

**Western State College of Law
Honors Writing
Fall 2025**

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Course Overview

Honors writing is an upper-level writing course that builds on the core writing curriculum you have already received. It is meant to challenge you with advanced study in logical and creative thinking, intricate analysis, and sophisticated source synthesis. By the end of the semester, you will produce a paper of publishable quality that is worthy of submission to either a law review or legal writing competition.

Course Objectives

This course has four student learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to develop an original thesis (*PLO3*).
2. Students will demonstrate a proficiency in legal research to support their thesis (*PLO4*).
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to prepare a cogent and thorough outline of research and analysis supporting their thesis (*PLO5*).
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to produce a well-written and well-reasoned paper of publishable quality (*PLO6*).

Course Requirements

- **Required Text:**
 - *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, 21st ed.
 - **Recommended Texts:**
 - *Scholarly Writing for Law Students*, Elizabeth Fajans & Mary Falk (2017, 5th ed.)
 - *Academic Legal Writing*, Eugene Volokh (2016, 5th ed.)
- (Both texts are on Reserve in the Library, so I suggest taking a look at both before you decide to purchase. See which one you like best.)

Attendance and Participation

Much of what you learn in this class is derived from class instruction and class discussion. Class activities will build on each other and help you outline, research, write, and draft your paper over the course of the semester. Class discussions and activities will enable students to share their projects and learn from one another in a collaborative and supportive environment. Hands-on learning is active learning is effective learning. As a result, it's important to participate actively and timely in the class discussions, activities, and personal reflections.

Class will have two components – a synchronous or live component conducted via Zoom and an asynchronous component managed through Westlaw's TWEN learning system. Using this

hybrid approach allows for the fullest learning experience. Please register for the TWEN course associated with this course. Also, please follow the Zoom guidelines listed below.

TWEN Course

- Honors Writing – Fall 2025

Zoom URL

- Join Zoom Meeting
<https://wsulaw-edu.zoom.us/j/84443804147?pwd=QZZpR1ykewQ2ubhzosTJYgdJ7sVKhb.1>

Meeting ID: 844 4380 4147

Passcode: 694327

Zoom Guidelines

- Find a dedicated quiet space to attend Zoom sessions, to minimize the chances that you will be disrupted during the session.
- Your camera must be turned on for the duration of the class. If desired, you can use the background settings in Zoom to create an artificial background that blocks the view of your space while still allowing you to be seen on camera.
- Come prepared, as you would for an in-person class. Participation in Zoom classes is as important as it is during an in-person class session.
- Do not multitask – stay focused on the class discussion – do not wander in and out of the Zoom session.
- If you have to miss a Zoom session, or arrive late or leave early, notify me in advance, as you would for an in-person class.
- If you have connectivity issues, whether it be long-term or short-term, that impact your ability to participate (e.g., if you are limited to dial-in without video), notify me so that we can explore other accommodations together.
- Do not post screenshots or recordings of any Zoom classes on social media. Such actions would constitute a violation of the Student Honor Code. If you need access to a recording of the Zoom session, please contact me.

Time Requirements for Class Participation

In addition to attending and participating in class each week, much of the work you will do over the course of the semester to produce your final paper will be outside the classroom. ABA Standard 310(b)(1) requires that students spend at least two hours of outside study time for every course credit hour. This means that you each week, must devote at least four (4) hours, on average, outside of the classroom, to this course. Writing is hard. Everyone's writing process takes much longer than they think, so I expect you'll have to have no problem with meeting this time requirement.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Generative AI Usage

Generative AI tools, like Gemini and ChatGPT, can do your homework for you, but they cannot do your learning for you. Learning is a messy, life-long process that requires you to critically evaluate and synthesize new evidence, ideas, and opinions and then integrate new knowledge into existing schemas. This is hard work. Generative AI tools can help but they should not replace critical thinking, original contributions, and reflecting on your learning. In this course, generative AI tools can be used for brainstorming ideas, assisting in research, or editing your original work. You must use these tools responsibly; this includes respecting copyright laws and not using AI to generate content that infringes on intellectual property rights (this includes not uploading any portion of this course content, assignment instructions, etc., to a generative AI tool); ensuring that any input into AI tools does not violate the privacy of individuals in this class; and, verifying the accuracy of the AI-generated content. **Any use of generative AI must be acknowledged in your work by providing a brief description of how the AI tool was used in the creation of your work and citing the tool, as applicable.**

Formatting Requirements

For all assignments, including the final paper, please comply with the following formatting requirements:

- Typewritten, double-spaced, any standard font (e.g. Calibri, Aptos) 12-point font.
- One-inch margins for the top, bottom, left, and right margins
- Page numbers at the bottom center of each page
- Citations must follow *The Bluebook* (21st ed.)

