

LEGAL ANALYSIS AND WRITING I
SYLLABUS
FALL TERM, 2021

Legal Writing Program Director

Professor Greg Johnson, gjohnson@vermontlaw.edu
Office Hours:
Tuesday, 1-3 pm, Old Schoolhouse, Second Floor

Dean's Fellows

Nikki Adelman
Michelle Amidzich
Simeon Brown
Heather Francis
Mary Franco
Morgan Fryar
Mariah Harrod
Kendall Keelan
Addison Kelty
Ashely Monti
Catherina Narigon
Kijana Plenderleith
Diarra Raymond
Brandon Sheffert

I. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Richard C. Wydick & Amy Sloan, *Plain English for Lawyers* (6th ed. 2019).

Harvard Law Review et al., *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21st ed. 2020).

Course Packet (on TWEN—online

II. THE COURSE

The three objectives of Legal Analysis and Writing I are to introduce you to 1). Key principles of clear and precise writing; 2). Legal organization and IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion); and 3). Rules of legal citation. You will learn and apply these lessons 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 meet with your Dean's Fellow to discuss your draft. 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 Meg York, is available to help any student with the mechanics of their writing, including grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and organization. You can meet with Professor York before you hand in a draft or after the Dean's Fellows have returned your draft. If you do, you must ask Professor York specific questions about your draft; do not ask Professor York to "look this over." Contact Professor York at myork@vermontlaw.edu to make an appointment.

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 *Plain English* 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, the Dean's Fellows, and the Writing Specialist are looking forward to working with you this semester.

Have a good semester!