

Legal Writing
FALL SYLLABUS – LAW 5792/SECTION S – 2 CREDITS



Professor: Stacy Biggart
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CLASS MEETING TIME: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30 to 4:25 p.m.

CLASS LOCATION: Holland Hall 355D

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. & 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

In addition to my posted office hours, I have an open-door policy. If the door is open, come on in!

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

Christine Coughlin et al., *A Lawyer Writes* (3d ed., 2018)

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed.)

Core Grammar for Lawyers (software), by Carolina Academic Press

Supplemental materials and case files are posted on the course Canvas website.

Suggested Reading Materials

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (4th ed., 2013).

WORKLOAD

It is anticipated that you will spend approximately 2 hours of class reading and preparing for class assignments for every 1 hour of class.

COURSE OBJECTIVE AND GOALS

Our goal for this course is for you to learn how to construct a thorough legal analysis and express it effectively in writing.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the U.S. legal system and how lawyers use law to advise clients and resolve legal problems;
- Apply ethical and professional obligations in crafting your written work;
- Identify legal issues affecting a client's situation;

- Review facts and evaluate their relevance to a client’s legal situation;
- Analyze, interpret, and use statutes and case law to construct legal arguments;
- Apply legal rules to relevant client facts, analogizing and distinguishing precedent;
- Write an analysis of a legal issue predicting its outcome;
- Use effective organizational techniques;
- Write effective topic sentences, transitions, and paragraphs;
- Write precisely, clearly, and concisely;
- Use good grammar, syntax, punctuation, and document format;
- Use legal citations correctly;
- Revise, edit, and proofread your legal writing; and
- Use AI-generated first drafts where appropriate to increase efficiency, while critically analyzing, fact-checking, and editing the same to ensure high-quality end products.

PROFESSIONALISM & PARTICIPATION

Professionalism does not mean wearing a suit and saying the “right” words. It is not performative. We do not use it to exclude but to demonstrate understanding and care for others. We will practice professionalism in our class in simple ways:

- Prepare for class and turn assignments in by the deadline.
- Ask questions that show you are trying to understand concepts and skills.
- Listen to the views of others because you value their thoughts as much as you want them to value yours.
- Contribute to class and group discussions because you care about learning.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

I will take roll during each class period. You are permitted to miss two class periods without penalty. **Missing more than two class periods may result in a reduction of your final grade. Missing more than six classes will result in a failing grade in the course.**

Punctuality is part of professionalism. Please be on time to class and do not leave early, absent extenuating circumstances. Excessive tardiness will also result in a grade penalty.

ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION/SUBMISSION OF GROUP WORK POLICIES

Students will be divided into groups for some activities. Each group will have an assigned TA to assist students with in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments. TAs are 2Ls and 3Ls who did particularly well in their first-year legal writing courses. They are a tremendous resource to you, and I encourage you to speak with your assigned TA regularly. The class TAs will be:

Zach Perrotta	zperrotta@ufl.edu
Sidney Thomas	sidneythomas@ufl.edu
Lila Greenberg	lilagreenberg@ufl.edu
Riley Fitzpatrick	rileyfitzpatrick@ufl.edu

Assignment Submission and Late Policy

Lawyers must be organized. Failing to meet a deadline can have disastrous results for your client. If you are not yet in the habit of keeping a personal calendar, please start now.

If you turn in an assignment late, your grade will be lowered by one grade increment per day. An assignment that is over three days late will not be accepted.

Plagiarism

All work in this class must be your own. You may discuss cases and ideas; however, you may show your written work product only to your TA and me.

GRADING

Throughout the semester, you will turn in five major writing assignments in addition to minor assignments and possible quizzes. The assignments will be assigned either Completion Points (good faith effort and on time = all points) or Quality Points (graded based on content and timeliness).

Percentage Allocation

- 5% WA#1 Case Illustration (COMPLETION POINTS)
- 10% WA#2 Discussion section of a legal memo based on Hypo #1 (QUALITY POINTS)
- 5% WA#3 Client letter based on Hypo #1 (COMPLETION POINTS)
- 20% WA#4 Full legal memorandum based on Hypo #2 (QUALITY POINTS)
- 5% WA#5 Email/Texting Project (COMPLETION POINTS)
- 5% Participation: Attendance; ICWs; Core Grammar; Conference Participation, Quizzes
- 50% Final Project (Full memorandum of law) (QUALITY POINTS)

In addition, to pass this class, you must satisfactorily complete the *Core Grammar* pre-test and every module for which you do not “test out” in the pre-test.

Please note that *Core Grammar* also has a post-test; you must complete that post-test before Saturday, September 14, with a minimum score of 85.

