject matter which is quite evident in every class session. Given the difficulty of the subject she made her best effort to clarify matters but at times ended up making the material more complicated than it needed to be. She has always made herself available in office hours or simple email responses which is encouraging. My only suggestion for the course next year is that she come in with a better game plan for laying out the material and building a foundation before creating hypotheticals within the explanation of the initial case or concept. I believe this will only help students buy into the course more. All in all I think Professor Stone is an exceptional woman with a firm grasp and expertise of the subject but for first year law students who haven't achieved the level of legal thought process she should reduce the level of sophistication when introducing a topic and then build from there. Her in class hypotheticals at the end of a unit that develop both sides of an argument are also class.

Professor Stone clearly knows the material, but her lack of organization often made it very difficult to understand for someone who doesn't already have a grasp of it. She rarely would go through a case or concept without breaking into another concept or a hypothetical, and her use of the Socratic method often felt more like she was asking people to fill in the blanks rather than provide any insight. The class seemed to go in circles based not on any particular plan, but on the whims of Professor Stone. In addition she was frequently late, never had markers when she wanted to draw on the board, and had to reschedule a number of classes in the middle of the semester, which really threw off the timing of the semester and made it difficult to maintain any momentum.

Professor stone is extremely unorganized. She was continuously late and would often cancel

class. She did not know how to explain the material and would go off on tangents. She made the material extremely more confusing than it needed to be. I often left class more confused and stressed.

Would have been helpful to take a single complex hypothetical that combines all the question we've covered in class and come back to it after each topic with a new analysis.

The professor should not have been allowed to cancel/make up so many lessons, including TWO in the last week of class. Also, you seem like you know what you're talking about- but your ability to convey is so limited that it doesn't matter how much you know.

Civil Procedure is a course that I have been very excited to be a part of from the beginning. I still find the substance of the course profoundly interesting and highly stimulating intellectually. While I admire the intelligence of Professor Stone, I felt that her presentation of the material more often confused, rather than clarified, what is already a complex subject. Often she seemed unprepared for class, unable to clearly convey her knowledge and occasionally curiously venturing off topic for long periods of time. At the outset Professor Stone informed us that she had not taught this class in nearly a decade and that showed. For the tuition that students put in to learn the law, they should be confident that the Professor in front of them will be prepared, be current in their knowledge of the subject and will act professionally towards their students. Addressing that final issue of professionalism - although all classes were made up having 7 classes cancelled throughout the semester such that there were stretches of two weeks with 7 classes per week and stretched of two weeks with no classes at all is highly unprofessional, as is arriving 5-10 minutes late to class and ending early each day. If this would be unacceptable in an professional office environment, surely it should be unacceptable here as well. I admire Professor Stone and her intellect. But I chose to attend Cardozo because the school is known to employ the best and brightest; not only highly intelligent but effective communicators and instructors as well. It is because I admire that ethos even more that I have to voice my opinion against Professor Stone as a teacher of this course in the future.

Mots disorganized professor in this school. Can't stay on a topic without getting sidetracked every two seconds. Never clearly reviews material or gives helpful hypotheticals. She uses notes from yellow pads that are over 5 years old. Gets facts from cases wrong all the time... Kind of ridiculous.

Professor Stone is very intelligent and understands the material, but it was very difficult to learn in this course, and it wasn't presented in an organized fashion. We also had more than a month's worth of classes rescheduled (it is QUITE difficult to have double Civ Pro during your first month of law school). She was available for questions through email but hardly ever in her office. Overall, it was a stressful course and I still don't feel like I grasp all of the material.

