

LEGAL SKILLS AND STRATEGIES SYLLABUS - FALL 2017
Professor Hilary Stirman Reed

Professor Reed's Contact Information

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Class Home Page

You can access the Class Home Page at <http://lawschool.westlaw.com>.
Enter your Westlaw password and click on the TWEN link.

Please use your official University of Houston email when you register for TWEN. You are responsible for *regularly* checking the e-mail account you register with TWEN and the Class Home Page for postings and announcements.

Required Texts and Readings and Materials

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 20th ed. 2015) (the "Bluebook").

Laurel Currie Oates and Anne Enquist, Just Memos: Preparing for Practice (4th ed.).

The Greenbook, Texas Rules of Form (13th ed. 2015).

2017-2018 Course Rules and Regulations and Reed Local Rules

Handouts, web links, and other material posted on TWEN

Recommended Texts

Texas Law Review Manual on Usage & Style (13th ed. 2015).

Tracy McGaugh Norton, The Interactive Citation Workbook (2017).

Course Description

This class will teach students how to perform legal research, writing, and analysis. Students will learn how to identify, use, and analyze primary and secondary legal authorities to solve legal problems and how to structure and draft legal memoranda and briefs.

Graded Assignments

1. Closed Memorandum (10% of Course Grade)

The Closed Memorandum is released on September 9, and due on September, 22.

2. Email Assignment (10% of Course Grade)

The graded email assignment will be released on the morning of October, 17 and due that evening. More details forthcoming.

3. LRW Exam (15% of Course Grade)

This exam will be given on Tuesday, October 24. The exam format will be multiple choice and will cover the Bluebook legal citation rules, the U.S. legal system, and the weight of legal authorities.

4. Open-Library Office Memorandum (55% of Course Grade)

The instructions will be distributed on Friday, October 27, and the memorandum is due on Monday, November 20.

5. Open Memo Research Presentation (5% of Course Grade)

Shortly after the Open Memo is released, you will do a simulated “partner presentation,” no longer than ten minutes, in my office where you will briefly explain the rules, applicable case law, and analysis of the memo to me. You will be graded on the thoroughness of your research and analysis. This meeting will also ensure that you are on track with your research.

6. Professionalism and Exercise Completion (5% of Course Grade)

As future attorneys, I expect you to demonstrate professionalism in this class. This means coming to class and to meetings with me on time and prepared, participating in class discussions, avoiding using Facebook, Twitter, iChat, and similar programs in class when we are using laptops, making a good faith effort on ungraded assignments, and showing respect for me, your TAs, and other students during class and in any email or other communications. In addition, an important part of your professionalism grade will be timely completion of and *making a good faith effort on* any exercises I ask you to do. Unexcused failure in any regard will result in a loss of professionalism points.

Ungraded Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will receive several research and writing assignments that will not be formally graded. You must make a good faith effort on these assignments and complete them on time. If you fail to do either of these things, you may receive a grade penalty or receive an incomplete for the class.

1. Westlaw and Lexis Training

Westlaw, Lexis and Bloomberg are the largest providers of online legal research services. Your future employers will expect you to be proficient in using these services, and proficiency will help you maximize your research efforts for assignments in this course. Representatives from each provider will conduct training sessions during the semester. You are required to attend one presentation per provider.

Other Ungraded Assignments:

- Writing exercises
- Research exercises
- Citation exercises- Interactive Citation Workbook (ICW)- These exercises are available at www.lexisnexis.com/icw. Attempt the exercises online.

Turnitin Anti-Plagiarism Software

This course requires the electronic submission of your written assignments (graded or ungraded) through the plagiarism detection service Turnitin (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Turnitin is an online plagiarism detection service that conducts textual similarity reviews of submitted papers. When papers are submitted to Turnitin, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted work. The use of Turnitin is subject to the Terms of Use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Please Note

1. The use of laptop computers in class is a privilege, not a right. Students will be asked to close their laptops and give their full attention during many class sessions. Please have pen and paper available for note-taking during these times. The use of a computer or any other communication device in class for activities or purposes unrelated to the course causes a significant distraction for other students and severely disrupts the ability of students to participate fully in class. Therefore, improper use of a computer during class (including, but not limited to, composing, sending, or reading emails; instant messaging; searching or browsing the Internet; playing games; and/or viewing movies) may, at the discretion of Professor Reed, result in dismissal from the class session and/or a reduction in your final grade.

2. The syllabus is subject to change upon notice in class and/or via TWEN postings and emails.

3. If specific Writing Assignment Instructions conflict with Reed Local Rules, the Writing Assignment Instructions control.

4. Policy regarding timely submission of assignments and back up of documents: As

an attorney, you will be expected to maintain back-up copies of your files to protect against loss, theft, or file corruption. Similarly, as a student, you are expected to implement an appropriate data management plan to protect your files from loss, theft, or corruption. Many free services exist that will back up your files to remote servers and maintain prior versions of your files to prevent data loss. Examples include Dropbox (<http://www.dropbox.com>), GoogleDrive (<https://drive.google.com>), and SkyDrive (<https://skydrive.live.com>). You are expected to turn your assignments in on time in this class, and you will be subject to a late penalty for not doing so. It is not a valid excuse for untimely submission of an assignment that your files were lost, stolen, or corrupted. If you have used these back-up services, the burden will be on you to prove why your assignment cannot be submitted on time. Such proof may include a requirement that you produce the change/history logs from your data protection service.

