Lawyerining Skills and Strategies I (Section B1)

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Course Objectives
Lawyering Skills and Strategies I will focus on an introduction to the American legal system and the underlying skills and strategies lawyers must possess to succeed within it. By working through problems inside and outside of the classroom, you will learn to identify legal issues; gather initial facts from the client; locate and assess the governing law; analyze legal issues within the context of particular fact patterns; cite to the governing law; and write clear and concise documents that communicate your legal analysis. And, in all matters, you will be expected to uphold the ethical and professional standards of a lawyer-in-training.

Required Course Materials
You are required to purchase the following textbooks for use in this course:

- *A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis* (2d ed. 2013), written by Christine Coughlin, Joan Malmud Rocklin, & Sandy Patrick [“Coughlin”];
- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20th ed. 2015), published by the Harvard Law Review Association [“Bluebook”];
- *Interactive Citation Workbook for The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (2015 ed.), written by Tracy McGaugh Norton, Christine Hurt, & Jeffrey D. Jackson [“ICW”]; and


Attendance
The course is scheduled to meet on Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in 211-TUII and on Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in 211-TUII. Please note that certain class periods will be added and/or combined. Any changes to the regularly scheduled meeting time and location for the course will be reflected on the syllabus and/or announced via email.

*Attendance is mandatory.* Attendance will be taken during each class session and individual conference. It is your obligation to ensure that you are counted present. In accordance with the University of Houston Law Center’s attendance policy, you may miss no more than *five* scheduled class sessions during the semester. Thus, on your sixth absence, I will send you to Dean Tennessee (the Associate Dean for Student Services) where the matter of dismissal will be taken under advisement. I reserve the right to count you as absent if you (1) are not in the classroom, or other specified location, ten minutes after the class or conference has begun or (2) fail to consult with a tutor in the Legal Writing Center after I have instructed you to do so.
Conferences
You must attend at least one conference with me this semester. Between November 16, 2015, and November 20, 2015, I will be scheduling individual conferences to discuss the Graded Predictive Memorandum.

If you need to reschedule your conference, please contact me before the originally scheduled conference time. Otherwise, your failure to appear for the scheduled conference will be counted as an absence, and you will not be allowed to reschedule.

Class Preparedness and Participation
You are expected to complete the assigned readings and ungraded exercises before coming to class. I reserve the right to lower your course grade up to a maximum of two grade levels (e.g., from a B+ to a B-) if you habitually fail to prepare for class, participate actively in class, or perform satisfactorily on quizzes. I also reserve the right to lower your course grade up to a maximum of two grade levels if you fail to submit all of your ungraded exercises or complete all of your ICW Problems before the last day of classes on November 24, 2015.

Office Hours
If you have any questions about the course, please ask me. I will have office hours on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., and by appointment. My office is located adjacent to the Lawyering Skills and Strategies Suite in Room 11C-BLB. Any changes to the regularly scheduled office hours will be announced via email.

Legal Writing Center
You may obtain free individual tutoring at the Legal Writing Center (“Center”). The Center is located adjacent to the Lawyering Skills and Strategies Suite in Room 14D-BLB. Several outstanding third-year law students staff the Center. They are able to help you with legal writing, legal research, and citation issues as well as style and usage questions. You may schedule an appointment with a tutor by emailing C_LawLegalWritingCenter@central.uh.edu or calling 713-743-0759. Walk-ins are also welcome. At my discretion, I may require you to visit the Center for additional assistance. If I require you to visit the Center and you fail to do so, that failure will be counted as an absence.

Online Legal Research Training
Online legal research is an important component of this course. You will be given passwords for Bloomberg Law, LexisNexis, O’Connor’s Online, and Westlaw. You will attend a mandatory training session for Lexis Advance this semester and a mandatory training session for Bloomberg Law next semester.

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. After you register your Westlaw password, sign on to TWEN and add this course webpage. The course webpage is named Lawyering Skills and Strategies I (Section B1).

