

General Drafting
7339 WRC: General Drafting for Smaller to Midsize Firm Attorneys - SWIFT- 13507
Summer 2025 Syllabus

Prof. Kenneth R. Swift
431F
krsswift@central.UH.edu

Preliminary Syllabus – Final Syllabus available at the start of class

Introductory Note: With an online course it is very important that you read every document and e-mail closely, beginning with this syllabus, to ensure that you understand all of the course assignments, procedures, and due dates. Additionally, from time to time there may be changes, reminders, and additional content sent to organize and supplement the course. You are responsible for knowing all such information.

I. Text

Fajans, Falk, and Shapo, *Writing for Law Practice*, Foundation Press 3rd Edition 2015, ISBN: 9781609304447. Note that you may purchase the e-book version.

II. Learning Goals

In this course you will develop skills necessary for drafting precise, clear, and complete documents. You will be exposed to drafting litigation documents, contracts, and other legal documents covering a wide-range of practice areas, similar to what some small to mid-size attorneys do, particularly early on in their careers. You will learn to research, evaluate, and use forms and checklists.

III. Course Structure and Technology

This course is taught fully online. With the exception of readings from the assigned text, all aspects of this course including additional readings, assignments, and multimedia material such as videos and MP3 files, will be available online. To prepare for the course, there are two steps you must take before the semester begins:

A. Course Website

The course website is hosted by the University's Canvas course management system. (Note that this is the first time the course has been offered using the University's new Canvas system, so please allow for adjustments as we proceed). To access the course website:

1. Log into access UH: <https://accessuh.uh.edu> .

2. Under University Services, click on Canvas.
3. Under courses select WRC General Drafting.
4. The website will be available approximately 2-4 days prior to the official start of the course. You will be automatically enrolled in the course.

Support is available 8-8 (M-F):

1. Phone: 713-743-1411
2. Live chat: <http://www.uh.edu/infotech/livechat>
3. Email: support@uh.edu
4. In person: 58 MD Anderson Library

NOTE: There is an introductory video assigned for the first unit. Some information in the video may be duplicative of the information below, but some will not be. You are responsible for information both in this document and in the introductory video.

B. Course E-Mail

I will regularly send e-mails. You **must check** the e-mail address that is associated with the Canvas site to ensure it is the address you want to receive class e-mails. I am not able to change the e-mail associated with your account.

IV. “Attendance” and Collaborative Assignments

In an online course there is, obviously, no physical “attendance.” However, you are required to keep up with the assignment schedules as set forth in the syllabus. Falling behind that schedule may result in your **forced withdrawal** from the course. All units must be completed, and the standards met for credit, to receive credit for the course. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete. You are also required to watch all course videos and you will be asked to affirm that you have done so at the end of the course.

It is important to keep up with the weekly readings, assessments, and activities. It will be important to work on course activities consistently and not put them aside until the due date as there will be group assignments and activities which will require participation throughout the week.

Group Assignments

Transactional drafting is collaborative work. Final documents reflect collaborative work with clients and, in most cases, other attorneys and opposing parties. While group work will not be required every week, particularly in the first few weeks you are going to be required to work with other students to complete assignments.

V. Course Structure and Assignments

The course is divided into five units, each covering several weeks, and some units will overlap. Each you will be given a checklist of all of the items which you must complete prior to a particular due date, and the suggested order in which they should be completed. With the exception of the assignments from your textbook, each required activity will be presented, in order, in a folder on the course website (demonstrated in the introductory video).

Within each unit there will be several items, including:

A. Videos: These are videos or MP3 files which provide an introduction to, and overview of, the materials you will be studying in the unit.

B. Readings: These are the required textbook chapters, cases, statutes, and articles.

C. Assessments and Activities: Your comprehension of the reading materials and lectures is assessed using several different types of inquiries:

i. Questions: These are sets of questions designed to assess your comprehension of assigned readings, develop skills, or lead you through research materials or other items related to your assignments. These will be multiple-choice, multiple answer, true/false, and fill in the blank type questions. Requirements for completing any one set of questions will be included in the instructions.

