

**Legal Writing II – Persuasive Writing § W**  
**LAW 5793, Class # 19477**  
**Spring 2026**

Instructor: Timothy McLendon  
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30-3:55 PM  
Holland Hall, Room 345

**SYLLABUS**

**Professor:** Timothy McLendon  
**Office:** 320 Holland Hall (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor at the far west of the building, in the office suite of the Center for Governmental Responsibility)  
**Telephone:** (352) 273-0835  
**E-mail:** [mclendon@law.ufl.edu](mailto:mclendon@law.ufl.edu)

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 4.00-5.00pm  
Tuesdays, 3.00-4.00pm  
Thursdays, 3.00-4.00pm  
and other times by appointment.

**Required Textbooks:** Joan M. Rocklin et al., *A Lawyer Writes* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2024).  
*The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21<sup>st</sup> ed., 2020).  
Note that these are the same materials from your fall writing class. Additional Course Materials will be posted on Canvas.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to help students learn how to read, think, and write like a lawyer at the trial and appellate levels. The course build upon the foundation students received last semester in legal research and writing, using this to become effective persuasive writers. Together we will dissect and analyze your client's case and will practice applying cogent legal arguments to support your client's position. Students will then have the opportunity to argue their case in both a trial and appellate court format.

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

- Apply a lawyer's ethical and professional standards in the context of written and oral advocacy;
- Demonstrate an understanding of appellate standards of review of trial court decisions;
- Use effective techniques of persuasion;
- Develop a theme and integrate that theme into your argument;
- Frame a legal issue to persuade a court to rule in your favor;

- Present a compelling account of all relevant facts;
- Write a persuasive argument, supported by credibility, logic, the law, and a commanding narrative;
- Use effective organizational techniques;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of adhering to appellate procedural rules and formatting requirements for submitting appellate briefs to a court;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic appellate process and fundamental appellate concepts, including the decision to appeal;
- Edit and proofread a persuasive legal document;
- Prepare and effectively present an oral argument in support of your legal position; and
- Use AI-assisted research & AI-generated first drafts, where appropriate, to increase efficiency while critically analyzing, fact checking & editing the same to ensure high-quality, professional & ethical end products.

### Grading:

The four major writing assignments in this course consist of: 1) a memo in support of a trial motion (on which you will collaborate with regard to the research); 2) an independent memo in support of a trial motion; 3) a robust outline of the appellate brief; and 4) an appellate brief. These assignments may entail extensive research, submission of multiple drafts, meetings, and oral argument. There will be additional research assignments, oral argument activities, and homework assignments, all of which will be reflected in your participation grade.

5% Writing Assignment # 1 – Trial Court Memorandum of Law (completion points only)

25% Writing Assignment # 2 - Trial Court Memorandum of Law

10% Writing Assignment # 3 – Robust Outline of Appellate Brief (completion points only)

50% Writing Assignment # 4 - Final Appellate Brief

10% Participation [includes in-class exercises and oral argument presentations, as well as timely completion of other assignments]

### Grade Values for Conversion

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0

The law school grading policy is available at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/uf-law-student-handbook-and-academic-policies>.

Requirements for class attendance, and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with University of Florida policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Policy regarding late submission of assignments:**

If you turn in a writing assignment, and have not received prior permission from me, your FINAL GRADE will be lowered by one step (for example, B+ to B) for every 24 hours each paper is late. I reserve the right not to accept an assignment submitted more than three days late. If you have an emergency, you must contact me at your earliest opportunity to obtain a special arrangement. There is no guarantee that I will allow any special arrangement or late submission of work absent a true emergency. This is the same professionalism you would be expected to provide to your law partner, a judge, or a client. Your professional career starts now.

**Professional Behavior during Class:**

Please do not arrive late to class, leave early, or leave during class absent extenuating circumstances. Please turn off cell phones during class. I reserve the right to lower your final grade if you engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment.

**Attendance:**

We will take attendance during each class period. You are permitted to miss two classes without penalty. Your participation grade may be lowered due to additional unexcused absences. Missing more than six classes will result in a failing grade in the course. Excessive tardiness may also result in a grade penalty. The law school's policy on attendance can be found [here](#).

**Class Participation:**

Students are expected to complete all readings prior to class. Your readings are outlined in the syllabus. Additional readings may be assigned during the semester and posted to the Canvas site. Your participation grade is based on not only in class participation, but also on your successful completion of all assignments. Each assignment will be evaluated for completeness, accuracy and timeliness.

**Other Policy Statements:****A. Policy related to Make-up exams or other work.**

The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](#).

**B. Statement related to accommodations for students with disabilities.**

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Assistant Dean Brian Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester. Students may access information about various resources on the UF Law Student Resources Canvas page, available at <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635>.

