

Persuasive Legal Writing
University of Florida Levin College of Law
Spring Semester Tentative Syllabus, 1/1/2025
Law 5793, 2 Credits

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Office Hours: T, Th, 10:00 to 1:00 pm, and by Appointment

Class Time: (V): T, Th, 8:30 to 9:55 am (Y): T, Th, 1:15 to 2:40 pm

Location: (V): HH 355D (Y): HH 382

I. Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes.

The primary objective of this course is for you to learn how to construct a thorough legal argument and express it effectively and persuasively in writing and orally.

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

1. Apply ethical and professional standards in crafting your written and oral advocacy;
2. Find and use the fundamental sources of U.S. legal research, including constitutions and statutes, cases and digests, secondary sources, administrative law, and legislative history;
3. Develop research strategies that maximize your efficiency and accuracy;
4. Continue to improve your research, analysis, and legal writing under time constraints;
5. Demonstrate increasing levels of citation literacy, including reading, writing, and placement;
6. Frame legal issues to persuade a court to rule in your favor;
7. Present compelling accounts of relevant facts;
8. Analyze and advocate effectively, using compelling narratives, persuasive rule structures, analogical reasoning, relevant policy, strategic application of law to fact, and logical and persuasive organization;
9. Communicate legal analyses in impactful, concise, and polished written products, including motion memoranda and appellate briefs;
10. Understand the fundamentals of the trial process, including the filing of trial motions;

11. Understand the fundamentals of the appellate process and appellate concepts, including the decision to appeal;
12. Understand the importance of adhering to procedural rules and formatting requirements when submitting documents to a court;
13. Effectively and critically edit, revise, and proofread your own persuasive legal writing as well as the writing of colleagues;
14. Present legal arguments and answer questions effectively in meetings and simulated hearings;
15. Prepare and effectively present an oral argument in support of your legal position in a simulated appellate oral argument;
16. Continue to use and improve your writing generally, including effective topic sentences, transitions, paragraphs, as well as proper grammar, syntax, punctuation, and document format.

II. Required Reading Materials

An Advocate Persuades, by Joan Rocklin, Robert Rocklin, Christine Coughlin, Sandy Patrick (2d ed.); The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed.).

Please be sure to register for the Canvas course and have any required materials with you in print or easily accessible electronic form in class. You are responsible for checking your Canvas page and the e-mail connected to the page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

III. Course Expectations and Grading Evaluation

Weekly Assignments. The Legal Writing course requires the completion outside of class of many short and medium-length writing assignments. You may collaborate on the first collaborative summary judgment memo, but collaboration is not permitted on any graded assessments. You are also not permitted to use Chat GPT or any other AI to do the work for this course.

Teaching Assistants. You will be divided into groups for some activities including oral arguments. Each group will have an assigned TA who will assist students with in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments.

Grade Calculation. You will be evaluated based upon the following:

Class participation, timely completion of all assignments, and oral argument (10%), the collaborative memo (5%) and appellate argument draft (10%)	25% of Grade
SJ Memo	25% of Grade
Appellate Brief	50% of Grade

IV. Class Attendance Policy

Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the Law School. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Students are allowed 4 absences during the course of the semester. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are not recorded as absent if they come in late. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement will be dropped from the course. The law school's policy on attendance can be found [here](#).

V. Other UF College of Law 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>.

VI. ABA Out-of-Class Requirements

ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Each class involves 2 classroom hours per week, requiring at least 4 hours of preparation.

VII. Course Schedule of Topics and Assignments

This syllabus is offered as a guide to the direction of the course and is subject to change.

Class Date	Assignments Due Before Class
1.14	Read Chapter 1,2, Persuasion and Ethics , Read Prompt for Collaborative Summary Judgment Memo
16	Read Chapter 8, Appendix B, Trial Motions , Begin Research for Summary Judgment Memo Draft Outline of Summary Judgment Standard with Case Cites, Upload to Canvas
21	Research Cases for Memo Draft Case List and Mini Briefs for Memo, Upload to Canvas
23	Read Chapter 3, Organizing Arguments

	Construct Case Charts for Issues in Memo, Upload to Canvas
28	Read Chapter 4, Themes Draft Caption, Intro, Statement of Facts, Upload to Canvas
30	Read Chapter 5, Drafting Arguments Draft Headings, Discussion, Conclusion, Signature Lines, Upload to Canvas
2.4	Read Chapter 6,7, Refining and Editing Proofread and Cite Check Memo, Upload to Canvas
6	Read Prompt for Graded Summary Judgment Memo, Begin Research for Memo Collaborative Summary Judgment Memo Due 2/9 , Upload to Canvas
11	Research Cases for Memo Draft List and Mini Case Briefs for Memo, Upload to Canvas
13	Class with Research Prof. Construct Case Charts for Issues in Memo, Upload to Canvas
18	Read Chapter 10, Statement of Facts Draft Caption, Intro, Statement of Facts, Upload to Canvas
20	Draft Headings, Discussion, Conclusion, Signature Lines, Upload to Canvas
25	Proofread and Cite Check Memo, Upload to Canvas
27	Read Chapter 9, Appellate Briefs , Read Prompt for Graded Appellate Brief, Research Standard of Review Draft Outline of Standard of Review with Case Cites, Upload to Canvas Graded Summary Judgment Memo Due 3/2 , Upload to Canvas
3.4	Research Cases for Brief

	Draft List and Mini Case Briefs for Appellate Brief, Upload to Canvas
6	Construct Case Charts for Issues in Brief, Upload to Canvas
11	Attend Individual Writing Conferences in lieu of Class Complete ICW 6, 7, and 16 (Fed. and State Statutes and Lit. Docs)
13	Attend Individual Writing Conferences in lieu of Class Complete ICW 12 and 13 (Signals and Parentheticals)
18, 20	Spring Break – No Class
25	Read Chapter 11, Oral Argument
27	Draft outline for Oral Argument, Upload to Canvas Outline of Graded Appellate Brief Due 3/29, Upload to Canvas
4.1	Draft Caption, Intro, Statement of Facts, Upload to Canvas
3	Watch Moot Court Competition in lieu of Class 4/3 Draft Headings, First Half of Discussion, Upload to Canvas
8	Draft Second Half of Discussion, Conclusion, Signature Lines, Upload to Canvas
10	Practice Oral Argument with TA Proofread and Cite Check Brief, Upload to Canvas Graded Appellate Brief Due 4/13, Upload to Canvas
15	Oral Arguments in lieu of Class
17	Complete Course Evaluations