Welcome to the University of Houston Law Center ("UHLC") and to my class! I have two pieces of advice for my LSS students:

- **Start early and get ahead on you reading for the fall.** Start early on your assignments, too. The fall semester—being filled with the many basics of legal study and practice and, frankly, being just so new and different—gets very busy very quickly. So getting ahead of schedule will serve you well, especially as the semester progresses and exams approach. Do it if at all possible.

- **The more effort that you put into this course, the more that you will get out of it.** I strive to give each student detailed feedback on every assignment, graded or not. The more developed your submitted assignments are, the more commentary I can give on them, and the better they will serve as teaching tools tailored to your individual needs. I also provide optional assignments and resources, available on my LSS I web course (maintained by The West Education Network, or “TWEN”), for students to sharpen their skills. I am happy to give feedback on any of these that you complete, so consider doing them if you can.

**B. Course Objectives (i.e., Learning Outcomes)**

Lawyering Skills and Strategies I will focus on an introduction to the American legal system and the underlying skills and strategies that lawyers must possess to succeed within it. By working through fact-specific problems both inside and outside the classroom, students will learn to identify legal issues; to locate and to assess the governing law; to communicate with the client; to analyze legal issues within the context of particular fact patterns; to cite to the governing law; and to write clear and concise documents that reflect that legal analysis or that address the client’s transactional needs.

More specifically, the following 13 objectives apply to this LSS course in both semesters (unless otherwise indicated):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Understanding of sources, hierarchy, and precedential value of laws</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Proficiency in identifying issues applicable to the client’s case</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Effective execution of on-line legal research and selection of authority to address issues in the client’s case</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Proficiency in understanding and applying case precedent to the client’s case</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Proficiency in understanding and applying enacted law to the client’s case</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>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 [Objective 8 applies only during the spring 2020 semester.]</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Exposure to the considerations underlying contract negotiation and drafting to address the client’s needs effectively</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Introduction to the general principles for legal citation, proficiency in <em>Bluebook</em> citation for cases and statutes, and proficiency in <em>Greenbook</em> citation for cases [ <em>Greenbook</em> citation applies only during the spring 2020 semester.]</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Proficiency in using correct grammar and punctuation regardless of the document or communication drafted</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Awareness of how the topics discussed and assignments given in the course fit into the practice of law</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Awareness of ethical and professional issues in practice</td>
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C. Course Textbooks

Following are the texts required for my class for the fall 2019 semester:

- Tracy L. McGaugh & Christine Hurt, *Interactive Citation Workbook for The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (2018 edition, or latest edition)
- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20th edition [2015], or latest edition)
- Kamela Bridges & Wayne Scheiss, *Writing for Litigation* (1st ed. 2011)

Special notes:

- Please pay close attention to the edition specified for each textbook. At least two of my required text editions are not the most current edition, which I’ve done purposefully to save students money.
- We will use all of the above-listed texts in the spring semester, as well, *except* for Stark. *Therefore, you will need to retain all of your textbooks (except for Stark) for the spring semester.* (However, the Stark textbook is an exceptional practical guide that is handy for contract-drafting, and you may decide to keep it for reference in your future practice.)
- Unless otherwise instructed, please bring to every class (1) your laptop; (2) your Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg Law passwords; and (3) your copy of *The Bluebook* and ICW Workbook (starting with Class 9).

D. Office Hours and Contact Information

If you have any questions about the course or class assignments, please feel free to ask me. I will have office hours on Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. and by appointment. My office is located inside the Lawyering Skills and Strategies office suite. Any changes to my regularly scheduled office hours will be announced by email and posted on the TWEN web course calendar. My office phone is 713-743-2159, but I prefer for students to contact me through my office email, which is ljsimpso@central.uh.edu. I will also provide you my cell phone number on the first day of class, which I request that you not distribute beyond your LSS class.

E. Class Attendance and Absences

This class is held on Mondays and Thursdays from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in classroom 211 TU2. Any changes to the regularly scheduled meeting time and location for the class are reflected in the syllabus or will be announced by email and posted on the TWEN web course calendar. Each student will also have to attend two mandatory conferences with me during the semester,
one before each graded assignment is due. Failure to attend a mandatory conference counts as
a class absence.

In accordance with UHLC attendance rules, you may miss no more than five scheduled classes
or mandatory class activities (e.g., a conference). On the sixth absence, you must report to the
Associate Dean for Student Services, where the matter of dismissal will be taken under
advisement. If you are not in the classroom or other specified location within 15 minutes after
the class or presentation is scheduled to begin or if you come unprepared to participate, I
reserve the right to count you absent.

