

Lawyering Skills & Strategies 1
Sections B2 & C2
Fall 2019

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1. Overview and Course Objectives

Welcome to your first semester of law school, and to Lawyering Skills & Strategies 1 (LSS 1). In this course, you will learn the basic workings of the American legal system; how to analyze and apply legal sources; and other skills you need to succeed in law school and beyond, with a strong focus on research and writing. To accomplish these goals, you will draft documents; work through legal problems inside and outside the classroom; review texts about effective writing; and engage in simulation exercises. More specifically, the course objectives for LSS 1 and 2 include:

1	Understanding the sources, hierarchy, and precedential value of laws.
2	Ability to distinguish different types of legal rules, to dissect legal rules into their basic components, and to synthesize a unified rule of law from disparate sources.
3	Proficiency in identifying issues applicable to the client's case.
4	Effective execution of on-line legal research and selection of authority to address issues in the client's case.
5	Proficiency in understanding and applying case precedent to the client's case.
6	Proficiency in understanding and applying enacted law to the client's case.
7	Ability to translate legal research and analysis into an objective writing that is organized effectively, conveys all relevant and required substance clearly and concisely, and omits extraneous matters.
8	Ability to translate legal research and analysis into a persuasive writing that is organized effectively; conveys all relevant and required substance clearly, concisely, and strategically; and omits extraneous matters. This course objective will be covered in the spring semester.

9	Exposure to the considerations underlying contract negotiation and drafting to address the client's needs effectively.
10	Introduction to the general principles for legal citation, proficiency in <i>Bluebook</i> citation for cases and statutes, and proficiency in <i>Greenbook</i> citation for cases. The <i>Greenbook</i> citation system will be covered in the spring semester.
11	Proficiency in using correct grammar and punctuation regardless of the document or communication drafted.
12	Awareness of how the topics discussed and assignments given in the course fit into the practice of law.
13	Awareness of ethical and professional issues in practice.

2. Course Materials

You are required to purchase the following textbooks and resources:

- Christine Coughlin et al., *A Lawyer Writes* (3rd ed. 2018). A used copy is adequate. Please do make sure you obtain the 2018 edition.
- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20th ed. 2015). This will be a resource for the entire year and beyond, so I recommend that you buy a new (or “like new”) copy.

I recommend the following materials as optional resources (the books will be placed on reserve in the library):

- Tracy McGaugh Norton et al., *Interactive Citation Workbook for the Bluebook* (2019 ed.).
- *Manual on Usage & Style* (14th ed. 2017), published by the Texas Law Review Association.
- *The Elements of Style: Simplified and Illustrated for Busy People*, William Strunk, Jr. & Virginia Campbell, available on Amazon.
- *Core Grammar for Lawyers*, available at www.coregrammarforlawyers.com.
- Free grammar exercises by the Purdue Online Writing Lab, available at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/index.html.
- The free writing assistant Grammarly, available at <https://www.grammarly.com/>.

I will post additional course materials on 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 course webpage Lawyering Skills & Strategies – 2019-2020 – Gomez.

3. Assignments and Grading

Graded Assignments:

The following assignments constitute the baseline for your grade for this course, subject to adjustments identified in this information sheet:

- **Closed Universe Memorandum – 15%**
- **In-Class Email Assignment – 10%**
- **In-Class LSS Exam (Multiple Choice) – 15%**
- **Open Universe Memorandum – 55%**
- **Ungraded Assignments and Professionalism – 5%**

If a graded assignment is not turned in by the deadline, I may deduct 10% of your total points during each hour that your assignment is late, starting with the first hour. So, if your assignment is due at 10 am on a given day, I may deduct 10% if you submit it at 10:05 am on the due date, 20% if you submit it at 11:05 am, etc.

If you are unable to complete a graded assignment by the deadline, you must contact me *before* the due date to seek an extension. ***I will consider extensions for emergencies only.*** Computer problems, routine illnesses, and assignments for other classes do not qualify as emergencies. If any deadlines present major difficulties for multiple students because of proximity to midterm exams or similar academic obligations, please inform me as soon as you become aware of the problem. The sooner you let me know, the more likely it is that we can work out a fair solution.

UHLC uses an anonymous grading system to ensure fairness in grading. Your name should not appear anywhere on the graded assignments, and you must remove personal metadata from your assignments in accordance with the instructions provided below. You should not give me your exam number, and you should take care to avoid providing information on graded assignments that may identify you.

Ungraded Assignments and Professionalism:

Throughout the semester, I will assign exercises to be completed during or outside class. I may also give quizzes during class, without notice. While these exercises and quizzes are ungraded, their satisfactory completion, along with professionalism, accounts for 5% of your grade. Moreover, because these assignments are mandatory, failure to complete any of them may result in not passing this course.

Curve, Grade Distribution, and Honor Code:

This course is subject to a mandatory grading curve. The average grade in each section must be between 2.8 and 3.2.

