Lawyering Skills & Strategies – Fall 2015

Professor Brem’s First Day Assignments

Welcome to law school and the University of Houston Law Center. In LSS, rather than learning law in the abstract, you will learn how to use the law as you will when you are a practicing attorney. This results in several immediate benefits to you:

• you will learn skills that make you a better law student;
• you will prepare writing samples necessary for judicial internship and law firm summer clerkship applications; and
• you will learn and hone the research, writing, and oral communications skills employers demand, whether you pursue a litigation- or transaction-based practice.

I look forward to meeting each of you. Until then, please complete the following tasks before our first class meeting:

1. Read How to Brief a Case, available online and in Brem’s Supplemental Reading Packet (Tab 1) and Coughlin pp. 33-35; 43-56
   • I recommend reading these early. They are targeted to the first goal set forth above and will help you to streamline the required reading in your other classes.

2. Read Coughlin, A Lawyer Writes, Chapter 1 pp. 3-13.
   • This succinctly describes the LSS fall syllabus.

   • This provides a brief overview of the U.S. legal system. While much of this may seem like mere “background” material to you, it is crucial that you thoroughly understand where law comes from and how much weight you should give it. These concepts are essential to understanding legal analysis in the common law system.
   • Before coming to class, you should be able to differentiate between primary and secondary authority, and binding and persuasive authority.

4. Finally, obtain your access code to Core Grammar for Lawyers from Rose Verde, our assistant in the LSS office suite. Go to coregrammarforlawyers.com and take the Pre-Test prior to our first day of class.
   a. Activate your subscription and enter this exact Class Code, which is unique for our section: 315-209-2986
   b. Once your subscription is activated, you are ready to begin.
      i. The first step is to open the Pre-Test by clicking on the link on the home page, called your “Bookshelf”.
      ii. Set aside from 45-90 minutes to answer the Pre-Test questions to the best of your ability (it took me about 45 minutes; the program suggests you set aside 90 minutes). Please do not consult outside resources - it is a closed book exam.
iii. Please be aware, THIS EXAM IS NOT FOR A GRADE. In fact, you will find that, while it
tests you on some basic grammar rules, it will also test you on many unique to the legal
field that will be new to you. If I could knock these out of the Pre-Test, I would. If you
come across something that is completely new to you, simply skip over it to save time –
the purpose of the Pre-Test is to enable you to skip lessons later in the semester about
grammar that you already know.

Please do not be discouraged if you encounter grammar questions that seem completely foreign to you.
Consider them an introduction to the legal writing style all lawyers employ. You, too, will be familiar with these
rules before you complete this class.

This grammar program is vitally important to achieving the second and third goals set forth above –
preparing professional writing samples for judicial internship and summer clerkship applications, and perfecting
the legal writing skills employers will demand throughout the whole of your practice.

Enjoy your last few days of summer and I'll see you in class Tuesday, August 25!

Regards,

Professor Katherine Brem