Aside from the 8 cancelled classes that we had to make up, Suzanne Stone is the epitome of a completely unsatisfactory civil procedure professor. On the day we did have normally scheduled class, I can count the number of times Stone showed up ON TIME on one hand. She was always 5 minutes late, somedays closer to 10, blaming it on traffic or other transportation

issues that leaving her house with reasonable time to spare could solve. Her office hours were held before class, so many times she was never there either (at least the 2 times I went) bc she wasn't arriving to class on time, so obviously she conveniently wouldn't be at school early enough for her office hours. The one time I tried to schedule an appointment to see her, she scheduled a time to meet with me and then blew me off without offering a reschedule. Once arriving to class she was always very frazzled and unprepared. She could never remember to bring a dry erase marker to write on the board, it got to the point where she forgot for so long that students were bringing them for her so we could have some sort of visual learning mechanism. One time she used a highlighter out of her bag and made a pretty big fool of herself. Not only was she unprepared with physical classroom materials but she was unprepared for our class discussion. She clearly did not review the facts of the cases because students would present the case to her with the wrong facts, she would never catch them, and our class discussion would go on based on incorrect facts because she didn't know one way or the other and students would sit there thinking they must have misread the case. She more often than not didn't have a textbook to check on them or a seating chart because she 'didn't have time to go up to her office bc she was running late.' The list goes on. It was hard to hear anything she was saying anyway, and I didn't even sit in the back of the class. Stone was very cold if you went up to her for help, often refusing to answer questions because 'they were covered in class' or 'would be restated next class' because she did not want to repeat herself. But the problem was no one was understanding what she was saying in class, and still Stone was not willing to provide better answers. She went off on so many tangents I could not tell you the purpose of any of our classes, its obvious she never had a plan because we always ended up in places not related nor beneficial to the task at hand, and consequently we never got much done and students had trouble taking things away from the course. It's honestly as if she didn't want to be teaching civil procedure and that was illuminated at great lengths by her demeanor, performance, and overall class conduct. At the end of it, everyone just gave up, class attendance plummeted and we decided no teacher is better than Stone. Please do not put future Cardozo students through this nightmare, it made me question what I was doing here in law school. Ps. As irrelevant as this is, she wore the same green long sleeved sweater to 90% of our classes and its hard to take anyone seriously who wears the same outfit every single day.

Professor Stone taught the subject in a way that made the material confusing and the class intolerable. We didn't cover the amount of material as the classes taught by other professors. We often spent a week on the same case going over the same material repeatedly, while breezing through other topics/cases. While Civ Pro often seems cut & dry, Professor Stone teaches the material in such a way that leaves my head spinning without a firm understanding of the subject. I have been teaching myself the material via numerous supplements, CALI lessons and by watching Civil Procedure Barbri lectures online.

She clearly wanted us to learn and do well, she just wasn't good at organizing the material and presenting it in a way that was clear and understandable for a first semester Civ Pro class. She assumed a lot of background knowledge and ability that made this more appropriate for Civ Pro II level class.

Very disorganized and difficult to follow. She seems brilliant but does not know how to teach the material. To our disadvantage, she canceled a good number of classes during the semester,

that we then had to do double classes for makeups.

She was difficult to understand. She was constantly forgetting the facts of the cases. She never gave a clear answer. She was nice, but very ineffective.

I wish she was more organized. Sometimes she went off on tangents that really didn't help with my understanding of the material. She is brilliant and knows her stuff. However, she is too advanced for 1Ls. I was always prepared for class, but felt (THE ENTIRE SEMESTER), that I understood LESS about each case when I left class than when I came in.

I learned a lot trying to make up for the mass confusion that resulted after every single class. The professor appears congenitally unable to communicate or explain clearly. She does not seem to have put much thought into how to communicate with the students. Furthermore, she'll never figure out what we understand and what we don't if she lectures the whole, and asks occasional questions which she usually answers herself (since nobody else knows). I feel that I've learned a lot, but I'm a 1L--it would be impossible not to. My understanding of how to apply what I know seems inadequate even to me. I think there are some very serious pedagogical issues that need to be resolved here, that may require the attention and/or cooperation of other teachers, faculty, etc.

I can think of no better word to describe the nature of this class than 'torpor.' The sluggish pace of the course and the ineffectual explanations of the material combined to form one of the most hellacious classroom experiences of my life. I will conclude by saying: Professor Stone told us that we had ten minutes to do this evaluation. Four minutes later, she came back and began class...

