

LAWYERING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES SYLLABUS - FALL 2026

Professor Hilary Stirman Reed

5314-12738 E1/5314-12739 E2 | 7:30p-8:40p MTH | Rm: 102A

Professor Reed's Contact Information

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Office Hours: TBA

Mode of Instruction and Class Home Page

This class will be in-person only. Our class has a Canvas page where course materials and other information is posted. Please make sure to check it regularly.

Required Texts and Readings and Materials

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 22d ed. 2025) (the "Bluebook") (You will need this book all year, not just fall).

Robin Boyle-Laisure, Christine Coughlin, & Sandy Patrick, Becoming a Legal Writer (2d ed. Carolina Press 2026).

2026 Course Rules and Regulations and Reed Local Rules, Handouts, web links, and other material posted on Canvas.

Recommended Texts

Texas Law Review Manual on Usage & Style (any recent edition). This is a reference for legal style and grammar. Older editions will likely have much of the same material.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is essential for your success in this course, and I will take attendance. Missing more than 4 classes will make you subject to dismissal from the class. Please contact me as soon as possible to alert me to any issues you are facing that affect your attendance.

Course Description

This class will teach students how to perform legal research, writing, and analysis. Students will learn how to research, identify, use, and analyze primary and secondary legal authorities to solve legal problems and how to structure and draft legal memoranda.

Lawyering Skills and Strategies Course Objectives

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
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
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

Graded Assignments

1. Research Assessments (each worth 10%)

You will have two in-class assessments of your research skills gained through the Research Modules. Bring your laptop to class for each of these timed assessments. You will submit your answers anonymously.

2. Final Memorandum (draft of first portion 15%, final draft 25% of Course Grade)

You will research and write a memorandum addressing the issues presented by the file. This memo will be submitted anonymously.

3. LRW Exam (30% of Course Grade)

At the end of the semester, you will take a three-hour exam that will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and a longer form answer. The exam will cover skills and concepts from the entire semester. This Exam will be submitted anonymously.

4. Professionalism and Exercise Completion (10% of Course Grade)

As future attorneys, I expect you to demonstrate professionalism in this class. This means coming to class and to meetings with me on time and prepared, participating in class discussions, avoiding using social media, chats and similar programs in class when we are using laptops, making a good faith effort on ungraded assignments, and showing respect for me and other students during class and in any email or other communications. In addition, an important part of your professionalism grade will be timely completion of and *making a good faith effort on* any exercises I ask you to do. Unexcused failure in any regard will result in a loss of professionalism points.

Ungraded Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will receive several research and writing assignments that will not be formally graded. You must make a good faith effort on these assignments and complete them on time. If you fail to do either of these things, you may receive a grade penalty or receive an incomplete for the class.

1. Online Legal Research Training

Westlaw, Lexis and Bloomberg are the largest providers of online legal research services. Your future employers will expect you to be proficient in using these services, and proficiency will help you maximize your research efforts for assignments in this course. Representatives from each provider

will conduct training sessions during the semester, which I encourage you to attend.

Other Ungraded Assignments:

- Writing exercises
- Research exercises
- Citation exercises

Please Note

1. Students may be asked to close their laptops and give their full attention during class sessions. Please have pen and paper available for note-taking during every class period. The use of a computer or any other communication device in class for activities or purposes unrelated to the course causes a significant distraction for other students and severely disrupts the ability of students to participate fully in class. Therefore, 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, at the discretion of Professor Reed, result in dismissal from the class session and/or a reduction in your final grade.
2. The syllabus is subject to change upon notice in class and/or via Canvas postings and emails.
3. If specific Writing Assignment Instructions conflict with Reed Local Rules, the Writing Assignment Instructions control.
4. 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.
5. **Policy regarding timely submission of assignments and back up of documents:** As an attorney, you will be expected to maintain back-up copies of your files to protect against loss, theft, or file corruption. Similarly, as a student, you are expected to implement an appropriate data management plan to protect your files from loss, theft, or corruption. Many free services exist that will back up your files to remote servers and maintain prior versions of your files to prevent data loss. Examples include Dropbox (<http://www.dropbox.com>), GoogleDrive (<https://drive.google.com>), and SkyDrive (<https://skydrive.live.com>). You are expected to turn your assignments in on time in this class, and you will be subject to a late penalty for not doing so. It is not a valid excuse for untimely submission

of an assignment that your files were lost, stolen, or corrupted. If you have used these back-up services, the burden will be on you to prove why your assignment cannot be submitted on time. Such proof may include a requirement that you produce the change/history logs from your data protection service.

Use of Generative AI

General. Generative artificial intelligence is a form of machine learning that creates new and original output based on the data it has been trained on or has access to, employing algorithms to generate content in response to prompts. Examples of the technology include what are known as generative “large language models” (LLMs). Two well-known LLM implementations are ChatGPT and Claude. LLM output can include text, images, music, code, and more. This syllabus policy covers the textual output of generative LLMs (AI-Generated Text)—which can include computer code or programs and human-language content. Because AI-Generated Text can often mimic human intelligence, it could potentially be used as a substitute for a student’s own work product. Such use is potentially problematic to the extent that it becomes a substitute for internalized student understanding of the material or creates a dependency on AI-Generated Text, which may be strictly prohibited in settings that include the bar examination.

Prohibition. Subject to the exceptions immediately below, your continuing enrollment in this course constitutes your pledge not to generate or to use any AI-Generated Text—whether from yourself or others—in relation to any assessment in this course. The term “assessment” means any graded or ungraded work product for this course that is submitted to the instructor, presented in a class session, or used in an oral or written graded assessment for this course.

Exceptions:

- You may use Generative AI for exercises related to Generative AI when specifically permitted.
- You may use Generative AI as a study aid to help you understand material better. For example, you can ask generative AI to create additional examples of mandatory v. persuasive authority or to assist in your outline for the class. This does not include creating any material that will be submitted as an assessment in the course.

A. *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.

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.

B. *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/>.

C. *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.

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.

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community (CSAC) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a “home away from home” and serves as a resource hub to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our Cougar Cupboard, all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1:1 appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The Cougar Closet is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar

community come closer together. Visit the CSAC homepage or follow us on Instagram: @uh_CSAC and @uhcupbrd. YOU belong here.

D. *Women and Gender Resource Center*

The mission of the WGRC is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

E. *Recording of Class*

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 Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center. 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.