

Legal & Policy Writing

weekend intensive

September 13th & 14th, 2019

Welcome to LPW, a course designed to fortify your writing skills as Master's students in law school, future professionals, and human beings. Some of what we'll cover here is basic and widely applicable. For instance: *what makes a clear and correct sentence? Does punctuation go inside or outside of quotation marks? What is the difference between THAT and WHICH?* And some of what we'll cover is specific to the legal and policy arena, for instance: *what is a policy memo and how do you write one? What is the difference between Bluebook and MLA citations?*

I think of this class as a bootcamp. If you've ever done any kind of bootcamp before, you know this means some of what you'll be doing here is tiring and repetitive and the pace is fast and the time is short. We're fitting weeks' worth of material into a weekend. But if you can stick with it and show up adequately rested (or caffeinated) and ready to ask questions and be engaged, you will leave on Saturday with increased confidence and strength in your ability to express yourself clearly.

Schedule

Friday, September 13th 2:30pm - 6:30pm
Saturday, September 14th 8:30am - 4:30pm (lunch break 12-1)

Readings

All readings are available on TWEN.

I. Readings due Friday

- *Plain English for Lawyers*, Richard C. Wydick (the law review article, not the book!)
- "Simplicity" (6-9) from *On Writing Well*, William Zinsser
- "Don't Mumble" (7-36) from *Writing that Works*, Roman & Raphaelson
- "Be Clear" (79) from *The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White
- "Rules and Nonrules" (6-19) from *Dreyer's English*, Benjamin Dreyer
- Style and Diction handout
- Shitty First drafts, Lamott

II. Readings due Saturday*

- *Writing that Works*, Roman & Raphaelson
 - Making it Easy to Read, 183-189
 - Email, 45-60

- Memos and Letters, 63-89
- Rwanda Radio jamming memo, KBM
- 2002 DOJ memo Re: Enemy Belligerency and Detention
- IRAC handout (*note*: do not worry about LEARNING the concept of IRAC on your own. We will go over it together in class. The handout is meant to introduce you to the concepts, but do not worry about understanding it all perfectly after reading it once).

* *Because you get out of class on 6:30 on Friday and have to be back at 8:30 on Saturday, it may behoove you to do all the readings for the weekend before Friday. But that, of course, is up to you.*

Assignments

1. *Exercises - due **FRIDAY***

Please do the exercises in the back of the Wydick article, found on page 757, Appendix A TRY TO DO THEM WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE ANSWERS IN APPENDIX B!! We will go over them in class.

2. *Read Good Writing - due **FRIDAY***

Please choose two essays to read from the list “Some Good Writing.” Try to find examples from the list that you genuinely like. And then, as you read or afterwards, jot down a list of things you liked. In your opinion, what about the essays made them good? Even though these essays are not in the category of legal writing, try to connect your thoughts back to the principles underscored in our other readings for this course (Wydick, Zinsser, etc.). Come prepared to share your thoughts in class.

3. *Practice: the Memo - due **SATURDAY***

Imagine you are an aide to a busy senator, and she has asked you to help her understand ONE of the following issues (i.e., you get to choose your prompt):

- The national debate on gun safety legislation
- Should cannabis be legalized at the federal level?
- Restorative Practices

Her reading comprehension is not great. She has no time and she wants easy answers.

Your assignment should take the form of a Memorandum. At the top of the page, please include the subject of the memo, the date, who it’s to and who it’s from. You will also want to use headers (like a roadmap) and simple words and sentences.

WORD LIMIT: 600 words. Times New Roman. 12 point font. Double Spaced.

BRING TWO COPIES!

Finally, a note on pride:

During our weekend together, please don't pretend to know something you don't. Not knowing is a great place to be. We'll be going over the basics—things you may have learned in elementary school—as well as covering new and complicated material. I ask only that you remain more curious than afraid and leave your pride at the door. You do not need to prove your worth here. We are gathered together to learn.