Additionally, on occasion there will be short answer/essay questions. Your responses to these questions will be reviewed on a "Reasonable Effort" standard, meaning I will look to see that you have thoughtfully and thoroughly responded to the question, regardless of the grade that might have otherwise be given. Often there will be immediate feedback in the form of a sample or discussion provided for these questions.

ii. CALI Exercises: There will be numerous Computer-Aided Legal Instruction (CALI) exercises throughout the course. These exercises will be used to help present and assess basic drafting skills and allow for short and long essay responses. These assignments will be graded based upon the "Reasonable Effort" standard discussed in the previous paragraph.

iii. Small Group Exercises: You will regularly be required to complete small group exercises designed to assess and build the skills necessary to draft good legal documents.

D. Graded Assignments.

i. Major Assignments: Each unit is designed to build skills and knowledge that lead to the development of a final drafting assignment for that unit. These

assignments, along with the final exam, will account for the majority of the points. Outlines and rubrics will be provided to help guide you in developing quality Major Assignments.

ii. Major Assignment Building Blocks/ Preliminary Assignments. Each unit will also include assignments designed to be "building blocks" to completing the major assignment. For example, you will be required to find forms, samples, and checklists that you will utilize to create your Major Assignments. These assignments will be graded based upon the "Good Faith Effort" standard discussed in the introductory video.

iii. Skills Assignments: There will also be assignments that are not directly related to a unit's Major Assignment but are designed to assess and build necessary drafting skills. On occasion, some of the group exercises discussed in V(C)(iii) will be included in this category. These types of assignments are not critiqued in the same way as the Major Assignments and completing these assignments with a reasonable effort will normally result in receiving most or all of the allotted points.

VI. Due Dates and Procedures

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be due by 10 p.m. on Tuesdays.

The cover sheet provided for each Major Assignment packet will include the due date for the assignment. Failure to submit your assignment prior to the due date and time will result in a penalty of two points per day, at 10 PM. By way of example, if an assignment is turned in at 5 PM on the Wednesday following the due date, the student will lose two points. If the assignment is turned in at 11 PM on Wednesday, the student would lose four points.

Submitting Assignments

When submitting an assignment, make sure you follow any requirements provided on the assignment cover sheet. Additionally, the following apply when submitting an electronic copy of an assignment:

- A. Use Microsoft Word
- B. Attach the assignment via e-mail; title the e-mail using the assignment name
- C. Title the Word document using **your last name only** ("Smith.doc")
- D. Make sure your name is on the **assignment document itself**

Failure to follow any assignment formatting or submitting procedures may result in a loss of points for that assignment. Note that some assignments may be graded anonymously. In such cases instructions will be provided on the assignment cover sheet and items C and D above will not apply.

VII. Grades

I will not provide letter grades on each assignment. Instead, each grading component will have a point total. At the conclusion of the semester, I will tabulate all of the points and determine grades.

The determination will be based upon the following Major Assignments for each unit plus points for selected Building Block assignments and Skills Assignments (see section V above), some of which are not included here:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Pleadings Unit | 15 points |
| Contract Drafting I Unit | 15 |
| Contract Drafting II Unit | 25 |
| Statutory Drafting Unit | 5 |
| Will Drafting Unit | 15 |
| Participation and Effort | 10 |
| Final Exam | 35 |

Exam

The exam will consist of one or more exercises designed to test the skills we have developed throughout the semester. The exam will be administered remotely via Respondus Lockdown Monitor.

Participation and Effort Points

The points for participation and effort will be based upon:

1. Timely completion of all assignments and activities.
2. Thoroughness of responses to essay questions and writing assignments, including CALI exercises.
3. Timely participation in small group activities. **“Timely”** includes participating throughout the week the activity is assigned and not waiting until the last day or two to contribute to a group project.

NOTE: The participation points are not based upon a curve, and it is my hope that every class participant will receive all of the allotted points.

I reserve the right to raise a grade by one grade increment (ex: B to B+) for significant and consistent work that exceeds the normal expectation of the class, as determined in my sole discretion. This would entail outstanding work on the exam style essays, essay questions, and group activities. In particular, weight will be given to thorough and thoughtful responses to the writing assignments/ exam style questions.