Information on Accessing *Core Grammar*:

1. Go to <https://coregrammarforlawyers.com/> in your browser.
2. Complete the form and be sure to select “FL” for your state and “University of Florida – F.G. Levin College of Law” for your school.
3. On the payment page, enter “UFLL2024” in the Access Code field. Your discounted price will appear immediately. You need to purchase a one-year subscription.
4. Enter our credit card information below, verify the purchase, and continue on to create your Core Grammar for Lawyers account.
5. To activate your subscription, enter this exact Class Code: **324-072-2774**
6. You will be able to start using CGL immediately. However, before we meet for Week 1 of classes, you should take the Pre-Test (available on a link from the home page or “Bookshelf”). The deadline for the Pre-Test is Wednesday, August 21.

BASIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food or lacks a safe place to live is encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs. If you are comfortable doing so, you may also notify me so that I can direct you to further resources.

UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW STANDARD SYLLABUS POLICIES:

Other information about UF Levin College of Law policies, including compliance with the UF Honor Code, Grading, Accommodations, Class Recordings, and Course Evaluations can be found at this link: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635/files/74674656?wrap=1>.

Week 1

COURSE SCHEDULE

Class 1: 8/20 Reading: ALW Ch. 1
Class Topic: Intro to Class, How Attorneys Communicate

Core Grammar for Lawyers Pre-Test DUE: Wednesday, August 21, by 11:59 p.m.

Class 2: 8/22 Reading: ALW Ch. 2
Class Topic: Sources and Systems of Law

Week 2

Class 3: 8/27 Reading: ALW Ch. 3 & 11.III.B. (pp. 199–205)
Hypo #1 on Canvas
Description for WA #1
Class Topic: Comprehending Cases and Statutes
Cannons of Construction

Class 4: 8/29 Reading: ALW Ch. 6 & 7.2
Class Topic: Legal Analysis and Case Illustrations

Week 3

Class 5: 9/3 Reading: ALW Ch. 7.1, 4 & 5
Class Topic: Finding Your Argument & Organizing Legal Authority
Rule Synthesis

Class 6: 9/5 Reading: ALW Ch. 7.1, 4 & 5
Class Topic: Rule Synthesis Continued

Writing Assignment #1 (Case Illustration) DUE: Friday, September 6, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 4

Class 7: 9/10 Read: ALW Ch. 8 & 9
Class Topic: Applying the Law

Class 8: 9/12 Read: ALW Ch. 12
Class Topic: Discussion Section: Roadmaps and Point Headings

Core Grammar Modules and Post-Test Completed (with min. score of 85) DUE: Saturday, September 14, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 5

Class 9: 9/17 Class Topic: Review

Class 10: 9/18 Evening Writing Workshop (I will provide dinner!)

Class 11: 9/19 Read: Bluebook, pgs. 1–27
Fla. R. App. P. 9.800
Class Topic: Intro to Citations

Writing Assignment #2 (Memo Discussion Section) DUE: Saturday, September 21, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 6

Class 12: 9/24 Read: ALW Ch. 17
Description of WA #3 (client letter)
Class Topic: Writing for a Different Audience (Your Client)

Class 13: 9/26 Reading: ALW Ch. 17
Review WA#3 – Client Letter
Class Topic: The Client Letter

Week 7

Class 14 10/1 Read: Bluebook, pgs. 1–27
Intro to Client File #2
Class Topic: Citations Workshop
ICWs 1 & 2

Writing Assignment #3 (Client Letter) DUE: Wednesday, October 2, by 11:59 p.m.

Class 15 10/3 Class Topic: Intro of Issues for 2d Memo

Week 8

Class 16: 10/8 Class Topic: Intro to WA #4
Getting Organized

Class 17: 10/10 Reading: Cases for WA #4
Class Topic: Close the Universe
Outlining Arguments

Week 9

Class 18: 10/15 Reading: ALW Ch. 14
Class Topic: Statement of Facts
Brief Answer

Class 19: 10/16 Evening Writing Workshop (I will bring dinner!)

Class 20: 10/17 Reading: ALW Ch. 15
Class Topic: Conclusion & Loose Ends

Week 10

Class 21: 10/22 Reading: ALW Ch. 16
Class Topic: Editing & Polishing

10/23 Optional Evening Writing Workshop

Class 22: 10/24 Reading: ALW Ch. 18
Class Topic: Professional Emails

Writing Assignment #4 (Full Memo) DUE: Saturday, October 26, by 11:59 p.m.**Week 11**

Class 23: 10/29 Class Topic: Texting with Clients & Counsel (Asynch Class)

Class 24: 10/31 Class Topic: Evaluations
Final Project Tips

Writing Assignment #5 DUE: Friday, November 1, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 12

Class 25: 11/5 Class Topic: No Class
Attend individual conferences with Prof. Biggart to review
WA #4. Conferences will be held 11/1 to 11/8.

Class 26: 11/7 Class Topic: TBD

Week 13 No class, but I will hold optional review sessions during class time.

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETED IN CLASS: Saturday, November 9.