

LAWYERING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES ▪ COURSE INFORMATION SHEET ▪ FALL 2026

SECTION C5 ▪ COURSE 5314 ▪ SECTION 12473 ▪ F2F

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Course Description

Lawyering Skills and Strategies (“LSS”) will focus on an introduction to the American legal system and the underlying skills and strategies lawyers must possess to succeed within it. By working through problems inside and outside of the classroom, you will be introduced to fundamental legal research, analysis, writing, and citation skills. And, in all matters, you will be expected to uphold the ethical and professional standards of a lawyer-in-training.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for the fall semester include the following:

- **Legal System:** Understanding the sources, hierarchy, and precedential value of legal authority.
- **Legal Research:** Proficiency in identifying issues applicable to a client’s case; effective execution of the four-step legal research process; and careful selection of legal authority.
- **Legal Analysis:** Ability to distinguish, structure, and dissect different types of legal rules; proficiency in understanding and applying enacted law to a client’s case; proficiency in understanding and applying case law to a client’s case.
- **Legal Writing:** Ability to translate legal research and analysis into an objectively written document that is organized logically; conveys all relevant and required content clearly and concisely; omits extraneous information; and uses correct grammar and punctuation.
- **Legal Citation:** Familiarity with the general principles for legal citation, the specific *Bluebook* rules for select legal authority, and the ability to apply them correctly.

Canvas Learning Management System

Canvas is the online Learning Management System that you will use to access LSS course content, upload LSS assignments, and interact online with me and your classmates. You will need to join the Canvas site for this section of LSS and check it frequently.

Course Materials

The required course materials are listed below.

- [*A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis* \(4th ed. 2024\)](#) by Christine Coughlin, Joan Malmud Rocklin & Sandy Patrick (“A Lawyer Writes”). You may purchase or rent the print or eBook version of this text.
- [*The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* \(22nd ed. 2025\)](#), published by the Harvard Law Review Association (“Bluebook”). You must purchase or rent the print version of this text.

- *The Bluebook Uncovered: A Practical Guide to Mastering Legal Citation* (22nd ed. of *The Bluebook*), by Dionne E. Anthon (“Bluebook Uncovered”). This free eBook is available online by clicking [here](#).
- You should have received and registered your passwords for the online legal research providers Lexis and Westlaw during Orientation. If you did not, please let me know.

The recommended course materials are listed below.

- [*Manual on Usage & Style* \(16th ed. 2024\)](#) published by the Texas Law Review.
- The free writing assistant Grammarly, available at <https://www.grammarly.com/>

Throughout the semester, I may supplement the readings assigned in the texts. The supplemental readings will be posted on Canvas. The supplemental readings will be identified by their class handout number (e.g., “Class 1B Handout”).

Attendance

The mode of instruction for this course is face-to-face (F2F): it is scheduled to meet on Tuesdays from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Room 211 of the John M. O’Quinn Law Building.

Please note that class sessions may be added or adjusted throughout the semester. Any additions or adjustments will be reflected in the syllabus and/or announced via email. For example, you will be required to attend one workshop hosted by the Legal Writing Center this semester. The workshop will take place outside of our regularly scheduled class time. As soon as the dates and times for the Legal Writing Center’s workshops are finalized, I will let you know.

Attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken during each class session. I reserve the right to count you as absent if you arrive more than ten minutes late or leave more than ten minutes early. If you cannot attend a class session in person, it is your responsibility to contact me in advance of the class session to join remotely by Zoom. Please note that remote attendance through Zoom is counted as an absence, unless prior arrangements for an accommodation are made through the Office of Student Affairs. In accordance with the Law Center’s attendance policy, you may miss no more than five class sessions during the semester. On your sixth absence, I will refer you to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss your continued enrollment in the course.

If you observe religious or cultural holidays that will conflict with class sessions, please let me know so we can discuss alternative arrangements.

Class Sessions

Class sessions will emphasize collaborative and interactive learning through exercises and discussions. Accordingly, I expect that you will need to use an electronic device during class to access class materials, to complete class activities, and to take notes.

However, you should refrain from the impermissible use of electronic devices during class. Impermissible use includes, but is not limited to, completing assignments for other courses; engaging in electronic communication that is unrelated to class activities; visiting websites unrelated to class activities; playing games, listening to music, or watching videos that are unrelated to class activities. The impermissible use of an electronic device repeatedly during class sessions may affect your final grade in this course.

Class sessions may be recorded this semester. Your contributions during class sessions may be included in the recording, and your continued registration in this course indicates your acquiescence to any such recording.