Assignments and Grades

- 50%
In-Class Exercise Participation (15 pts.)
Reflective Journaling (10 pts.)
Literature Review & Annotated Bibliography (15 pts.)
Paper Presentation (10 pts.)
- 25%
First Draft of Paper (25 pts. (15+10))
- 25%
Final Draft of Paper (25 pts.)

Week	Date	Course Topics / Readings / Assignments
01	08/15/25	<p>Topics: Introduction to the Course; Introduction to Each Other; Overview of class; Expectations; Logistics; Writing Histories; Difference between a legal scholarly paper and a legal pleading</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due Reflective Journaling Due: <i>How do you describe yourself as a writer? What experiences have prepared you for this class?</i></p>
02	08/22/25	<p>Topics: Library Research: Paper Topic Sources (e.g. Competition /Circuit Splits); Preemption; Inter-disciplinary sources</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due Reflective Journaling Due: <i>How confident are you in your researching skills? What is the difference working with legal resources for a paper vs. pleading?</i></p> <p>Research Session: Searching case law, law reviews & other research-level legal analytical articles; searching non-law related material; searching non-primary and secondary sources</p>
03	08/29/25	<p>Topics: Multi-text synthesis (Part 1): Critical Reading & Note-taking; Source Organization; <i>Questioning-The-Author</i></p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: General Paper Topic Due</p>
04	09/05/25	<p>Topics: Multi-text synthesis (Part 2): Summarizing; Annotated Bibliographies; Objective Purposeful Literature Reviews</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: Pre-Discussion / Activity Due: Have 3 sources summarized into at least 3 bulleted issues each</p>

05	09/12/25	<p>Topics: Structure and Parts of Scholarly Papers; different types of legal arguments; translating a general paper topic into a legal paper topic; topic scope; structure approaches; tone; audience consideration</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review</p>
06	09/19/25	<p>Topics: Writing Strategies Collaborative Session; What's your writing style? How do you approach organizing research? Are you an outliner or a long writer? How much time do you spend writing each day?</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: Refined Paper Topic (Problem/Solution) Due</p>
07	09/26/25	<p>Topics: Peer Review / Collaborative Writing Session</p> <p>ULWR: Return of Literature Review & Annotated Bibliography</p>
08	10/03/25	<p>Topics: No class. Work on research, outlining/organizing, and writing first draft.</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: Individual Progress Meetings with Sarah</p>
09	10/10/25	<p>Topics: Peer Review / Collaborative Writing Session; Breaking down article sections; problems? hurdles?</p>
10	10/17/25	<p>Topics: Audience Consideration: Footnotes; citations; following research trail</p> <p>Research Session: Following the Research Trail; How do you decide whether to trust the citing author or read the article personally?</p> <p>ULWR Assignment Due: Pre-Discussion / Activity Due: List and describe 3 valued sources you found by following footnotes; potential uses in your paper?</p>

11	10/31/25	Topics: Peer Review / Collaborative Writing Session; Focusing on your first draft ULWR Assignment Due: Pre-Discussion / Activity Due: What kind of feedback are you looking for? First Draft of Paper Due
12	11/07/25	Topics: Paper Presentations ULWR: Return of First Draft of Paper
13	11/14/25	Topics: Paper Presentations ULWR Assignment Due (optional): First Draft Selected Section Re-Writes Due
14	11/21/25	Topics: Class Wrap-Up; Transferability; Where we go from here ... ULWR Assignment Due: Reflective Journaling Due: <i>What is one thing you will take away from this class? How do you describe yourself as a writer as a result of this experience?</i>
--	12/09/25	ULWR Assignment Due: Final Paper Due by 4pm submitted via email to Sarah Eggleston at sarahseggleston@gmail.com

Western State College of Law

Programmatic Learning Outcomes

Western State College of Law's curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:

(1) Doctrinal Knowledge

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedures, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

(2) Practice Skills

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student's chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student's particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

(3) Legal Analysis

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

(4) Legal Research

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

(5) Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone,

style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

(8) Legal Ethics

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.

Disability Services Statement

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Library Building, Room 275-B. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Dean Marisa Cianciarulo at mcianciarulo@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."