

Legal Writing
LAW 5792, Class #20631 (Section U)
Fall 2024

Instructor: Timothy McLendon
Mondays & Wednesdays, 1.15pm
Holland Hall, Room 285D

SYLLABUS

Professor: Timothy McLendon
Office: 320 Holland Hall (in the Center for Governmental Responsibility)
Telephone: (352) 273-0835
E-mail: mclendon@law.ufl.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, 4.30-5.30pm
Wednesdays, 4.30-5.30pm
and other times by appointment.

Required Textbooks: Christine Coughlin et al., *A Lawyer Writes* (3rd ed., 2018).
Core Grammar for Lawyers (software), by Carolina Academic Press.
The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed., 2021).
Additional Course Materials available on Canvas

Suggested: Deborah Cupples & Margaret Temple Smith, *Grammar, Punctuation & Style: A Quick Guide for Lawyers & Other Writers* (2013).

Course Objectives:

The primary objective of this 2-credit course is to teach you how to perform a rigorous analysis of a legal problem and express that analysis effectively in writing.

If you devote yourself to doing the best work you can, at the end of the semester 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;
- Revise, edit, and proofread your legal writing; and
- Use AI-generated first drafts where appropriate to increase efficiency, while critically analyzing, fact checking, and editing the same to ensure high-quality end products.

Grading:

There are two major writing assignments in this course: the first is due in mid-semester, while the final assignment is due towards the end of the semester. We will review and critique your submitted assignments, and you will usually have the opportunity to revise your assignments.

Your grade in the class will be determined primarily by your performance on your **final** writing assignment (**WA #5**). This assignment will serve as your ‘final exam’ and will offer you the opportunity to apply the skills you develop during the course.

Timely and satisfactory performance in all class activities and interim assignments is also required. Thus, 50% of your grade is based on the final project, 30% on the second written memo, and 20% on your timely and satisfactory performance on all other written assignments, in-class quizzes, citation and grammar exercises, writing conferences, as well as on your class participation.

50% Final Project (Full Memo of Law)

30% performance on second written memo

20% Participation (includes successful and timely completion of all other assignments and in class exercises)

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 test post-before Tuesday, 1. October, 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 "UFL2024" into the Access Code field. Your discounted price will appear immediately. You need to purchase a one-year subscription.
4. Enter your 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 (which is unique for our section): **324-072-8941**.
6. You will be able to start using CGL immediately. However, before we meet for Week 2 of classes, you should take the Pre-Test (available on a link from the home page or "Bookshelf").

Information on accessing Lexis Citation Workstation:

1. This is a free online platform that tests Bluebook citation proficiency.
2. ICW exercises are tracked online and must be completed no later than the deadlines specified below. For each exercise, you must achieve a minimum score of 70% to receive credit. For each exercise, if you submit your exercise on time and achieve 70% or better, you will receive full credit for that exercise.
3. Prior to beginning the exercises, select me as your instructor to ensure I have access to your certificates of completion. I will also appoint one TA to be the ICW tracker. You will need to add that TA to your account prior to turning in the first ICW.
4. You will have five attempts to answer each question correctly and should strive for 100%. Becoming familiar with the nuances of the Bluebook is critical to becoming a strong legal writer. Be sure you understand why each correct answer is correct. I will re-set each ICW for you only one time. Please request re-sets during business hours and at least 24 hours prior to the due date.

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 Levin College of Law’s mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College’s website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The law school grading policy is available [here](#).

Policy regarding late submission of assignments:

If you turn in a writing assignment, and have not received prior permission from me, the grade on **that assignment** will be lowered by one letter grade for every 24 hours the paper is late. Your FINAL GRADE will be lowered by one step (for example, B+ to B) for every 48 hours any paper is 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.

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 page for this course. 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. 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. We will have some in-class group assignments. However, for the main written assignments, the work you do must be your own. 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. 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 I expressly authorized you to do so. 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.

E. 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.

F. 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.

G. 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.

H. 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.

I. In-Class Recording.

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.

Overview of Major Assignment Deadlines (due via Canvas by 11.59pm on date listed):

August 30	Writing Assignment #1 [Case Description]
September 22	Writing Assignment #2 [Facts and Discussion for Memo 1]
October 4	Writing Assignment #3 [Client Letter for DUI Pedicab Issue]
October 15	Draft Writing Assignment #4 [Question Presented, Brief Answer, Facts & Outline of Discussion for Memo 2]
October 27	Writing Assignment #4 [Memo 2 Final Draft]
November 7	Writing Assignment #5 [Professional E-mail on legal research problem]

November 9 Final Project-Full Memo of Law (follow instructions on how to submit this)

In addition, you will need to complete 5 exercises in the Interactive Citation Workstation (ICW) on Lexis by the following deadlines:

September 17	ICW exercise #1 (case names)
September 24	ICW exercise #2 (case location) & ICW exercise #3 (court & date)
October 6	ICW exercise #5 (short forms of cases)
October 18	ICW exercise 6 (federal statutes) & ICW exercise #13 (signals)

Note that these assignments may be completed ahead of schedule, but they must be completed and submitted by 11.59pm on the deadline. Writing Assignments must be submitted to me in MS-Word compatible format on Canvas **and a copy must be sent to your teaching assistant by e-mail.**

Class Schedule:

Generally, classes will meet Mondays and Wednesdays at 1.15pm in Room 285D Holland Hall.