You may not record all or part of a class session, livestream all or part of a class session, or make/distribute screen captures without my prior express authorization. If I authorize a class session to be recorded, you may use the recording for your personal studying and notetaking only. You may not share the recording with any other person or on any other platform without my prior express authorization. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings may result in disciplinary action.

Class Videos

For certain topics, you must watch a video in advance of the related class session. These class videos are intended for your education only. They should not be shared with any other person without my prior express authorization.

My expectation is that you will watch the class video in a distraction-free setting that will allow you to take detailed notes in preparation for the related class session. While I may highlight important points from the class video when introducing activities and answering questions during the class session, I will not review the topic in its entirety.

A link to each class video will be available on Canvas. If you encounter any problems accessing a class video on Canvas, please let me know immediately.

Conferences

You are required to attend an individual conference with me this semester to discuss the Graded Legal Memorandum. Conferences will take place on Zoom. You will schedule the conference on Canvas, and I will email you the Zoom link in advance of your conference.

If you need to reschedule this conference, please do so before the originally scheduled conference time. Otherwise, your failure to appear for the scheduled conference will be counted as an absence, and you may not be allowed to reschedule.

Office Hours

If you have any questions about the course, please ask me. I will have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in person and on Wednesdays from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom. I will email you the Zoom link in advance of the first week of classes.

If I change my regularly scheduled office hours, I will notify you by email. For example, I may not hold office hours during the week of individual conferences.

Legal Writing Center

You may obtain free individual tutoring through the Legal Writing Center (“Center”), which is located on the fourth floor of the Law Center Library in Room 413B. Several outstanding law students, known as Legal Writing Fellows (“Fellows”), staff the Center. They are able to help you with legal writing, research, and citation issues as well as style and usage questions. However, the Fellows are prohibited from assisting you with any graded assignment before you submit it.

You may email c_law_legal_writing_center@central.uh.edu using your UH email address to schedule an appointment with a Fellow. Drop-ins during weekly office hours are also welcome. At any point during the semester, I may require or recommend that you meet with a Fellow.

Class Preparedness, Participation, and Professionalism

As future attorneys, I expect you to uphold the professional standards of a lawyer-in-training throughout the semester. Accordingly, before attending a class session, I expect you to complete any assigned readings and watch any assigned videos so that you are prepared to participate in class.

I reserve the right to lower your final course grade by one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B) if you habitually fail to prepare for class, to participate actively in class, to complete practice exercises, or to show respect for me and your classmates. I also reserve the right to lower your final course grade by one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B) if you impermissibly use an electronic device repeatedly during class sessions.

Ungraded Quizzes and Practice Exercises [Formative Assessments]

Throughout the semester, you will complete ungraded quizzes and practice exercises, and I will provide you with feedback. Some practice exercises will be used during class sessions only. Other practice exercises will be submitted to me for review.

Because these quizzes and practice exercises will help you hone the lawyering skills you need to succeed in LSS and in practice, I expect you to make a good faith effort when completing them. Any work that in my discretion does not reflect a good faith effort will have to be redone or

rewritten to an acceptable standard within a prescribed time. The habitual failure to make a good faith effort on practice exercises and submit them in a timely manner may affect your final grade.

Graded Assignments [Summative Assessments]

Your performance and competence in this course will be graded. Your final grade this semester will be based on the following, subject to any adjustments identified in this course information sheet:

- **LSS Midterm (25%)**
- **Graded Legal Correspondence Assignment (25%)**
- **Graded Legal Memorandum Individual Conference (10%)**
- **Graded Legal Memorandum Assignment (35%)**
- **Professional Development Assignment (5%)**

Knowing how to budget and manage time is an essential lawyering skill, so I expect all graded assignments to be submitted on time. If a graded assignment is more than fifteen minutes late, I may deduct 10% of the total points for the first hour (or part of the hour) that the graded assignment is late. After the first hour, I may deduct an additional 10% of the total points for every hour that the graded assignment is late.

I will consider extensions for **true emergencies** only. Be advised: computer problems and routine illnesses do not constitute true emergencies.

The Law Center uses an anonymous-grading system to ensure fairness in grading. You will be assigned a student identifier this semester. You must use your student identifier, instead of your name, when instructed by me. **Do not share your student identifier number with me before the release of final grades.**

Formatting Requirements

All practice exercises and graded assignments must conform to these specifications:

- Use Times New Roman, 12-point type, on white letter-size (8 ½" x 11") paper.
- Double space each page.
- Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- Place page numbers in the bottom center of each page.
- Print on one side of each page only [if a hard copy is requested].
- Staple your paper in top left corner [if a hard copy if requested].
- Adhere to all other requirements stated in the instruction sheet.

