

**LEGAL ANALYSIS AND WRITING I**  
SYLLABUS  
FALL TERM, 2018

Legal Writing Program Director

Professor Greg Johnson, Ext. 1284, [gjohnson@vermontlaw.edu](mailto:gjohnson@vermontlaw.edu)  
Old Schoolhouse, Second Floor, Room 205  
Office Hours: Monday, 9 a.m.—11 a.m., Wednesday, 9 a.m.—noon,  
and by appointment

Dean's Fellows

Kaelyn Barbour  
Evan Baylor  
Amanda Carrington  
Hannah Clarisse  
Hannah Dean  
Sasha Gainen-Truslow  
Patrick Leary  
Allyson Moore  
Admira Nkouka  
Victoria Santry  
Kyle Sasser  
Margaret Shugart  
Kathryn Steffy  
Amy Stevens

**I. REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Richard C. Wydick, *Plain English for Lawyers* (5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2005).

Harvard Law Review et al., *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20<sup>th</sup> 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 Writing Lab led by the Dean's Fellows on Wednesday. The small-group Writing Labs give you an opportunity to work interactively with the principles discussed in Professor Johnson's lecture. The lecture and the Writing Labs are both seventy-five 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. 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 their writing, including grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and organization. You can visit with Professor Carter before you hand in a draft or after the Dean's Fellows have returned your draft. Contact Samantha Johnson, the Legal Writing Program Coordinator, at [sjohnson@vermontlaw.edu](mailto:sjohnson@vermontlaw.edu) for an appointment with the Writing Specialist.

### IV. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All writing assignments, except the email assignment, must be typed on 8 1/2" x 11" paper and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides (the email assignment is single spaced). 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 from your Dean's Fellow to turn a paper in late. Permission will be granted only for good cause. Good cause includes religious observance, illness, and personal emergency. 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 drafting 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 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!