

# INTRODUCTION TO SMALL CLAIMS COURT

## INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS

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Course objectives  
Class Roster  
Evaluation Form

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## APPENDIX

### JOB AIDS

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The Four Commandments for Dealing with Attorneys	Appendix-Page 155

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# INTRODUCTION TO SMALL CLAIMS COURT

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MAY 6-8, 2013



*It is the daily; it is the  
small; it is the  
cumulative injuries of  
little people that we  
are here to protect....if  
we are able to keep our  
democracy, there must  
be one commandment:  
THOU SHALT NOT  
RATION JUSTICE.*

~Judge Learned Hand



*In matters of truth  
and justice, there is  
no difference between  
large and small  
problems, for issues  
concerning the  
treatment of people  
are all the same.*

~Albert Einstein





## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### MONDAY, MAY 6, 2013

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9:00 Welcome & Introductions  
9:15 Small Claims Overview  
10:45 Break  
11:00 Learning to Analyze Small Claims Cases  
12:15 Lunch at SOG  
1:00 Small Claims Procedure  
2:30 Break  
2:45 Procedure, cont'd  
4:45 Recess

### TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2013

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8:30 Revisiting Yesterday  
8:45 The Crux of Contracts  
9:45 Break  
10:00 Landlord-Tenant Law  
10:45 Break  
10:50 Landlord-Tenant, cont'd  
12:00 Lunch  
12:45 Small group discussions & Videotaping  
4:00 Small Claims Bench Skills  
5:30 Recess

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2013

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8:30 Checking-In  
8:45 Actions to Recover Possession  
9:45 Break  
10:00 The Struggle for Fairness & Other Information About the Mind of a Judge  
11:30 Mock Trials  
12:30 Adjourn



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# INTRODUCTION TO SMALL CLAIMS: OBJECTIVES

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1. That you will be able to correctly apply procedural rules applicable to small claims court.
2. That you will learn to use a job aid in listening for essential elements in witness testimony.
3. That you will be able to correctly decide contract cases and determine damages.
4. That you will develop your own individual policies for:
  - a. opening court;
  - b. dealing with attorneys
  - c. assisting pro se litigants
  - d. admitting evidence
5. That rural magistrates will identify ethical challenges unique to conducting court in a small community and share strategies for dealing with those challenges.
6. That urban magistrates will share strategies about how to organize holding court when there are many cases on the docket.
7. That you will be fluent in the procedure for entering judgment and completing forms.
8. That you will be able to identify the factors most influential in litigant satisfaction.
9. That you will be able to identify appropriate judicial demeanor and the factors important to that appearance.
10. That you will be able to list three types of judicial style and categorize your own judicial philosophy.
11. That you will report feeling more confident about holding court.





School of Government  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Introduction to Small Claims Court May 6-8, 2013

### Part I: Individual Subjects and Instructors

#### Monday, May 6, 2013

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Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

Small Claims Overview Dona Lewandowski, SOG	SD	D	N	A	SA	NA	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

Comments:

Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

<b>Learning to Analyze Small Claims Cases</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

<b>Small Claims Procedure</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

**Tuesday, May 7, 2013**

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Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

<b>The Crux of Contracts</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

<b>Landlord-Tenant Law</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

Small Group Discussion	SD	D	N	A	SA	NA	
1. Provided clear feedback	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2. Supplied practical suggestions for improvement	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

Interviewing Exercise Dona Lewandowski, SOG & Cynthia Pigford, Wake County	SD	D	N	A	SA	NA	
1. Provided useful feedback about interviewing skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2. Gave helpful suggestions for improvement	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

<b>Small Claims Bench Skills</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

### Wednesday, May 8, 2013

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Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

<b>Actions to Recover Possession</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

**SD** = strongly disagree    **D** = disagree    **N** = neutral    **A** = agree    **SA** = strongly agree    **NA** = not applicable

<b>The Struggle for Fairness &amp; Other Information About the Mind of a Judge</b> Dona Lewandowski, SOG	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Introduced objectives and provided an overview of the session	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2.. Organized content logically	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Provided relevant activities and exercises for practice	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
7. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
8. Session content was relevant to the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
9. Handouts are helpful and will be useful in my work	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

<b>Mock Trials</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>NA</b>	
1. Provided clear feedback	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
2. Supplied practical suggestions for improvement	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
3. Used clear examples and explanations	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
4. Gave helpful responses to questions	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
5. Demonstrated energy and interest in the topic	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
6. Reviewed key points	1	2	3	4	5	NA	

**Comments:**

## Part II: The School as a Whole

Please circle the number that best reflects your agreement with the items in the table below. The rating scale is:

EX = Excellent    G = Good    F = Fair    P = Poor

	EX	G	F	P	Results
1. How would you evaluate the overall quality of this program (relevance and usefulness of sessions, activities, exercises, materials, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	
2. How would you evaluate the overall quality and ability of the instructors?	1	2	3	4	
3. How would you evaluate the opportunities for student participation (question and answer, discussion, small group work, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	
4. How would you evaluate the overall design, schedule, and length of the program?	1	2	3	4	
5. How would you rate the application and selection process?	1	2	3	4	
6. How would you rate the information received in advance (including the homework assignment)?	1	2	3	4	
7. How would you rate the lunches/reception/breaks?	1	2	3	4	
8. How would you rate the facilities (rooms, sound, parking, room temperature, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	

If we offer this course again, what should we add?

As a result of this course, will you do anything differently when you return to work? Explain your answer.

What was the most valuable part of this course for you personally? What was the least valuable part?