F. Class Preparedness

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

G. Grading and Graded Assignments

Curve and Grade Distribution: UHLC requirements set the average of grades in this LSS class
between 2.8 and 3.2. A mandatory grade distribution also applies to this class, the specifics of
which will be shared later in the semester.

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. Graded Law-Firm Memo—(55% of grade) due Thursday, November 7, 2019, at 6:00
   p.m.

2. Citation Exam (open Bluebook)—(10% of grade) on Thursday, November 14, 2019,
   from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

3. Graded Contract—(30% of grade) due Monday, November 25, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

4. Professionalism (5% of your final grade)—Professionalism includes keeping scheduled
   appointments with the professor (unless prior notice of cancellation is given), being
   prepared for class, participating fully in class exercises, and treating classmates and the
   professor respectfully.
One of the skills you need to master in law school is how to budget and to manage your time. If your Graded Law-Firm Memo or Graded Contract is turned in after 6:14:59 p.m. on the due date, I may deduct the following points for each hour (or part of an hour) that the document is late:

- **Graded Law-Firm Memo**: 4 points
- **Graded Contract**: 3 points

(Student grades for these assignments can be very close, so the loss of even a few points can make a significant difference in your curved grade.) If your Graded Law-Firm Memo or Graded Contract is submitted after 11:59:59 p.m. on the due date, I will not accept it, and your LSS I course grade will be an “F.”

If you are seriously ill or are otherwise unable to turn in your Graded Law-Firm Memo or Graded Contract on time, you must notify me in writing prior to the due date to seek an extension. I will consider extensions for true emergencies only. The following are non-exhaustive examples of things that do **not** constitute true emergencies: computer problems (including, but not limited to, printer problems), internet problems, routine illnesses, and job-related matters. I include job-related matters as non-emergencies simply to be fair to all students because each of you carries a heavy work load at his or her job.

Please note that UHLC uses a blind-grading system to ensure fairness in grading. Your name should not appear anywhere on any of your graded assignments. Instead, you will be assigned an exam number each semester. You are responsible for obtaining your fall exam number before the first graded assignment (the Graded Law-Firm Memo) is distributed.

### H. Ungraded Assignments

Writing Assignments: During the semester, I will assign two ungraded writing assignments. The course syllabus and TWEN web course calendar indicate the time and date by which each assignment is due. I generally grant reasonable extensions requested in advance and will review assignments submitted after the deadline with my permission. In contrast, I reserve the right not to review or to give feedback on any ungraded assignment turned in late without my prior permission. I will not deduct from your final grade if you do not complete one or more of the course’s ungraded writing assignments. However, those who do not do these assignments will neither receive my feedback (which is extensive) nor get needed writing practice, both of which will place them at a **significant** disadvantage to those who have turned in their assignments.

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1 For example, a Graded Law-Firm Memo that is turned in after 6:14:59 p.m. but by or before 7:14:59 p.m. on the due date is subject to a 4-point deduction. A Graded Law-Firm Memo that is submitted after 7:14:59 p.m. on the due date is subject to an 8-point deduction: 4 points for the hour spanning from 6:15 p.m. to 7:14:59 p.m., and 4 more points for the hour starting at 7:15 p.m.
Interactive Citation Workbook (“ICW”) Exercises: To help you practice your Bluebook citation skills, I will assign certain ICW on-line citation exercises, for which you will receive instructions at the start of the semester. Be sure that you do the Bluebook exercises, not the ALWD exercises. ICW exercises should be completed by the end of the day on the due date. Please ensure that you select the option for your ICW results to be emailed to me at ljsimpso@central.uh.edu. If you experience any technical difficulties accessing or completing the problems, please contact me or LexisNexis for assistance.

I will not deduct from your final grade if you do not complete one or more ICW exercises. However, proper citation form is a component of the Graded Law-Firm Memo, and you will also take a final citation exam. It will be impossible to do well on these graded components (or to cite well enough for law practice and scholarly writing on a journal or law review, for that matter) if you do not practice legal citation. Additionally, throughout the semester, I use my students’ ICW answers as a diagnostic tool, providing in-class citation tips and practice on areas that are difficult for the majority of students. If students do not do the ICW exercises in a timely fashion, then I cannot see where the class needs help, and I cannot help the class improve its citation skills. For these reasons, all students should complete the ICW exercises in a timely fashion.