SCHEDULE

ICW refers to Interactive Citation Workstation exercises, available on LexisNexis. I will explain in class how to access and complete your ICW exercises. TCB refers to The Citation Book, which is available on our TWEN page.

Week 1, August 21

Class 1:

Introduction to LSS and Briefing Cases

Read: Just Memos: 1-10, skim 11-14. Read course Syllabus (posted on TWEN). **Have available either a print or electronic copy of the Syllabus, Course Rules and Regulations, and Reed Local Rules.** Read “Do Law Students Become Worse Writers?” (posted on TWEN). Read Motorized Cooler Hypo (TWEN).

Class 2:

Case Analysis and the Role of Precedent; IRAC; Comparing and Distinguishing Cases

Read: Just Memos 47-62.
Read and brief: In re Mustafa and In re Sobin cases on TWEN.

Week 2, August 28

Class 1:

Rule Synthesis and Fact Analysis

Read: Just Memos: 77-84.

Class 2:

Introduction to the Bluebook

Read: TCB chapters 1 and 2. Bluebook pages 1-4.

Bring materials for tabbing Bluebook to class.

We will also discuss the ICW exercises that are assigned and will be due during Week 3. Do not attempt to do the ICWs before this class.

Week 3, September 4

- Class 1: ICW Q & A, Predictive Memoranda and Case Analysis.
Read: Just Memos: 87-105, TCB Chapters 3&4, Example Closed Memorandum Assignment Case, Cochran, posted on TWEN.
- Class 2: More on Predictive Memos
Read: Example Closed Memo Cases Yurick and McDaniel, Sample Memo posted on TWEN

NOTE: Email Certificates for ICW Exercises 1, 2, 3, and 5 due no later than 5:00 p.m., Thursday, September 7.

NOTE: Closed Library Office Memo distributed 9/8, due 9/22 at 5:00 p.m. on TWEN.

Week 4, September 11

- Class 1: **Organizing the Discussion Section; Outlining; Practicing Rules and Rule Explanation Paragraphs.**
Read: Just Memos Chapter 7; all materials related to your closed memo assignment.
- Class 2: **Components of an Office Memorandum; Drafting the Caption, Issue Statement, and Brief Answer, Statement of Facts, Conclusion.**

Week 5, September 18

- Class 1: **Components of an Office Memorandum; Drafting the Caption, Issue Statement, and Brief Answer, Statement of Facts, Conclusion, continued.**

Class 2: **Closed Memo Q & A; Writing Tips, Editing Exercise
Bluebook—Punctuation and Quotations, Numbers and
Symbols**
Read: Course Rules and Regulations and Reed Local Rules
(posted on TWEN)
Read TCB Chapters 9&10.

Closed Memo is due 9/22 at 5 p.m. You must turn in an electronic copy on TWEN.

Week 6, September 25

NOTE: ICW exercises 6 and 7 due at 5 p.m. on 9/28 at 5:00 p.m.
**NOTE: I will also be assigning research units online through our online
providers.**

Class 1: **More on the American Legal System, Hierarchy of
Authority; Mandatory v. Persuasive Authority.**
Read: Just Memos: chapters 2 and 3.
Bring laptop to class for all of the research weeks.

Class 2: **Legal Research**
First Amendment Problem
Bring laptop for online research activity in class.

Class preparation: Research Tutorials- TBA.

Week 7, October 2

Class 1: **Legal Research**
Copyright Problem
Bring laptop for online research activity in class.

Class preparation: Research Tutorials- TBA.

Class 2: **Legal Research**
Employment Contract
Bring laptop for online research activity in class.

Class preparation: Research Tutorials- TBA.

Week 8, October 9

Class 1: **Bluebook: String Citations, Signals and Parentheticals**
Read: TBA
Bring your Bluebook to class.

Class 2: **Legal Communications and Email Memos**
Read: TBA

NOTE: ICW exercises 12, 13 and 15 due at 5 p.m. on Oct. 12th.

Week 9, October 16

Class 1: **Graded Email Assignment**

Class 2: **Citation Quiz Review**
Bring your Bluebook to class.

Week 10, October 23

Class 1: **Citation and Hierarchy of Authority Quiz**

Class 2: **Closed Memo Rewrite Feedback; Preparing for the Open Memo.**
Read Example Open Memo Materials posted on TWEN.

Open Memo Assignment Distributed on October 27, due November 11.

Week 11, October 30

Note: Attend Mandatory Research Presentations.

Class 1: Organizing Your Research and Preparing for Research Presentations
Reading: TBA

Class 2: Structure of the Open Memo- Drafting and Editing Exercises
Reading: TBA

Week 12, November 6

Class 1: More on the Open Memo; Drafting and Editing Exercises
Reading: TBA

Class 2: More on the Open Memo; Drafting and Editing Exercises
Reading: TBA

Week 13, November 13

Note: Attend Conferences with Professor Reed. Signups will be posted on TWEN and announced in class. Bring a hardcopy of your draft with you.

Class 1: No Class- Instead Attend Mandatory Professor Conferences

Class 2: No Class- Instead Attend Mandatory Professor Conferences

Week 14, November 20

Open Memo due no later than 8:30 a.m., Monday, November 20th.

LSS ends for the fall semester!

I reserve the right to change this Syllabus. All changes will be announced by email and/or in class.