### C. Evaluations.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

### D. Recording in Class

All classes will be recorded via Mediasite in case students must miss class for health reasons. The Office of Student Affairs will work with faculty to determine when students may have access to these recordings, and the recordings will be password protected. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible after an absence.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor and Student Conduct Code.

### E. Honor Code.

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Law Honor Code located [here](#). The UF Law Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so.

*Collaboration.* All work you submit in this class must be your own independent work unless I have specified that an assignment is “collaborative.” If an assignment is “collaborative,” please follow my directions about how and with whom you may collaborate. Generally, although you may discuss assignments with each other, you may not give answers to anyone, receive answers from anyone, read the work of another student (whether or not that student is enrolled in Legal Writing) or allow student to read your work. From time to time, this rule may be relaxed for a specific project, but I will let you know if, and exactly when, this is done. If you need help completing your assignments, please see me or contact your teaching assistant.

Unless I specifically instruct otherwise, you may not use any large language models or generative AI (e.g., Chat GPT, Claude, Omni etc.) to assist you with any of our assignments. This includes the generative text feature of Grammarly. However, you may use both Word and Grammarly for non-generative features such as grammar, spelling, syntax, and punctuation support. While I encourage you to use those features of Word and Grammarly, you are solely responsible for all choices you make in drafting any assignment you submit.

Note that when you are permitted to use any AI, you must verify all content and citations. You are wholly responsible for doing so. You are also responsible for the style, tone and format of any document you submit, and for following any additional AI-use instructions for that assignment.

*Plagiarism.* Plagiarism is an Honor Code violation. Sources must be acknowledged, not only when you quote the text, but also when you paraphrase. Direct quotes must be indicated by the use of quotation marks, and the source should be cited immediately after the quoted passage or at the conclusion of the sentence in which the quoted passage appears. The language within quotation marks should correspond exactly with the original; any changes should be indicated by square brackets ([ ]), and any omissions should be indicated by an ellipsis (. . .). Be sure you check the accuracy of all quotations against the source.

Note that when you cite to a case, you represent that the court opinion supports the proposition you have asserted. Note that the headnotes and syllabus of a case are not part of the court opinion and should never be cited. In this class, you may not use the “citation modified” option described in *Bluebook* Rule B5.3 (22d ed.) or “cleaned up” citations. If you believe you should cite a (cleaned up) or (citation modified) citation, please come to me to discuss your options.

**F. Observance of religious holidays.**

UF Law respects students' [observance of religious holidays](#).

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.
- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

**G. Class Preparation.**

This course complies with ABA Standard 310. The required readings for this course, posted below, will require approximately 120 minutes of reading and preparation for each class session.

**H. Your Responsibilities to Other Classes.**

As an attorney you will be responsible for many clients at the same time. You must attend to the legal affairs of multiple clients, even when you have a big project for one client. Similarly, when you have an assignment for this course, you are still responsible for attending your other classes and completing the work for those classes on time.

**I. Basic Needs Assistance.**

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food or lacks a safe place to live is encouraged to contact the Student Life & Career Services Office, under Dean Shaw. You can e-mail [gatoraid@law.ufl.edu](mailto:gatoraid@law.ufl.edu) or contact Dean Shaw directly at [shaw@law.ufl.edu](mailto:shaw@law.ufl.edu).

**J. UF Academic Policies & Resources**

Other information about UF academic policies and resources can be found at this [link](#).

**Summary of Assignments & Due Dates.**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Weight</b>
WA #1 Collaborative Trial Memo of Law	February 15	5%
WA # 2 Second Trial Memo of Law	March 8	25%
WA # 3 Outline of Appellate Brief	March 29	10%
WA # 4 Final Appellate Brief	April 19	50%
Participation, Exercises & Oral Argument	<i>Due dates will vary</i>	10%

**Class Schedule:**

Classes will generally meet Mondays and Wednesdays at 2:30pm in Room 345 Holland Hall. **Note:** This is a tentative syllabus - assigned readings and assignment due dates may change.

**Outline of the Course:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject Matter &amp; Reading Assignment</b>	<b>Assignment due</b>
Class 1 Wed., January 21	Intro to Persuasive Writing. Read ALW ch. 19; read Record for MSJ on Canvas (Slip & Fall Redux).	
<b>Class 2 – Extra Class Fri., January 24 Time &amp; Room TBD</b>	Standards of Review; jurisdiction of district & appellate courts. Read: Fed. R. Civ. P. 56, material on Canvas. Research Project #1 – Standard of Review for Motion for Summary Judgment – complete by next class	
Class 3 Mon., January 26	Read AAP ch. 4 & Record on Canvas. Charting key cases in TA groups	
Class 4 Wed., January 28	Read ALW ch. 7. Discuss key cases. Theme & Persuasive Statement of Facts. Homework: 1-3 sentence theme & 1-page Statement of Facts.	
Class 5 Mon., February 2	Read Supplemental materials on Canvas. Review themes & statement of facts. Organizing Argument & Point Headings. Homework: draft point headings & initial conclusions. Sketch of argument	
Class 6 Wed., February 4	Read ALW ch. 8. Review point headings. Discuss persuasive rule statements & case illustrations for CREAC. Homework: Draft Rule & Rule Explanation for Trial Memo (WA#1).	
Class 7 Mon., February 9	Persuasive arguments & counter-arguments. Homework: Draft Application for Trial Memo (WA#1).	

