
American University Washington College of Law Health Law & Policy Program



Adjunct Professor Spotlight

Professor Kirk Nahra

Health Information Privacy & Data Security

Professor Nahra is a partner at WilmerHale, and the co-chair of its global Cybersecurity and Privacy Practice and its Big Data Practice.

What is your area of practice? What types of client work occupies most of your time?

I am a privacy and data security lawyer. I represent companies in pretty much any industry (with a focus on health care and financial services), of virtually any size, from start-ups to Fortune 100 companies, pretty much anywhere in the world. I manage our firm's global privacy and cybersecurity practice. My day to day work involves advising companies on compliance with the growing range of privacy and security laws, assisting them with transactions, helping them with enforcement investigations and dealing with security breaches. A lot of my work has become business strategy and consulting on new operations, business relationships and partnerships, public relations and public policy issues.

What was your path to your current position?

I started my career at a Washington law firm, after being a summer associate there. Privacy law didn't exist at the time, and I was at the firm for about a dozen years as an associate then partner before I started to become a privacy lawyer. I have a weird path to being a privacy lawyer (if you want to learn more, please go [here](#)) but suffice it to say that I never took a privacy law class and never had any intention of being a privacy lawyer, even though I have spent the last 20 years in the field. I moved firms in 2019 to WilmerHale, after 31 years at my first firm.

What do you enjoy about teaching your course?

I teach two classes, on general Information Privacy and Security Law and a specific Health care privacy and security law course. They are both really interesting to teach because the law is so new and evolving in real time (which also makes it really hard to teach). I like the policy discussions, teaching the real world issues about being a privacy lawyer, and getting the students engaged in issues that not only are important to a growing range of legal careers but also impact every student virtually every day in their personal life. As I tell my partners regularly, my issues impact every company in the world that has customers and/or employees (or has a computer system).

What are your hobbies?

I am a very active tennis player (along with other racket sports). I played almost every day for the first 8 months or so of the pandemic. This kept me (reasonably) sane from March until Thanksgiving during the pandemic, and I am looking forward to getting back outside to play.

Do you have a favorite book? Favorite quote? Favorite food? Pet?

Despite my daughter's lobbying for her entire life, we have not had pets other than about a dozen hamsters, which don't really count (well, other than two African dwarf frogs, which really don't count). I am Lebanese, so I love Lebanese food, but also a big fan of Mexican and Thai. My biggest single skill in the world is restaurant recommendations (so don't hesitate to ask). I'll give you a few books – The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid (Bryson), the Adventures of Kavalier and Clay (Chabon), the Tummy Trilogy (Trillin), a Prayer for Owen Meany (Irving) and the Emperor of Ocean Park (Carter). A bonus pick – the Princess Bride by William Goldman.