Additionally, this course is subject to the mandatory first-year grade distribution:

A	0-10%
A-	5-15%
B+	15-25%
B	25-35%
B-	15-25%
C+	5-15%
C or below	0-10%

The UHLC Honor Code applies to this class. <http://www.law.uh.edu/student/HONOR-CODE-AND-PROCEDURES.pdf>. Students are responsible for knowing its provisions and complying with them. Please direct any questions regarding the Honor Code's applications to specific activities to me.

Formatting Requirements:

Unless instructed otherwise, all assignments must conform to these specifications:

- Use Times New Roman, 12-point type, on white letter-size paper.
- Double-space each assignment, except for headings.
- Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- Place page numbers in the bottom center of each page.
- Adhere to any other instructions provided for an assignment.

Remove Metadata:

To safeguard anonymity, you must scrub each graded assignment of metadata that could identify you by taking the following steps immediately before submitting it:

- Under "File" (typically at the top left of your screen when you are in Word), click the "Check for Issues" box.
- Click "Inspect Document."
- Click "Yes" when asked if you want to save changes.
- Click "Inspect."
- If the inspection reveals that data were found under "Document Properties and Personal Information" (it probably will), click "Remove All."

4. Class Attendance and Conferences

Section B2 meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 – 10:30 am, and Section C2 meets on Tuesdays from 2:30 – 4 pm and Thursdays from 10:30 am – noon. All classes are in classroom BLB 213. Please note that certain class periods may be combined. Any changes to the regularly scheduled meeting time and location will be announced via email and/or in class.

You must also attend two mandatory individual conferences with me to discuss your outline or draft of each of the two memorandums you will prepare. You will sign up for these conferences

though TWEN; I will let you know during class when the sign-up sheets will become live. You may only sign up for one conference time slot per assignment. If you need additional assistance, I maintain office hours as described below.

You may also attend a group research conference (optional) in preparation for the open memo assignment near the end of the semester. You will sign up for the group conferences via TWEN as well; I will let you know during class when the sign-up sheets will become live.

Attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance during each class session and conference. Excessive unexcused absences may impact your grade. Additionally, under UHLC's attendance policy, you may miss no more than 20% of scheduled class sessions during the semester. If you exceed this percentage, I will notify the Associate Dean for Student Services, which could result in your dismissal from the class. I reserve the right to count you as absent if you are not present ten minutes after the class or conference has begun or if you need to leave more than 10 minutes early.

5. Laptops and Electronic Devices

We will regularly use laptops for in-class exercises, so please bring a laptop to every class. However, I ask that you keep your laptops closed until prompted to open them, as it helps to facilitate learning and reduce distraction. Make sure to have pen and paper available for each class for notetaking. The PowerPoints from each class will be posted to TWEN, so your notetaking can be minimized.

Consistent with UHLC's computer use policy, 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 result in dismissal from the class session or a reduction in your final grade.

<http://www.law.uh.edu/jd/current/handbook.pdf>.

Unless you are instructed otherwise, please turn off cell phones and similar devices.

6. Office Hours

My office hours are on Mondays from 9:30 to 10:30 am, Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am, and Thursdays from 12 to 1 pm. If you would like to meet outside office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment. I will not hold office hours during the weeks in which we have individual conferences.

7. Legal Writing Center

An excellent resource for free individual tutoring is the Legal Writing Center, located in the library near the circulation desk. The Center is staffed with outstanding second- and third-year law students who can help you with legal writing, legal research, citation, and style and usage. Note, however, that the writing fellows are prohibited from assisting you with any graded

assignments before you submit them. You can schedule an appointment with a writing fellow by emailing C_LawLegalWritingCenter@central.uh.edu or by calling 713-743-0759. Walk-ins are also welcome.

8. Accessibility and Accommodations

UHLC is committed to ensuring that all students enjoy equal access and full participation. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on a disability (including any chronic or temporary medical or mental health condition), feel free to reach out to me so that we can discuss options. If you require any support services, you may contact Samantha Ary, Academic Records Coordinator. Ms. Ary's office is in the Office of Student Services suite, and she can be reached at sary@central.uh.edu or 713-743-7466. Requests for accommodation that involve graded assignments must be directed to Ms. Ary and should be made as soon as possible to allow adequate time to process the request.

If you observe religious or cultural holidays that coincide with LSS 1 class meetings, please let me know as far in advance as possible, so that I can ensure that the class is recorded for you.

9. Chosen Names and Preferred Pronouns

I want to address each of you in a manner that corresponds to your identity. Although mistakes happen, chosen names and preferred pronouns—including non-binary ones such as they / them / their—must be respected in my classroom. Feel free to reach out to me at any time if you want to make me aware of your chosen name or preferred pronoun, or if you have concerns about how I or your classmates address you.

10. Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling and psychological services (CAPS) is available to help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. www.uh.edu/caps. You can reach CAPS by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is needed for the “Let’s Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service held at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

The Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program (TLAP) also supports law students who are dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health problems. You can reach TLAP at any time at 1-800-343-8527. TLAP’s website includes a page with links to sources about mental health that are of interest to law students: <https://www.tlaphelps.org/law-students>.