Class 8 Wed., February 11	Intro sections of Trial Memo. Editing, checking citations & quotations. Writing Lab.	
<b>Sun, February 15</b>		<b>Writing Assignment #1 (Collaborative Trial Memo) due</b>
Class 9 Mon., February 16	Read Record for WA#2 on Canvas. List critical facts. Begin procedural & substantive research.	
Class 10 Wed., February 18	Federal Research & Case Organization. ALW ch. 4 & 5 Homework: Case charts; point headings; discussion outline with case illustrations in the RE. <b>Due Fri., Feb. 20.</b>	
Class 11 Mon., February 23	Discuss Point Headings, Rules & Case Illustrations. Homework: Outline of Case Charts, point headings & put cases into discussion outline. <b>Due Thurs., Feb. 26.</b>	
Class 12 Wed., February 25	Discuss Applications. Homework: Outline or better of RA of discussion section. <b>Due Mon., March 2.</b>	
Class 13 Mon., March 2	SOF, Intro & Preliminary Statement to Trial Memo. Homework: Draft SOC, Intro & Prelim. Statement. <b>Due Thurs., March 5.</b>	
Class 14 Wed., March 4	Read: Draft Statement of Case & Facts. ALW ch. 16; Supplemental materials on Canvas. Draft Statement of Case & Facts.	
<b>Class 15 – Extra Class Fri., March 6</b>	<b>Writing Lab, 12.30-1.55pm, 285C HOL</b> Editing, proofreading & cite checking trial memo.	

<b>Sun., March 8</b>		<b>Writing Assignment #2 (Trial Memo of Law) Due</b>
Class 16 Mon., March 9	Record for Appellate Brief on Canvas.	
Class 17 Wed., March 11	Transition to Appellate Writing. Supplemental Materials on Canvas. Procedural & Substantive Research. Homework: Initial case charts. <b>Due Sunday, Mar. 15.</b>	
<b>March 16-20</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK.</b>	
Class 18 Mon., March 23	Supplemental Materials on Canvas. Roadmaps, Point Headings & Sub-Headings. Work on organization & outlining of appellate brief.	
Class 19 Wed., March 25	Persuasion through Case Law. Read AAP, Appendix C & other materials to be distributed. Activity: ICW 12 & 13 (signals & parentheticals). <b>Due Fri., Mar. 27.</b>  Homework: Draft Outline of Brief with point headings & case names identified (including those in RE). <b>Due Sun. Mar. 29.</b>	
Class 20 Mon., March 30	Theme, Appellate QP & Summary of Argument. Activity: ICW 6,7 & 16. Drafting Outline of Brief.	
Class 21 Wed., April 1	Statement of Jurisdiction & SOCAF for Brief.	
Fri., March 28	Optional writing workshop. Details to be announced.	
<b>Sun., March 29</b>		<b>Writing Assignment #3 (Outline of Appellate Brief with QP, SOCAF, Point Headings &amp; Cases Slotted) Due</b>

<b>Week of March 30 – April 3</b>	<b>Mini-Oral Arguments with TA Groups this week.</b>	
<b>Week of March 30 – April 3</b>	<b>Individual Writing Conferences with Prof. McLendon.</b> 20 Minute meetings – be prepared to discuss your progress including arguments, cases for illustrations.	
Class 22 Mon., April 6	No Class due to conferences with Prof. McLendon	
Class 23 Wed., April 8	Watch Maguire Moot Court Competition (link will be provided). Meet with your TA Group for 5-minute mini-oral argument, Continue work on Appellate Brief & your oral argument.	
<b>Week of April 13-17</b>	<b>Practice Oral Arguments this week.</b>	<b>Your 10-minute practice oral argument will occur sometime this week.</b>
Class 24 Mon., April 13	Oral Argument Tips. Supplemental material on Canvas. Prepare full oral argument (10 minute).	
Class 25 Wed., April 15	Appellate Brief Q&A. Edit, proofread & cite check appellate brief.	
Fri., April 17	Optional Writing Lab to work on Appellate Brief.	
<b>Sun., April 19</b>		<b>Writing Assignment #4 (Full Appellate Brief) Due</b>
<b>Week of April 20-22</b>	<b>Final Oral Arguments</b> Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday evening from 5.00-8.00pm	
Mon., April 20	<b>No Class (because of oral arguments)</b>	

Class 26 Wed., April 22	Oral Argument De-Brief. Course Evaluations. TA Discussion on Journal Write-On Competition & Skills Team Try- Outs.	
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