I would like to start this evaluation by saying that I do not doubt that Suzanne Stone is a wonderful person, and very intelligent. However, she is (and I do not mean this hyperbolically) the absolute worst professor I have ever had in my 19 years of schooling. Literally, the worst. First - her level of disorganization is unparalleled. She regularly shows up to class 5 - 10 minutes late. By regularly, I mean 3 out of the 4 times we have class a week. Whenever there have been no markers in the classroom, instead of going to get one, or purchasing any, she has either tried to write with an inkless one, or a highlighter. She has said 'pretend it's invisible ink'. (Yes, she actually said this). Her disorganization is evident in her teaching. She has failed to adequately teach us some of the core concepts of civil procedure. Given the weight she seems to be placing on the topic in her practice exams, it baffles me that she would leave preclusion to the end of the semester, where it was rushed, and spend an abundance of time on class actions. When students would volunteer answers, she would never clarify whether they were right or wrong, leading to the entire section being confused about a topic. At the middle of the semester, she was asked to provide a TA for the course, which she did not. In addition to her confusing and unclear teaching style, her class cancellations have really been very detrimental to the course. I do not think that anyone in this class would be able to understand even the basic concepts of civil procedure without the help of a supplement. I strongly believe that Professor Stone should not be allowed to teach this course again.

Professor Stone is very unclear! All my fellow classmates who I have talked to about this

Professor have agreed that she needs to speak more clearly. Everything I have learned in this course is due to my work outside the classroom.

I found the course material challenging to learn, due mostly to the very confusing manner in which it was taught. I had to invest more time outside of class to learning this material than for any of my other classes. Though Professor Stone clearly has a grasp on the material herself, I, and many other students, have struggled to understand her teaching method. She talks around the subject rather than teaching it. She tries to employ the Socratic method, but when the student does not present the material the way Professor Stone wishes, she does not really ever explain why it is wrong. The purpose of the Socratic method is to allow for active teaching in the classroom, which is supposed to aid our understanding. Instead, the teaching style of Professor Stone has made the material even harder to grasp.

Honestly I hope no future students are ever subjected to the misery of having this prof for this particular course. besides for being late everyday, being unavailable to students, coming unprepared to the extent that the students were supplying such basic items as a marker for the board so that we would be provided with some visual aid, this prof was completely incapable of conveying any amount of the material in a manner that did not leave us questioning whether or not we had read the same cases. her teaching methods are even more convoluted than the most complicated court opinions. this class has actually made me question why i came to law school while my other classes foster a love of the subject and desire to master the law. i fear i will be making up for the detriment of not being taught the basic material of civil procedure for the rest of my law school career. If there was an option for 0, most of my survey answers would be changed to reflect a more accurate opinion.

really did NOT enjoy this course. found the lectures to actually be counter-productive to my understanding of the material. unfun and stressful.

I think it would be more helpful to establish a clear analytical framework for each section. The Professor put a heavy focus on the subtleties of each case. As a result, the big picture was lost.

If the purpose of the instructor is to confuse students and make the material more difficult to understand, then the professor did a good job.

Professor Stone cancelled at least 6 classes and while she made them up, this was a really unfair burden to place on her students. Especially when 2 of her make-ups took place the last week of class. I thought that civil procedure was confusing on its own, but after looking at commercial outlines and taking Barbri lectures, I realize that it's Stone's teaching that made this already challenging material much more difficult. She often starts lists and doesn't finish them after the first item because she goes off track. I wish her lessons were more structured so that we could understand the material better.

I like Professor Stone on a personal level, but I don't think she is an effective teacher. She does not control the class very well. When students answer her questions wrong, she tries to fit the wrong answer back into class discussion, creating huge amounts of confusion. Additionally, she frequently confuses parties and modifies the facts of cases before completing review of the

case under stated facts. I understand that civil procedure is very circular and complicated, but these are just a few of the ways that she unnecessarily complicates the material. As a result of this complication, we are forced to spend much more time on insignificant or irrelevant points in the case. I live with two other Cardozo 1Ls taking civil procedure, one with Professor Suk, and one with Professor Reinert. We frequently study together and compare amounts of time spent on the course. Aside from any personal differences that may make my experience more arduous than theirs (it certainly has been), our class has considered significantly less material than those with other professors. Nonetheless, I still enjoyed the course material a lot.