Note: This is a tentative syllabus - assigned readings and assignment due dates may change. “ALW text” refers to Coughlin et al., *A Lawyer Writes*.

Outline of the Course:

Date	Subject matter & reading assignment	Assignment due
Mon., Aug. 19	How Attorneys Communicate: Intro to Class. Read ALW ch. 1; DUI Pedicab problem on Canvas	
Wed., Aug. 21	Sources and Systems of Law: Read ALW Ch. 2; DUI Pedicab problem on Canvas	
Sun., Aug. 25		Complete Core Grammar for Lawyers Pre-Test (plan for about 90 min.)
Mon., Aug. 26	Bridge from Pedicab to General Analysis. Read: ALW Ch. 3 & 4; Memorandum #1 hypothetical on Canvas; description for Writing Assignment #1.	
Wed., Aug. 28	How to write about a case. Read ALW ch. 7 & Fla. R. App. P. 9.800.	
Fri., Aug. 30		Writing Assignment #1 (case description)
Monday, Sept. 2	Labor Day Holiday – No Class	
Wed., Sept. 4	Synthesizing rules from several cases. Read ALW ch. 5 & 6	
Fri., Sept. 6	Make-up Class. Review case discussion; Introduction to Citation. Read pp. 1-13 in The Bluebook; ALW ch. 7	

Mon., Sept. 9	Legal Memorandum Structure; Introducing 1 st Memo. Read Ch. 4 & 5; Read hypothetical, transcripts, & cases.	
Wed., Sept. 11	One Legal Argument: Rule Explanation. Read ALW Ch. 6 & 7.	
Mon., Sept. 16	Global Intro/Roadmap; Facts Statement. Read ALW Ch. 12 & 14.	Interactive Citation Workstation Exercise 1 (Bluebook)
Wed., Sept. 18	Rule Application. Read ALW ch. 8 & 9. Review requirements of WA#2.	
Sun., Sept. 22		WA#2, Facts & Discussion section of Memo 1.
Mon., Sept. 23	Writing for a different audience: the client letter. Read ch. 17 and description of WA#3, client letter assignment, on Canvas.	Interactive Citation Workstation Exercises 2 & 3 (Bluebook)
Wed., Sept. 25	In-class: Write, do ICWs, or catch up on Core Grammar modules, as needed.	
Mon., Sept. 30	The client letter. Read ALW ch. 17. Review WA#3 – Client Letter on DUI Pedicab issue.	
Tues., Oct. 1		All Core Grammar modules done & Post-Test completed with min. score of 85).
Wed., Oct. 2	Client Letters; Intro of issues for 2 nd Memo; Cases for Memo2.	
Fri., Oct. 4		WA#3 – Client Letter on DUI Pedicab Issue

Sun., Oct. 6		Interactive Citation Workstation Exercise 5 (Bluebook)
Mon., Oct. 7	Review Law & Cases for Memo 2. Read ALW ch. 6 & 7.	
Wed., Oct. 9	Statement of Facts, Question Presented, and Brief Answer for Memo 2. Read ALW ch. 13 & 14. Description of WA#4.	
Fri., Oct. 10, 10:00 a.m., MLAC 100 (courtroom)	Moot Court Final Four competition	Write 150-word reaction
Mon., Oct 14	Writing the Discussion Section for Memo 2; Review law & cases for Memo 2.	
Wed., Oct. 16	Writing the Discussion for Memo 2, continued. Explaining & Applying the Rule.	
Wed., Oct. 16		Draft WA#4 - Question Presented, Brief Answer, Facts Statement & Outline of Discussion for Memo 2
Fri., Oct. 18		Interactive Citation Workstation Exercises 6 & 13 (Bluebook)
Mon., Oct. 21 – Fri., Oct. 25	Individual meetings with Professor regarding details of writing Memo 2	Please meet, so we can discuss your questions. Set up appointments on Canvas.
Mon., Oct. 21	Writing the Discussion for Memo 2, continued. Explaining & Applying the Rule.	

Wed., Oct. 23	NO CLASS: replaced by meetings all week with Professor about Memo 2.	
Sun., Oct. 27		WA#4 – Full Memo 2.
Mon., Oct. 28	Read description of WA#5 on Canvas.	
Wed., Oct. 30	Editing & Polishing. Read ch. 16.	
Mon., Nov. 4	Review materials from Legal Research problem. Writing the professional e-mail. Read ALW ch. 18 and description of WA#5, E-Mail Assignment, on Canvas.	
Wed., Nov. 6	Course Evaluations. Writing the professional e-mail. Read ALW ch. 18 and description of WA#5, E-Mail Assignment, on Canvas. Also: preview of Final Project. Editing & polishing documents	
Thur., Nov. 7		WA#5 – Professional E-mail summarizing legal research problem.
Sat., Nov. 9		Final Project (instructions will be provided)
Mon., Nov. 11	Veterans Day Holiday – No Class	
Wed., Nov. 14	TA Session on Exam-taking & summer job search	