

# Why Legal Writing Professors are Uniquely Qualified to Teach Bar Courses & Author Textbooks

PROFESSOR  
AMANDA PETERS

GODWIN LEWIS  
PC RESEARCH  
PROFESSOR

SOUTH TEXAS  
COLLEGE OF  
LAW HOUSTON

---

# Outline

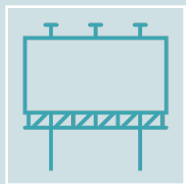
---



The Beginning



Lessons from Writing a  
Bar Textbook



Lessons from Teaching  
a Bar Class



NextGen Bar Exam's  
Focus on Skills

---



# The Beginning

---

# Initial Considerations

---

- What materials am I going to use?
  - Should I write my own book?
  - What does the class structure look like?
  - How can I work testing skills & practice into class?
-

---

# Other Textbooks

---

- Style
  - Readability
  - Audience
  - Coverage
    - Bar topics v. author's topics of interest
    - No testing skills
  - Organization
  - Editing
-

---

# My Book Wish List

---

- Useful for bar takers and future practitioners
    - What was required of me
  - Readable text – plain English (concise, clear, direct)
    - Modern, instructive cases – this was harder than I thought
    - Plain English statutory translation, when possible
      - Accessible legal authority
  - Logical organization
  - Moderate viewpoints
-





# Overview Samples

---

# My Class Structure

---

- I use practice questions to review.
  - I use practical documents: arrest warrants, search warrants, indictments, etc.
  - I provide practical tips to students.
  - I employ criminal cases in the news as a teaching tool.
  - I point out good/bad policing, lawyering, and judging and good/bad procedure.
  - I strive to be clear, concise, direct, organized, and scheduled.
  - Data from teaching and bar scores
-



---

# Financial Considerations

---

- Overload pay
  - Book royalties
    - Subsequent editions
  - Summer research stipend
  - Will other professors use the book?
    - What materials should I include to encourage others to use it?
  - What happens when the bar exam changes?
-

---

# Lessons from writing the book & teaching the class

---

- I love criminal procedure and ...
    - “quilt making”
    - breaking complex things down & communicating them to others
    - learning and teaching the why and the how
    - teaching students how to problem solve
    - encouraging and building confidence in my students so they’re ready for the “test”
-

---

# Assets we bring to textbook writing & teaching

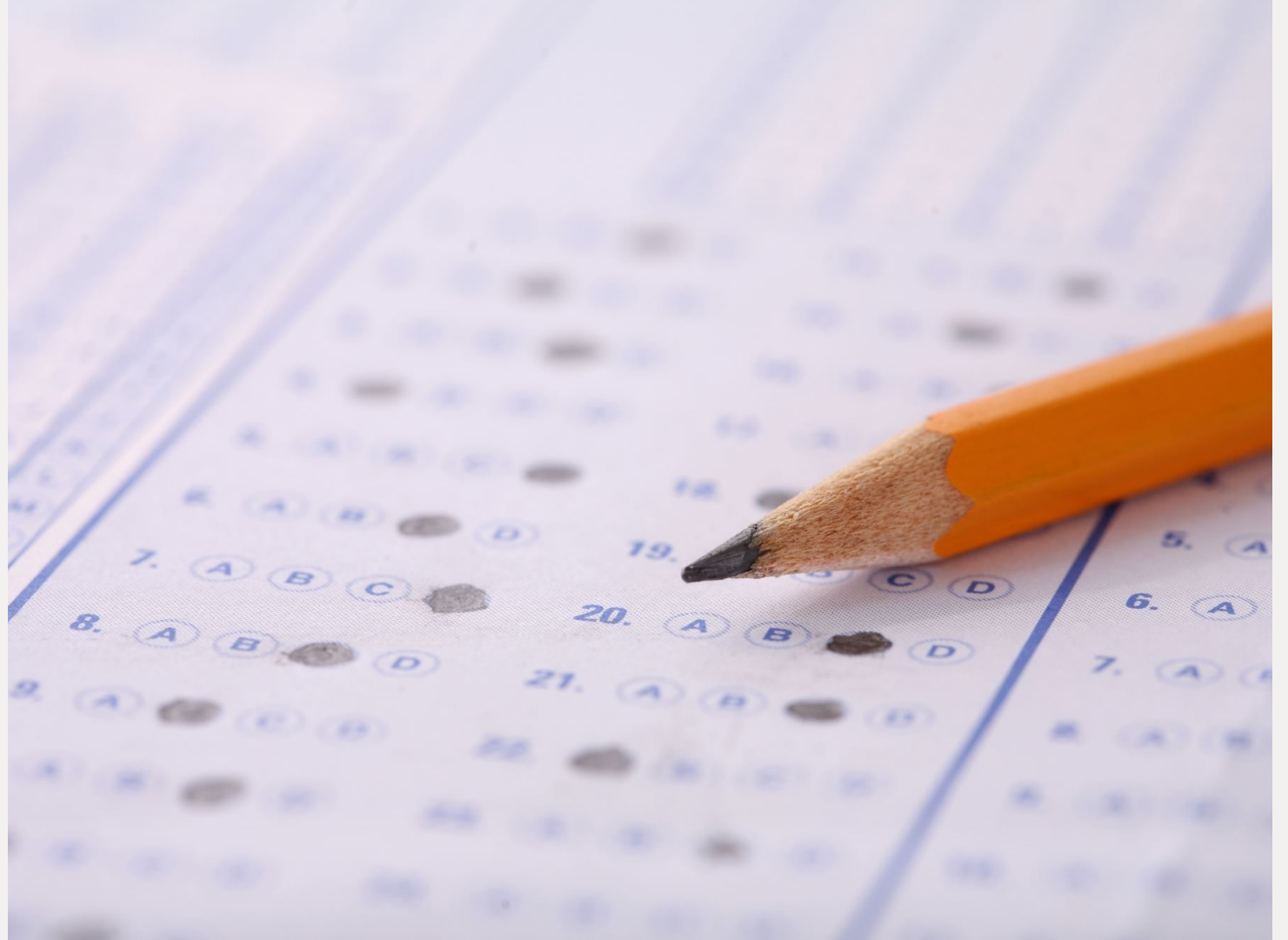
---

- Audience awareness
  - Good writing
  - Good research
  - Helping students with the why and the how
  - Skills training (test taking skills and practical skills)
  - The details: formatting, technical editing, & grammar
  - Logical organization
-

The background of the image is a sheet of white graph paper with a light purple grid. Numerous small, five-pointed stars are scattered across the grid. The stars are in various colors: red, green, yellow, blue, and silver. They are arranged in a somewhat random pattern, with some clusters and some empty spaces. The stars are slightly out of focus, giving a soft, artistic feel to the image.

# Student Evaluations

# The NextGen Exam





---

# Testing Task Force Recommendations

---

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES	FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civil Procedure</li><li>• Contracts</li><li>• Evidence</li><li>• Torts</li><li>• Business Associations</li><li>• Constitutional Law</li><li>• Criminal Law &amp; Procedure</li><li>• Real Property</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal Research</li><li>• Legal Writing</li><li>• Issue Spotting &amp; Analysis</li><li>• Investigation &amp; Evaluation</li><li>• Client Counseling &amp; Advising</li><li>• Negotiation &amp; Dispute Resolution</li><li>• Client Relationship &amp; Management</li></ul>

---



# Final Thoughts



- Writing the book was a commitment.
  - The bar changed, but I like what I created.
- New endeavors breathe life into what we do.
- What we do – teaching skills – translates well into other classes.



---

Questions

---