I also reserve the right to lower a grade by one grade increment (ex: B to B-) for significant and consistent work that does not meet the normal expectation of the class. This reduction may be in addition to loss of participation and effort points, discussed above.

VIII. Office Hours

An online course can present some difficulties in instructor-student interaction, if only due to the lack of a planned meeting time that a physical classroom provides. However, know that I am always available to answer questions and discuss class topics via e-mail. I will have a weekly virtual office hour, normally Thursday 1-2, which will be posted on Canvas and may be updated from time to time, depending upon other activities, such as individual meetings. I check e-mail very frequently and normally respond within 24 hours (sometimes 48 hours on weekends). If you send an e-mail and you do not get a response within that timeframe, please contact me again.

IX. Additional Resources and University Required Language

Mode of Presentation (University required designation)

(AS) Asynchronous classes do not meet face-to-face, and they do not have a regularly scheduled meeting time. Most of the class materials are available online at any time. Some asynchronous online classes may include virtual class meetings, which will be arranged on a class-by-class basis by the instructor.

CAPS

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

Names and 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 course. 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 any concerns about how I or your classmates address you.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including CoogsCARE and the UH Go App. UH Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections

to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit uh.edu/caps, call 713-743-5454, or visit a Let's Talk location in-person or virtually. Let's Talk are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

The Student Health Center offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The A.D. Bruce Religion Center offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

Need Support Now? - If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat 988lifeline.org.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>. Please be aware that under the sexual misconduct policy, SAM 01.D.08, faculty are required to report to the University any information received regarding sexual misconduct as defined in the policy. Please note that the reporting obligations under the sexual misconduct policy reach to employees and students. ***Also, as a required reporting party, I am not a confidential resource.***

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

Recording of Class (University required language)

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If

you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our Power-On website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Canvas; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

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Security Escorts and Cougar Ride

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. Our Security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety please call [713-743-3333](tel:713-743-3333). Arrangements may be made for special needs.

Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called Cougar Ride that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

Syllabus Changes

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus.

Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

Helpful Information

Coogs Care: <https://uh.edu/dsa/coogscare/>

Student Health Center: <https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>

Law Center Required Syllabus Elements

Honor Code

The UHLC Honor Code applies to all aspects of this course. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and for complying with the Honor Code. Please inquire if you have any questions regarding how the Honor Code's provisions apply to specific activities or situations related to this course. Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to comply with the Honor Code in relation to this course and to comply with the instructions in the course syllabus. *It is an Honor Code violation to review the graded assignments distributed to, or written by, any of my students from prior years.*

AI Generated Text

The software technology known as artificial intelligence has recently expanded its capability to generate text (AI Generated Text). Examples of the technology include what are known as “generative” large language models (LLMs), and a specific implementation what is well known in the general public is ChatGPT. These systems can generate text in response to prompts and/or input of other text/documents/code/images. The output, the AI Generated Text, appears to have human-mimicking “intelligence” and is thus potentially usable as a substitute for written work product one might generate themselves. AI Generated Text can include computer code or programs as well as human language content.

Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to not prompt, generate, obtain, read, or use any AI Generated Text in relation to any activity or assessment in this course. This applies to AI Generated Text from yourself or others. This pledge includes that your assessment work product in the course is without any contribution from AI Generated Text. This specifically extends to the plagiarism policy and unauthorized aid/materials parts of the Honor Code: AI Generated Text will be treated as from another/other in applying the plagiarism policy to this course. The term “assessment” means any work product generated for this course that is submitted to the instructor or presented in a class session, regardless whether it is graded content or not. Assessments include mid-terms and final exams. AI Generated Text may not be used in the development or drafting of any assessments created by you in a non-proctored environment, such as a “take-home” final examination unless specified as an exception below. The parts of the Honor Code that refer to unauthorized materials or aid are specifically prohibited from any use of AI Generated Text in this course unless specified as an exception in course documents.

Course Note: Course specific rules regarding AI are included in the Course Introduction video, which you are required to watch and acknowledge specific course items related to AI. As noted in greater detail in the video, you may not utilize AI to generate any text that you submit in this course, including contract terms. You may use AI related research tools available on the major legal research databases of Lexis, Westlaw, and Bloomberg.