

WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF LAW
HONORS WRITING
FALL 2017

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Course Overview

Welcome to Honors Writing! This is an upper-level writing course that builds on the core writing curriculum you have already received while challenging you with advanced study in logical and creative thinking, intricate analysis, and sophisticated case 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 a legal writing competition.

Course Objectives

This course has four specific student learning outcomes. They are derived from both Argosy University's Institutional Learning Outcomes (analytical reasoning, effective communication, information competency, and professional competence) and Western State College of Law's Programmatic Learning Outcomes (legal analysis, legal research, communication, and advocacy of legal argument).

Student Learning Outcomes

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

Course Requirements

Books. There is no required textbook for this course; however, you must use *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20th ed.) for proper citations in your final paper. In addition, if you are in need of a reference book for writing scholarly papers, I recommend *one* of the following:

- *Scholarly Writing for Law Students* by Fajans and Falk;
- *Academic Legal Writing* by Volokh; or
- *Scholarly Writing: Ideas, Examples, and Execution* by Clark and Murray.

Attendance and Participation. Much of what you will learn in this class is derived both from class instruction and class discussion. Directions will be given during each class session on “next steps” for your paper. In addition, class discussion will enable students to share their projects and learn from one another in a collaborative and supportive environment. Thus, it is important not to miss class and to actively participate during each class session.

Time Requirements for Class Preparation. In addition to attending and participating in class each week, much of the work that you will be doing over the course of the semester to produce your final paper will be outside of 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 must devote at least four hours each week, on average, outside of the classroom to this course. Throughout this semester, you will be devoting *at a minimum* four hours weekly, on average, to this course.

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

- Typewritten, double-spaced, Times New Roman 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* (20th ed).

Assignments and Grades. Your final grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:

- 25%
 - In-Class Presentation of Thesis (10 points)
 - Outline (50 points)
 - Presentation (15 points)
- 25 %
 - First Draft of Paper (75 points)
- 50%
 - Final Draft of Paper (150 points)

Course Schedule

Week 1 – August 18

- Introduction to Course; Find Topic and Develop Thesis

Week 2 – August 25

- Continue Work on Topic and Thesis

Week 3 – September 1

- In-Class Presentation of Thesis; Thesis Approved; Begin In-Depth Research

Week 4 – September 8

- Continue Research

Week 5 – September 15

- Finish Research; Begin Outline

Week 6 – September 22

- Continue Outline

Week 7 – September 29

- Outline Due

Week 8 – October 6

- Discuss Outline in Individual Conferences; Begin Writing

Week 9 – October 13

- Continue Writing

Week 10 – October 20

- Continue Writing

Week 11 – October 27

- First Draft of Paper Due

Week 12 – November 3

- Discuss Paper in Individual Conferences; Continue Writing

Week 13 – November 10

- Continue Writing

Week 14 – November 17

- Presentations

Week 15 – November 24 (Thanksgiving Friday)

- Final Paper Due on Monday, November 27, by 4:00 p.m. to faculty secretary

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 Students Services Suite 119. 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 Allen Easley at aeasley@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."

Argosy University – Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. Analytical Reasoning

Analyze issues objectively, interpret and synthesize data and ideas, and develop feasible, flexible, and creative solutions to real world problems

2. Effective Communication

Identify audiences, assess information provided, interpret needs, and present relevant information using appropriate written, oral, and listening skills and media to meet the needs of the situation

3. Information Competency

Gather, evaluate, and ethically use information from a variety of relevant technological and library resources to make decisions and take action

4. Interpersonal Effectiveness

Develop individual and group interpersonal skills to improve and foster participation and interaction critical for achieving individual and group goals

5. Personal and Professional Integrity and Ethical Behavior

Demonstrate a multi-dimensional awareness of individual and social responsibility to act ethically and with integrity in a diverse, global society.

6. Professional Competence

Apply skills appropriate to program objectives and employ critical reasoning to contribute to one's field and profession

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.