Prof. Stone is obviously very intelligent and understands the material. However, she fails to convey this knowledge in a manner that most 1Ls would find logical and approachable. She has shown awareness that many students in class are confused by the material, but has failed to adequately alleviate this conclusion. I would recommend that the administration reconsider allowing her to teach a class that is so vital to the 1L curriculum.

1. She has showed up late to every single class, today 9 minutes late. I find this is disrespectful to us students. I am forced to rely far to greatly on supplements to learn concepts for this course. Professor Stone needs to better project her voice so that students not in the front row can hear her. On the positive side, she seems like a nice person.

We had an enormous amount of make up classes. This was particularly difficult considering that we already have class 4 days a week. The professor's office hours were always changing and I often couldn't figure out when they were. The same people were always called on, and I feel like they got more out of the class than the rest of us. Professor Stone is very approachable and patient with student questions.

Professor Stone is brilliant and has mastery of the very abstract nature of civil procedure but struggled to communicate the material in a comprehensible way. Discussions were very abstract and while she was able to impart some very valuable lessons on theory and reasoning behind civ pro in a federal system, I felt we completely skipped basic building blocks and digesting cases in the context of the body of law. The subject matter is difficult as is and I think she expected a much superior level of processing before class than I was able to do.

Prof. Stone's only strong points are that she's intelligent, seems nice, and has a soothing voice. Nevertheless, she is chronically late. Though her personal command of the material is strong, this understanding does not transfer well to her teaching. I find myself frequently lost and relying on supplemental materials for guidance. In all honesty, I don't believe the students have gotten their tuition money worth with regards to Civil Procedure.

I understand that she had a personal issue that required making up a lot of classes, but it was pretty stressful. The lack of organization, both on a class-by-class level and a semester-long level, made an already difficult and complex subject even more complicated to comprehend. It required more work outside of class consulting supplemental material than any of my other classes or any other sections' civ pro courses. As a first semester student, it's hard for me to isolate the source of my confusion (subject matter or professor), but I think this course requires an exceptionally organized, available, and clear professor. That requirement was not fulfilled

for our class.

More organized class discussion and better use of blackboard wld have made it easier to understand step-by-step processes of applying rules

Civil Procedure is a complex subject as it is; therefore, I can understand the difficulty involved with teaching it in a clear and understandable manner. However, there was no sense of organization or consistency.

Very Poor Teaching Skills. Every time time I walked into class confident and walked out confused. She goes off on too many tangents and fails to relate back to her main purpose.

Professor Stone is quite obviously very brilliant and very accomplished. I would like to have casual meetings with her to chat over coffee and pick her brain. But her ability to communicate the material clearly was lacking. She did not seem to be able to manage a large classroom well. Her goal was to get us to come to our own conclusions about the issues raised by Civil Procedure, but she only lectured. If she wished us to command the material this way, class should have been more discussion-based. I realize the difficulty of discussion with such a large class size, but Professor Gilles seems to achieve it despite both the large class size and the sheer abundance of material she must cover in Torts. Professor Stone often lost her own train of thought mid-hypothetical, and since we often didn't know where she was going with the thought in the first place, we were usually left struggling to find the concept. She was always unprepared. She never had dry erase markers with which to write on the white board, and once she brought a highlighter instead (the mark of which of course couldn't be read on a white background). When she provided us with past exams, they were all so far out of date that they completely lacked relevance to current rules and case law. In general, she seemed to have 'checked out' of the course before it even began. I say this because she cancelled so many classes that another professor called it 'an accomplishment'. When she was in class, she didn't always have the right materials, or she was late, or her appearance was completely disheveled, or she couldn't remember where we were in the syllabus or what she had assigned. She made herself very unavailable for office hours, and discouraged it at any chance she got. I could cite many more examples of ways in which she was either unprepared or failed to impart much understanding to the students, but I do not wish to complain. Suffice it to say that Professor Stone would be much better utilized for her strengths in theoretical areas, etc. by employing her to teach upper level classes in jurisprudence, philosophy, and MAYBE upper level civil procedure courses. She would ideally teach SMALL classes which could be conducted in a casual, discussion-based manner. She should NOT teach first year students.