I. Submission and Formatting Guidelines for Assignments

Except for ICW citation exercises, your graded and ungraded assignments will be submitted through the TWEN web course, under the “Assignments” page drop box specified for the assignment. Unless otherwise specified, assignments submitted through the TWEN web course must be in MSWord or Word Perfect format. You must obtain your fall 2019 semester student exam number (which you will use in lieu of your name because of UHLC’s blind-grading policy) before the first graded assignment is distributed. Otherwise, you will not be able to access the assignment, which I distribute via TWEN, or to submit your work product on TWEN.

All graded and ungraded assignments that you submit must conform to these specifications, unless an assignment’s instructions provide otherwise:

- Use Times New Roman 12-point font on white 8 ½ x 11 paper.
- Double-space each assignment’s text and use one-inch margins on all sides.

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2 At the time that I distribute a graded assignment, I will always specify at least one alternative method of submission (e.g., hard-copy or email submission to an administrative assistant, to preserve your anonymity), should you experience technical difficulties that prevent your submitting your graded assignment through the TWEN web course. Any such alternative submission method, however, is subject to the same deadlines as a TWEN submission.
• Place page numbers in the bottom center of each page.

• Staple your paper in the top, left corner (for hard-copy submissions only).

• Print only on the front of each page, i.e., no double-sided submissions (for hard-copy submissions only).

• Ensure that you follow all other requirements stated in the assignment sheet for each assignment. Again, to the extent that a particular assignment’s requirements conflict with the specifications stated in this Course Information Sheet, the former control.

Additionally, please scrub each graded assignment of meta-data 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 MSWord), 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.”

J. TWEN Web Course

The URL for TWEN is located here. In your first class, I will provide each student with three things relevant to my TWEN web course: (1) a reminder of the web course name and TWEN URL; (2) a short primer on using the web course; and (3) a password and instructions for registering on Westlaw (which hosts TWEN), unless those have already been distributed during orientation. After you register your Westlaw password, please sign on to TWEN right away and register for my web course as soon as possible. My TWEN web course is named “Lawyering Skills and Strategies I: Section E-1 & Section E-2, Fall 2019.” There is no password for accessing the web course. Throughout the semester, I will post class information and useful materials on our TWEN web course on a regular basis. You are responsible for reviewing any materials posted to, and the calendar for, our TWEN web course. Because I will usually contact my students through the TWEN email system, please ensure that the email address that you use for the TWEN web course is one that you check regularly and that it remains current.
K. 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 Ms. Samantha Ary, Academic Records Coordinator. Ms. Ary is located in room 44A TU-II 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 document and to process the request.

If you observe religious or cultural holidays that will coincide with class meetings or conferences, please let me know as soon as possible after the fall 2019 semester starts so that we may make arrangements.

L. 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. Please 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.

M. Class Recordings

I will have all of my classes recorded throughout the semester, with a link to recordings for your use. The only exception will be when we have guest speakers, whom I will not record unless authorized.

N. Computer Use and Other Disruptions

In accordance with UHLC’s computer-use policy, located in the Student Handbook, I prohibit computer use in class for anything other than completing activities that I direct, taking notes, or accessing previous notes or materials for my class, unless otherwise directed by me. Similarly, unless I give you permission, please turn off or silence your cell phone and similar devices and avoid talking with your colleagues during class except during in-class exercises. Please do not record classes on your own: as indicated, I am recording all classes except for those in which guest speakers are present.
O. Legal Writing Center

You may obtain free, individual tutoring from Legal Writing Fellows at the UHLC Legal Writing Center, which is located near the circulation desk in the library. Several outstanding upper-level law students staff the Center. The Legal Writing Fellows will answer your questions on grammar and punctuation, legal writing, legal research, and citation of authority for ungraded assignments or in general—although they may not assist in any way with your graded assignments before you submit them. You can schedule an appointment with a Legal Writing Fellow by emailing C_LawLegalWritingCenter@central.uh.edu or by calling 713-743-0759. Walk-ins are also welcome.

P. Honor Code

The UHLC Honor Code applies to all aspects of my LSS class. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and for complying with the Honor Code. Please ask me if you have any questions regarding how the Honor Code’s provisions apply to specific activities or situations related to my course. It is an Honor Code violation to review the graded assignments distributed to, or written by, any of my LSS students from prior years.

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Again, welcome to the UHLC! I look forward to working with each of you during the 2019-2020 scholastic year.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/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 necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program: https://www.tlaphelps.org/