Mandatory Course Curve

J.D. students in this course are subject to a mandatory curve in the range of 3.20 to 3.40.

Mandatory First-Year Grade Distribution

In addition to the mandatory course curve, the following grade distribution is mandatory for J.D. students in all first-year courses, including LSS:

A	5% to 30%
A- or B+ or B	50% to 90%
B- or below	5% to 20%

Honor Code

The Law Center's [Honor Code](#) applies to all aspects of this course. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and complying with the Honor Code. Unless you have my prior express authorization, it is an Honor Code violation to review ungraded exercises and graded assignments distributed to, or written by, any LSS students from prior years.

Questions regarding how the Honor Code's provisions apply to specific activities or situations may be directed to me or the Faculty Advisors for the Honor Board. 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 information sheet and syllabus.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Generative AI tools trained on large language models generate human-like text in response to user prompts. Examples of current Generative AI tools include Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini. Unlike a spelling and grammar checker or a plagiarism checker, Generative AI tools don't limit their analysis to existing content only. And, unlike traditional search engines, Generative AI tools don't fetch data from the internet only. Rather, Generative AI tools generate new, original content based on user prompts. The generated content may not always be unbiased and factually accurate (N.B., inaccuracies are termed "hallucinations"). Moreover, a Generative AI tool may collect and save data that is shared by a user in a prompt, even if the data is private or sensitive.

Limited use of generative AI tools that do not require a paid subscription will be allowed in this course. The nature and extent of those limitations will be announced in an updated syllabus and shared in advance of the first class session.

Zoom Etiquette and Expectations

Access to a webcam is required for students participating in this course. Webcams must be turned on in accordance with this Zoom Etiquette and Expectations section.

In order to make online conferences and office hours as engaging and effective as possible, you should plan to participate fully with audio and video. If you are unable to participate with both audio and video, please let me know in advance.

Additional expectations for Zoom etiquette include the following:

- Access the Zoom link at least a few minutes before the scheduled time. If you run into difficulties, email me at wwheard@central.uh.edu.
- If your Zoom username isn't your full name or chosen name, please rename yourself accordingly.
- When you join Zoom, turn on your video camera. If I notice that you are turning your video camera off for an extended amount of time, I may contact you to see if everything is okay.
- Most importantly, I will exhibit flexibility, patience, and kindness as issues arise. I hope that you will do the same.

Cougarnet Email and Resources for Online Learning

Please check and use your Cougarnet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the Cougarnet email to respond to course-related inquiries in accordance with FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). To access your Cougarnet email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your Cougarnet credentials. For instructions on how to connect to your Cougarnet email on a mobile device, visit the University Information Technology (UIT) website.

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

Reasonable Academic Adjustments and Auxiliary Aids

The Law Center and the UH System are 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 its website at <https://uh.edu/accessibility/>, by calling (713) 743-5400, or by emailing JDCenter@central.uh.edu.

If you anticipate or experience barriers based on a disability (including any chronic or temporary medical or mental health condition), you should also contact Ms. Samantha Ary, Program Director in the Office of Student Affairs, to discuss your options for support services. Ms. Ary can be reached at sary@central.uh.edu or 713-743-7466. Requests that involve graded assignments must be directed to Ms. Ary, and they should be made as soon as possible to allow adequate time to document and process the request.

Respect When Addressing Students

I want to address each of you in a manner that corresponds to and respects your name and identity. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you have concerns about how I address you, including the pronunciation of your name. You may call me “Professor Heard” or “Prof. Heard.”

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The UH System has a number of resources to support students’ mental health and overall wellness, including [CoogsCARE](#), the UH Go App, and the [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) for spiritual support and programming.

UH Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, law school 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 www.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. You may call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, immediate help is available. CAPS crisis support is available 24/7 by calling 713-743-5454, and the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available by call or text at 988 or by chat www.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 by calling 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>.

Anti-Discrimination and Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policies

The Law Center and the UH System are committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free

from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you experience an incident of discrimination or sexual misconduct, a confidential reporting process is available to you. For more information, please refer to the [Anti-Discrimination Policy SAM 01.D.07](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Policy SAM 01.D.08](#).

Under the UH System Sexual Misconduct Policy, as your instructor, 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 on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

Security Escorts and Cougar Ride

The [UH Police Department](#) (UHPD) continually works with the UH community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The 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. 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/>.

