

Lawyering Skills and Strategies

Fall 2025, Law 5314 Section 18282 | Brem

About Me. I'm a first-generation college and law school graduate and Big Law refugee who specialized in oil and gas, general commercial, and catastrophic personal injury defense litigation. For 16 years, I've taught LSS, Evidence, Federal Pretrial Drafting, Transactional Drafting, Legal Methods, and U.S. Legal Skills. I research and write about the intersection of legal rhetoric, evidence, procedure, and substantive law, as well as introductory U.S. legal concepts for novice students and foreign-trained attorneys - especially those trained in the civil law tradition.

Fun Fact: I have twin 25-year-old daughters (neither of whom has an interest in practicing law), I'm an avid OrangeTheory enthusiast, I have what my family charitably describes as "eclectic" music tastes. And I can never get enough coffee. Seriously. Never. Drop by my office anytime for an espresso. You'll find me in Room 341M in the third-floor faculty suite.

I respond to every email (kbrem@uh.edu), and can usually be reached on Teams anytime between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (713.743.5945) Monday through Friday. I will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 – 5:30 p.m. and by appointment. If you prefer to meet virtually, just let me know in advance and I will send a calendar invite with a Teams link.

About Your Tutor. Former Brem student **Naseem Shalae** is a third-year law student from Katy, Texas. Since her 1L spring, she's clerked for a mid-size firm in its Defense Base Act practice group (insurance defense for workers' compensation claims). At UHLC, she serves as the Head Senior Articles Editor for the Houston Journal of Health Law and Policy, where she has developed a strong appreciation for precise legal writing and citation. Outside of law school, she loves long-distance running, hosting dinner parties, trying new happy hour spots with friends, and unwinding with sitcoms like Modern Family, New Girl, and Veep.

Course Objectives. In this class, we will focus on developing your legal analysis and communication skills and conducting effective but efficient legal research. This will serve you well as you prepare to write law school exams; create a writing sample to obtain summer employment; and, ultimately, begin legal practice. This semester, expect to master the following course objectives:

1. Understand the sources, hierarchy, and precedential value of laws.
2. Distinguish different types of legal rules, dissect legal rules into their basic components, and synthesize a unified legal rule from disparate sources.
3. Identify legal issues crucial to resolving a client's legal problem; effectively execute online legal research and select appropriate authority to analyze these legal issues.
4. Understand and apply case precedent and, when appropriate, enacted law, to resolve the client's case.
5. Translate legal research and analysis into objective writing that is organized effectively; conveys all relevant and required substance clearly and concisely; and omits extraneous matters.
6. Understand and apply legal citation proficiently using *Bluebook* and *Greenbook* citation formats.
7. Master grammar and punctuation commonly used in legal documents, and basic tenants of legal style.
8. Understand the nexus between substantive law, procedure, legal skills, and ethics.

Textbooks. Please purchase Romantz & Vinson's *Legal Analysis: The Fundamental Skill* (4th ed.) (ISBN 978-1-5310-2778-0) and McAlpin's *Beyond the First Draft: Editing Strategies for Powerful Legal Writing* (2d ed.) (ISBN 978-1-5310-2713-1). We will use these books for the full academic year.

In addition, purchase either *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (22nd ed.) ISBN 979-8-218-57457-4 OR a subscription to the *Bluebook Online*, available at [Homepage | The Bluebook Online \(legalbluebook.com\)](https://www.legalbluebook.com). I

don't care which you purchase, the print edition or online; either is fine. You will continue to use this book throughout your law school career. Based on comments from former students, some prefer the print edition *Bluebook* because they like being able to tab, highlight, and annotate it. In contrast, some prefer the online *Bluebook* because it is easier to search.

I will also occasionally provide supplemental materials free of charge on Canvas, our course management system.

Assessment | Late Submissions. The purpose of this course is to teach you to use doctrinal law in a practical setting. Accordingly, I will calculate your grade based on your written work product produced in response to assignments that mimic tasks you will encounter in practice. In addition to your understanding and use of applicable doctrinal law, I will also assess your mastery of citation, grammar, and legal style. Your grade will be determined based on your performance on the following tasks:

Assignment	Final Grade	Due Date
Research Modules and Citation Exercises	Graded for Completion ¹	<i>Passim</i>
Closed Memo Discussion	Graded for Completion ²	Friday September 19
Research Assessment 1	10%	Thursday October 2
Research Assessment 2	20%	Thursday October 16
Graded Legal Memorandum	35%	Sunday November 9
Final Exam	35%	Friday November 21

Whenever work is graded for completion, understand that complete work will be submitted on time and reflect your good faith effort. Failure to do so will result in point deductions from your final grade.