On the “Syllabus” page, I will post a copy of the course information sheet and syllabus. In the “Handouts” folder, you will find supplemental readings and instruction sheets. And, on the “Course Materials” page, I will post the PowerPoint presentations and exercises that we cover in class. You will use the “Sign-Up Sheets” page to schedule an individual conference with me this semester.
You need to check the course webpage regularly because I will assume that you are aware of the material I post on it and I will not spend class-time repeating what you should already know.

### Quizzes, Ungraded Exercises, and ICW Problems

#### 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. The habitual failure to perform satisfactorily on such quizzes may result in a lowering of your course grade by two grade levels.

#### Ungraded Exercises
Throughout the semester, I will assign a number of ungraded exercises which you must complete to my satisfaction. Any work that in my discretion does not reflect a good faith effort will have to be redone or rewritten to an acceptable standard within a prescribed time. A hard copy of all exercises should be submitted by the end of class on the due date, unless otherwise stated. Be sure to retain a copy of your ungraded exercises. The failure to submit all ungraded exercises by the last day of classes this semester may result in the lowering of your course grade by two grade levels.

#### ICW Problems
To practice your citation skills, you must complete the Interactive Citation Workstation (ICW) Problems as assigned in the syllabus. You will access ICW through Lexis Advance. Be sure you do the Bluebook exercises, not the ALWD exercises. Please email your results to me at wwheard@central.uh.edu and submit a hard copy of the Completion Certificate at the beginning of class on the due date. If you experience any technical difficulties accessing or completing the ICW Problems, contact me or LexisNexis for assistance. The failure to complete all ICW Problems by the last day of classes this semester may result in a lowering of your course grade by two grade levels.

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

- **Legal Citation Exam (20%)** – Given at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 26, 2015.
- **Graded Email (30%)** – Due by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, November 9, 2015.
- **Graded Predictive Memorandum (50%)** – Due by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, November 23, 2015.

One of the skills you need to master is how to budget and manage your time. If your Graded Email is more than fifteen minutes late, I may deduct 5% of the total points (1.5 points) for the first hour (or part of the hour) that the assignment is late. If your Graded Predictive Memorandum is more than fifteen minutes late, I may deduct 5% of the total points (2.5 points) for the first hour (or part of the hour) that the assignment is late. After the first hour, I may deduct an additional 5% of the total points for every hour that the assignment is late. If your Email or Memorandum is submitted after 5:00 p.m. on the due date, I will not accept it, and your course grade will be an “F.” Additionally, if you do not sit for the Legal Citation Exam, you will receive an “F” in this course. If you receive an “F” in Lawyering Skills and Strategies I, you will be required to repeat the course.

If you are unable to complete a graded assignment by the due date or if you are unable to sit for the Legal Citation Exam when it is scheduled, you must contact me before the due date or exam date to seek an extension. I will consider extensions for true emergencies only. Be advised: computer problems, including printer problems, as well as routine illnesses do not constitute true emergencies.
Please note that the Law Center uses an anonymous-grading system to ensure fairness in grading. You will be assigned an exam number this semester to use instead of your name on the Exam, Email, and Memorandum. Your name should not appear anywhere in your Exam, Email, or Memorandum, and you should not share your exam number with me before the release of final grades.

**Curve**
The Law Center uses a mandatory distribution and a grading curve for this course. The average grade in each section must be between 2.8 and 3.2.

**Formatting Requirements**
*Except for ICW Problems*, all exercises and assignments you submit must conform to these specifications:
- Use Times New Roman, 12-point type, on white letter-size (8 ½” x 11”) paper.
- Double space each assignment.
- Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- Place page numbers in the bottom center of each page, starting on the second page.
- Print on one side of each page only.
- Staple your paper in top left corner.
- Adhere to all other requirements stated in the instruction sheet.

**Honor Code**
The Honor Code applies to this class. Students are responsible for knowing its provisions and complying with them.


**Computer Use and Other Disruptions**
In accordance with the University of Houston Law Center’s computer use policy, located at [http://www.law.uh.edu/student/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf](http://www.law.uh.edu/student/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf), I prohibit computer use in the classroom for anything other than completing activities as directed, taking notes, or accessing course materials. Also, to avoid disrupting the class, please turn off all cell phones and similar devices, unless I have given you permission.