Course Information Sheet and Syllabus Updates

I may need to update the course information sheet and syllabus during the semester. Notice of such updates will be announced as quickly as possible through CougarNet email and/or Canvas. I appreciate your understanding and flexibility should the need for an update arise.

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CLASS PERIODS	CLASS TOPICS	CLASS READINGS AND VIDEOS	EXERCISES DUE IN CLASS
Class 1A August 25	The U.S. Legal System	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 15-32	Federal Jurisdiction Ex. State Jurisdiction Ex.
Class 1B August 27	Types of Legal Authority	Class 1B Handout	Weight of Authority Ex.
Class 2A September 1	Types of Legal Issues and Rules	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 65-78, 107-114	Rule Synthesis Ex.
Class 2B September 3	Reading and Briefing Cases	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 33-34, 45-64	Case Brief Ex.
Class 3A September 8	Legal Analysis (Statutory Law)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 35-43, 207-212, 215-231	Statutory Interpretation Ex.
Class 3B September 10	Legal Analysis (Case Law)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 79-97, 155-179, 212-213	Case Law Analysis Chart
Class 4A September 15	Communicating Your Analysis in Writing (“CREAC”)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 99-106, 115-135, 137-140, 197-205, 213-214	None
Class 4B September 17	Communicating Your Analysis in Writing (“CREAC”)	None	Peer Review Ex. (CREAC)
September 21	Submit Ungraded Writing Ex. 1 (“CREAC”) by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 21.		
Class 5A September 22	Introduction to Legal Research and Legal Citation	<i>Bluebook</i> pp. 1-2 <i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. xiii-xiv, 3-11	Research Modules 0 and 1 (Modules 0.1 through 1.3)
Class 5B September 24	Effective Legal Writing	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 298-305 “Effective Legal Writing” Video	Effective Legal Writing Quiz
Class 6A September 29	Legal Research (Secondary Sources)	None	Research Module 2 (Modules 2.1 through 2.7)
Class 6B October 1	Legal Citation (Secondary Sources)	<i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. 107-116 “Citing Secondary Sources” Video	Submit Citation Quiz 1 (Secondary Sources) by 11:59 p.m. on October 2

Class 7A October 6	Legal Research (Statutes)	None	Research Module 3 (Modules 3.1 through 3.7)
Class 7B October 8	Legal Citation (Statutes and Constitutions)	<i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. 61-75, 81-83, 179, 244-248 “Citing Statutes and Constitutions” Videos	Submit Citation Quiz 2 (Statutes and Constitutions) by 11:59 p.m. on October 9
October 12	Submit Ungraded Writing Ex. 2 (“CREAC” Rewrite) by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 12.		
Class 8A October 13	Legal Research (Cases)	None	Research Module 4 (Modules 4.1 through 4.9)
Class 8B October 15	Legal Citation (Cases)	<i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. 15-34, 47-55, 137-143, 175-179, 233-244 “Citing Cases” Videos	Submit Citation Quiz 3 (Cases) by 11:59 p.m. on October 16
Class 9A October 20	The LSS Midterm will be administered during the class session on Tuesday, October 20, at 2:30 p.m.		
Class 9B October 22	Legal Correspondence	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 311-354	Procertas Word Memo Assessment
Class 10A October 27	Legal Correspondence	None	None
Class 10B October 29	Editing (Rewriting, Revising, and Polishing)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 285-298, 305-309	None
November 2	Submit Graded Legal Correspondence Assignment by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, November 2.		
Class 11A November 3	Legal Memorandum (Discussion Content)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 135-137 <i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. 211-214	Identify Activity for Professional Development Assignment
Class 11B November 5	Legal Memorandum (Discussion Organization)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 181-195, 233-249, 281-283 “Legal Memorandum Organization” Video	None
Class 12A November 10	Legal Memorandum (Statement of Facts)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 269-279	None
Class 12B November 12	Legal Memorandum (Question Presented, Brief Answer, Conclusion)	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 3-14, 251-268	None

November 16 - November 20	Individual Conferences to discuss Graded Legal Memorandum Assignment will be held outside of LSS class sessions.		
Class 13A November 17	Ethical Use of Sources	<i>A Lawyer Writes</i> pp. 141-154 <i>Bluebook Uncovered</i> pp. 191-204 “Quoting Sources” Video	None
Class 13B November 19	Professional Identity Formation	None	None
November 23	Submit the Graded Legal Memorandum Assignment by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, November 23.		
November 30	Submit the Professional Development Assignment by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, November 30.		

*** The syllabus may be modified as needed to achieve course objectives. ***