This course is graded anonymously. If you are ill or otherwise unable to turn in an assignment on time, please request an extension, in writing, before the assignment's due date. Assignments turned in late without a prior extension will result in a grade reduction.

Using Generative Artificial Intelligence. As technology develops to address issues of confidentiality, more and more lawyers will turn to generative artificial intelligence ("gen-AI") to improve efficacy and efficiency. Accordingly, you too will need to learn how to use this tool in an effective and efficient manner. We will discuss proper prompting techniques in class and learn to assess AI output critically. This will require that you first learn the basics of critical thinking and how to analyze a legal issue. After you've mastered these skills, I will notify you in writing when and how you may employ gen-AI on specific assignments.

Honor Code. The UHLC Honor Code will apply to each assignment. Among other things, *this means that you may NOT employ gen-AI or work together* on any assignments for this class unless I instruct otherwise. You may not plagiarize another's work. And you may not share your own work with another student. For more information about the UHLC Honor Code, please consult the code itself, [available at this link](#).

¹ If I determine that your work on the research modules or citation exercises is incomplete, I will deduct up to 5 points from your final grade for lack of professionalism.

² If I determine that your work is incomplete, I will deduct up to 5 points from the final draft of the graded legal memorandum.

Attendance | Class Administration. This class will meet in person. Be prepared to discuss the lecture material that I assign for each class. I will call on you at random. If you are not prepared for class, please email me before class to let me know.

The Fine Print. 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 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 [this website](#), calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.uh.edu.

We ask also that you contact Samantha Ary, Academic Records Coordinator at the Law Center. Ms. Ary's office is in the Office of Student Services suite. She can be reached by [email](#) or at (713) 743-7466. *Requests for accommodation that involve graded assignments should be directed to Ms. Ary as soon as possible to allow adequate time to process the request.* She can assist you as you navigate the Dart Center process.

Class Recordings. I may record some classes, depending on student need. If class is recorded, I will post a link to the recordings on the Canvas course management system as soon as it is available. You may use these recordings for your own studying and notetaking purposes, but please do not share them with anyone. University policy mandates that an 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

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.

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 resources about mental health that are of interest to law students: <https://www.tlaphelps.org/law-students>[Links to an external site.](#). Check it out.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct. Per the UH System Sexual Misconduct Policy, I am 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 I 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 here on [the Title IX website](#).

Syllabus. We will cover the following topics in class each week. Please complete any reading and assignments for the week *before* coming to class on Tuesdays. From time to time, reading assignments may change to meet class needs. I will announce all changes orally in class and in writing via Canvas.

PART 1 | LEGAL ANALYSIS

Week 1 August 26/28	Fundamental Tools for Student Success Critical Reading Case Briefing Fundamentals of Legal Analysis Primary Sources of Law <i>Stare Decisis</i> Jurisdiction & the Hierarchy of Court Systems
Week 2 Sep 2/4	Communicating Legal Analysis IRAC/CreAC Introduction to Bluebook Citation
Week 3 Sep 9/11	Identifying Legal Rules and Rule Synthesis Identifying Legally Significant Facts Drafting Case Explications
Week 4 Sep 16/18	Advanced Legal Analysis Inductive and Deductive Analysis: A Review Statutory Analysis Editing: Introduction to Legal Style and the Relationship Between Organization and Coherent Writing

PART 2 | LEGAL RESEARCH

Week 5 Sep 23/25	Hierarchy of Authority & Introduction to the Legal Research Process Fundamentals of Bluebook Citation Restatements Legal Dictionaries Legal Treatises Periodicals Books Legal Research: Secondary Sources
Week 6 Sep 30/Oct 2	Legal Research: Statutes Research Assessment 1
Week 7 Oct 7/9	Legal Research: Cases and Citators Legal Research: Boolean Searching

PART 3 | COMMUNICATING LEGAL ANALYSIS

Week 9 Oct 21/23	Legal Communication: The Writing Process (Madman Architect Carpenter Judge) Introduction to Predictive Memoranda Locating and Choosing Authority
Week 10 Oct 28/30	Parts of a Memo Question Presented Brief Answer Conclusion Discussion Section Deep Dive: Drafting Effective Rules, Case Explications, and Analysis
Week 11 Nov 4/6	Parts of a Memo Statement of Facts Editing: Using Effective Legal Style and Clear Writing Panel Discussion: The Importance of Details
Week 12 Nov 11/13	Short Form Professional Communication: Drafting Effective Emails
Week 13 Nov 18/20	Exam Review: Writing Under Timed Conditions
Friday, Nov 21 ~ Final Exam 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Room TBD	

In lieu of class in Week 14, you must attend at least one of the three Legal Writing Fellows' Workshops held this semester (details will be announced in class).