

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



Professor: Stacy Biggart (Pronouns: She/Her)
Office: 312N
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CLASS MEETING TIME: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 to 11:55am

CLASS LOCATION: Holland Hall 285D

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 10:00am to 12:00pm

A few words about office hours: I recognize that going to a professor's office can be intimidating. Think of office hours as a way for the professor to get to know you and for you to gain access to the professor's support. I have an open-door policy so if it's open, come on in! I also try to be present in student-centered areas of the law school, so please say hello, ask a question, etc.

If you have questions regarding the course or a specific assignment, please feel free to email me. I try to respond to emails quickly.

Note: I want you to learn how to anticipate and prepare for deadlines that you will face throughout your career as a lawyer. Procrastination can be brutal in the practice of law. To encourage you to work on your assignments in advance of the deadlines, office hours and other conferences will not be held (with me or your TA) within the 24 hours prior to an assignment due date.

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 file posted on the course Canvas website.

Suggested Reading Materials

Deborah Couples & Margaret Temple Smith, *Grammar, Punctuation & Style: A Quick Guide for Lawyers & Other Writers* (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 citation correctly; and
- Revise, edit, and proofread your legal writing.

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. You have a responsibility to yourself and others to show up for class prepared.

- Prepare for class and turn assignments in by the deadline because you are not here to waste people's time.
- Ask questions that show you are trying to understand concepts and skills.
- Listen to 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 who will assist students with in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments. TAs are 2Ls 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:

Jordan Karp	j.karp@ufl.edu
Alex Richardson	ae.richardson@ufl.edu
Chris Ruckdeschel	cruckdeschel@ufl.edu
Colton Teal	coltonteal@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 will not be accepted if it is more than three days late.

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 me and your TA.

GRADING

Throughout the semester, you will turn in five major writing assignments in addition to minor assignments and possible quizzes.

Percentage Allocation

10% WA#2 Discussion section of legal memorandum based on Hypo #1
10% WA#3 Client letter based on Hypo #1
20% WA#4 Full legal memorandum based on Hypo #2
10% Participation: Attendance; ICWs; Core Grammar; Conference Participation, Quizzes
50% Final Project (Full memorandum of law)

In addition, in order 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* has a post-test as well; you will be required to complete that post-test before Friday, October 1, 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 “UFLL2023” 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: **323-072-2023**
6. You will be able to start using CGL immediately. However, before we meet for Week two of classes, you should take the Pre-Test (available on a link from the home page or “Bookshelf”).

PREFERRED NAMES & PRONOUNS

I would like to use your preferred name and the pronouns that reflect your identity. I use the Canvas display names to create my course roster. Please make sure that your Canvas display name reflects your preferred name and correct pronouns if possible; or, if Canvas will not display your information correctly, please e-mail me and let me know how you’d like to be addressed in class.

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>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

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|----------|------|---------------------|---|
| Class 1: | 8/22 | <u>Reading:</u> | ALW Ch. 1 |
| | | <u>Class Topic:</u> | Intro to Class, How Attorneys Communicate |
| Class 2: | 8/24 | <u>Reading:</u> | ALW Ch. 2 & 3 (except 3.1) |
| | | <u>Class Topic:</u> | Sources and Systems of Law
Reading for Comprehension |

Core Grammar for Lawyers Pre-Test DUE: Sunday, August 27, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 2

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|----------|------|---------------------|--|
| Class 3: | 8/29 | <u>Reading:</u> | ALW Ch. 6 & 7.2
Hypo #1 on Canvas
Description for WA #1. |
| | | <u>Class Topic:</u> | Case Illustrations |
| Class 4: | 8/31 | <u>Reading:</u> | ALW Ch. 3.1 & 11.III.B. (pp. 199–205) |
| | | <u>Class Topic:</u> | Case Discussion
Statutes |

Week 3

Class 5: 9/5 Reading: ALW Ch. 4 & 5
Class Topic: Structure of a Legal Memo
Finding Your Argument
Organizing Legal Authority

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

Class 6: 9/7 Reading: ALW Ch. 6 & 7
Class Topic: Explaining the Law
Preview WA#2

Week 4

Class 7: 9/12 Read: ALW Ch. 8 & 9
Class Topic: Applying the Law

Class 8: 9/14 Read: ALW Ch. 11 & 12
Class Topic: Statutory Analysis
Discussion Section

Week 5

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

Class 10: 9/21 Read: Bluebook, pgs. 1–27
Class Topic: Citations Workshop
ICWs 1 & 2

Writing Assignment #2 (Memo Discussion Section) DUE: Saturday, September 23, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 6

Class 11: 9/26 Read: ALW Ch. 17
Description of WA #3 (client letter)
Class Topic: Writing for a Different Audience (Your Client)

Class 12: 9/28 Activity: In-class write, do ICWs, or catch up on Core Grammar modules, as needed.

9/29 Final Four Moot Court Competition. This is required homework for our class. If you are unable to attend live because of class or another conflict, watch the video and complete Discussion Board assignment by 11/16 at 11:59 p.m.

Core Grammar Modules and Post-Test Completed (with min. score of 85) DUE: Sunday, October 1, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 7

Class 13: 10/3 Reading: ALW Ch. 17
Review WA#3 – Client Letter
Class Topic: The Client Letter

Class 14: 10/5 Class Topic: Client Letters, Intro of Issues for 2d Memo

Writing Assignment #3 (Client Letter) DUE: Thursday, October 5, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 8

Class 15: 10/10 Class Topic: Intro to Hypo #2
Intro to WA #4
Getting Organized

Class 16: 10/12 Reading: Cases for WA #4
Class Topic: Close the Universe
Outlining Arguments

ICW 3 & 5 DUE: Sunday, October 15, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 9

Class 17: 10/17 Reading: ALW Ch. 14
Class Topic: Statement of Facts
Brief Answer

Class 18: 10/19 Reading: ALW Ch. 15
Class Topic: Conclusion & Loose Ends

Week 10

Class 19: 10/24 Reading: ALW Ch. 16
Class Topic: Editing & Polishing

Writing Assignment #4 (Full Memo) DUE: Wednesday, October 25, by 11:59 p.m.

Class 20: 10/26 Reading: ALW Ch. 18
Class Topic: Professional Emails

Week 11

Class 21: 10/31 Class Topic: Texting with Clients & Counsel (Asynch Class)

ICW 9 DUE: Wednesday, November 1, by 11:59 p.m.

Class 22: 11/2 Class Topic: Evaluations
Final Project Tips

Week 12

Class 23: 11/7 Class Topic: No Class
Attend individual conference with Prof. Biggart to review
WA #4. Conferences will be held 11/6 to 11/10.

Class 24: 11/9 Class Topic: TBD

FINAL PROJECT: Drops Friday, November 10.

Week 13

Class 25: 11/14 Topic: Guidance & Pre-Submitted Questions re Final Project

Class 26: 11/16 Topic: TA Talk re Productive Winter Break, Second Semester,
Summer Job Search (& Prof. Biggart brings lunch!)

WA #5, FINAL PROJECT (Full Memo) DUE: Sunday, November 19, by 11:59 p.m.