LEGAL ANALYSIS AND WRITING I
SYLLABUS
FALL TERM, 2016

Legal Writing Program Director

Professor Greg Johnson, Ext. 1284, gjohnson@vermontlaw.edu
Old Schoolhouse, Second Floor
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9 am—noon, Wednesday, 9 am—noon,
and by appointment

Dean’s Fellows

Kelsey Bain
Elizabeth Bootz
Jessica Bullock
Olivia Cruz
Catlin Davis
Alexander Dean
Letson Douglass
Laura Hartz
Tucker Jones
Dylan King
Bryanna Kleber
Ashleigh Krick
Patrick Marass
Ruth Roberts

I. REQUIRED MATERIALS


Harvard Law Review et al., The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (20th ed. 2015).

Course Packet
II. THE COURSE

The three objectives of Legal Analysis and Writing I are to introduce you to key principles of clear and precise writing; to familiarize you with legal organization and IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion); and to introduce you to rules of legal citation. You will learn these key principles of legal writing through the following writing assignments: a short email in response to a partner’s question; a two-page IRAC Exercise; the Discussion Section of an office memo; and a complete office memorandum. You will be required to follow Bluebook citation rules on all assignments. For the Discussion Section and office memorandum assignments, your Dean’s Fellow will return the first draft to you with comments. You will then have a mandatory conference with your Dean’s Fellow. You then resubmit the draft a final time for grading.

You will attend a lecture by Professor Johnson on Monday and a workshop led by the Dean's Fellows on Wednesday. The small-group workshops give you an opportunity to work interactively with the principles discussed in Professor Johnson’s lecture. The lecture is seventy-five minutes long, and the workshops are fifty minutes long.

The Dean’s Fellows will critique your writing assignments. The Dean’s Fellows are some of the best writers in the third-year class. They are also experts at legal citation. Professor Johnson meets weekly with the Dean’s Fellows as a group, and throughout the week with Dean's Fellows on an individual basis. In this way, the Dean’s Fellows are well prepared to offer a uniform message on the three objectives of the course. We believe the Vermont Law School tradition of collaborative learning in the non-competitive setting of a pass/fail course is the best way for you to begin your journey toward excellence in legal writing.
In addition to the mandatory conferences, the Dean’s Fellows will hold regular office hours to discuss your writing and your progress in the course. Students often say that their Dean’s Fellows become a mentor for legal writing and law school in general. Please take advantage of this opportunity to connect with accomplished 3Ls.

III. THE WRITING SPECIALIST

Our Writing Specialist, Professor Jared Carter, is available to help any student with the mechanics of his or her writing, including grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and organization. You can visit with Professor Carter before you hand a draft in, or after the Dean’s Fellows have returned your draft. Contact Rebecca Dube, rdube@vermontlaw.edu, Legal Writing Program Coordinator, for an appointment with the Writing Specialist.

IV. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All writing assignments must be typed on 8½” x 11” paper, and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font. You must number the pages of all papers. You must use Bluebook citation form on all writing assignments.

V. EVALUATION

Good legal writing involves sound legal analysis, logical organization, and a clear, effective style. Dean's Fellows will evaluate each paper by assessing its legal analysis, organization, writing, and citation form.

The rules about late papers are strict: You must ask permission to turn a paper in late. Permission will be granted only for good cause. Your paper will be marked down by 5% for each day it is late if you fail to ask for permission. One habit that lawyers must develop is the
ability to meet deadlines. Therefore, you must turn in your papers on time. If you get behind, you will find it very difficult to catch up. Please submit papers on time!

VI. GRADES

Grades will be computed as follows:

(1) IRAC Exercise 10%
(1) Discussion Section Assignment 30%
(4) Office Memorandum 40%
(5) Class Participation 20%

Class participation includes the email exercise; preparing answers for the workshop exercises; and participating in class discussion.

VII. GUIDELINES FOR COURSE WORK

Your work and conduct in the Legal Writing Program, as in your other courses, is subject to the Vermont Law School Honor Code. The exercises and papers you submit in Legal Analysis and Writing should be your own work product. You may, however, discuss ideas about any assignment with your classmates.

Whenever you use the words or ideas of another writer, you should acknowledge the original source. If you use the exact words of another person, use quotation marks and cite the name of the author and publication. Cite the original source even if you put another person's ideas in your own words. This rule includes cases and statutes. Never copy directly from a law review or other written material without indicating the actual author.
The Program Director, Dean’s Fellows, and Writing Specialist are looking forward to working with you this semester.

Have a good semester!