

Lawyering Skills and Strategies

Fall 2014

Professor Merle Morris

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Office Hours: Mon. 1:00-2:30; Wed. 9:30-10:30; 1:00-2:00

Office: 15 D/Suite 15 BLB

Course Information

Course Objectives

Lawyering Skills and Strategies I will focus on an introduction to the American legal system and the skills and strategic planning lawyers must possess to succeed within it. The curriculum will be problem – based, using fact-pattern simulations to enable students to work through actual practice skills and strategies and ethical issues. Training in essential lawyering skills such as oral communication, legal writing, research and analysis will be embedded within fact pattern simulations involving typical transactional issues which students will work through to develop lawyering skills and problem-solving strategies. Students will often be divided into small groups to represent opposing sides of the problem.

Class Attendance

In accordance with the Law Center attendance rules, you may miss no more than five scheduled classes or mandatory class activities. On your sixth absence, I will send you to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for consideration of withdrawal from the Law Center. I reserve the right to count you absent if you are not in the classroom or other specified location ten minutes after the class has begun or if you are not prepared for class.

Quizzes and Ungraded Assignments

Quizzes:

From time to time during the semester and without prior warning, I may give quizzes to test your comprehension of the material. These quizzes may be in the form of written questions during class or an interactive quiz accessed on the computer.

Ungraded Assignments:

During the semester I will assign a number of ungraded assignments that you must complete to my satisfaction. Any work that in my discretion does not reflect a good faith effort will have to be redone to an acceptable standard within a prescribed time; additionally, I may require a rewrite because the assignment needs further work. All ungraded assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Many due dates are reflected in the class syllabus, and other due dates will be announced in class. If you turn in more than one ungraded assignment late, I may lower your course grade by one grade level. Any ungraded assignment not turned in at all will automatically result in a lowering of your course grade one grade level (from a “B” to a “B-“).

Grades

Four Graded Assignments: The following assignments will be graded and constitute the baseline for your course grade, subject to adjustments as identified in this Course Information sheet:

1. **Mini Citation Exam-(10%) Tuesday, October 14, 2014.**
2. **Email Assignment-(10%) Due in class Tuesday, November 4, 2014.**
3. **Final Exam- (20%) Thursday, November 13, 2014.**
4. **Legal Memorandum – (60%) Due Monday, November 24, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in the Lawyering Skills and Strategies Office.**

If you are ill or are otherwise unable to turn in your paper on time, you must notify me in writing prior to the due date to seek an accommodation. If your memo is more than fifteen minutes late and you have not received a prior extension from me, I may reduce your grade on the memo by one letter grade level for the first hour (or part of the hour) that the memo is late. After the first hour, one additional grade reduction may be imposed for every hour the memo is late. For example, if your original memo grade was an A- and you turned in the memo in three hours after the deadline, your memo grade could be reduced to a B-. If your memo is turned in after 5:00 p.m. on the due date, I will not accept it, and your grade on the memo will be an F. I will consider extensions for true emergencies only. **Computer problems, including printer problems, do not constitute emergencies.**

Class Preparedness & Participation:

If you are unprepared for class or do not participate in class, I reserve the right to reduce your final course grade up to a maximum of one grade level (B to B-).

Curve:

UHLC requirements set the average of grades in this LRW section between 2.8 and 3.2. If your final grade this semester is an F, you will be required to repeat this course.

Formatting Guidelines for Assignments

Except for ICW and research exercises, all assignments that I require you to turn in must conform to these specifications:

1. Use Times New Roman 12-point type on white 8 ½ x 11 paper.
2. Double space each assignment and use one-inch margins on all sides.
3. Place page numbers in the bottom center of each page, beginning page numbering on page two.
4. Staple your papers together.
5. Conform to all other requirements stated in the assignment sheet for each assignment.

Course Materials

I will expect you to obtain the following textbooks and materials for use in this course:

☐ **Title:** Interactive Citation Workbook for The Bluebook A Uniform System of Citation

Author: Tracy L. McGaugh Norton, Christine Hunt

Edition: Latest **Year:** 2013 **ISBN:** 9780769864471 **Publisher:** Lexis /Nexis

☐ **Title:** Successful Legal Analysis and Writing: the Fundamentals

Author: Bradley G Clary and Pamela Lysaght

Edition: 3rd **Year:** 2010 or(newest) **ISBN:** 9780314908049 **Publisher:** Thomson Reuters

☐ **Title:** The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation

Author: N/A

Edition: 19th **Year:** 2010 **ISBN:** 9780615361161 **Publisher:** The Harvard Law Review

☐ **Title:** The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style

Author: Bryan A. Garner

Edition: 3rd **YEAR:** 2013 **ISBN:** 9780314289018 **Publisher:** West Academic Publishing

Supplemental Materials Packet– Morris A-1/B-2. Lawyering Skills and Strategies Office

Course Webpage. We will be using a course webpage maintained by The West Education Network (TWEN). The URL is <http://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen/> and you need your Westlaw password to access the webpage. Sign on and enter your e-mail address as soon as possible. The password for our class TWEN page is **YellowBrickRoad**. I will post class materials and information on TWEN on a regular basis and notify you of the postings. You will be responsible for reading the postings. Supplemental materials are also posted on TWEN.

****There may be a separate website associated with several of your textbooks. Please retain the web access card in the textbook for further reference.**

Legal Writing Center

All UHLC students may obtain free individual tutoring at the Legal Writing Center, located in room 14D BLB, just next door to the LRW suite. Several outstanding third-year law students staff the Legal Writing Center. **They will answer your questions on legal writing, research, and citation. They also will be able to help you with basic grammar skills, proper English usage, and sentence/paragraph construction.** You may schedule appointments with the Writing center tutors by calling 713-743-0759 or emailing C.LawLegalWritingCenter@central.uh.edu. Walk-ins are also welcome. Additionally, the Center will email "Writing Tips of the Week" to you. At my discretion, I may require a student to consult with the Legal Writing Center to get assistance on particular areas of weakness the student's work reflects. ***If I require you to consult with the Writing Center and you fail to do so, that failure may result in a reduction of your final grade by one level.***

Honor Code

The Honor Code applies to this class. You are responsible for complying with the Honor Code and for knowing its provisions. If you have questions about a certain activity, please ask me.

Computer Use and Other Disruptions

In accordance with the Law Center's computer use policy, I prohibit computer use in class for anything other than completing activities I direct, taking notes, or accessing previous notes for my class, unless otherwise directed by me. Similarly, to avoid disrupting the class, unless I give you permission, please turn off your cell phone or beeper and avoid talking with your colleagues during class.