**Advanced Legal Writing Workshop**

Spring 2017

Prof. Name Prof. Email Prof. Phone

Office Hours:

**Class Times**: Wednesdays 10:10 a.m.-1:10 p.m. Room:

**Course Goals**:

* Build on skills in legal discourse introduced in the first year Legal Practice course, including analyzing and conceptualizing legal issues, crafting effective written analysis, understanding and meeting the expectations of the audience, organizing documents to enhance clarity, and applying those skills to new forms of legal writing
* Improve students’ ability to critically assess their own and others’ legal writing and provide helpful feedback in a professional setting
* Improve time management skills and develop an effective writing process that can be adapted for a range of contexts in legal practice
* Learn techniques for effective teamwork and collaboration
* Develop confidence in transferring legal writing techniques across genres

**Required and Recommended Texts:**

Required: Ray & Cox, Beyond the Basics: A Text for Advanced Legal Writing (West 2013)

A Uniform System of Citation, 20th edition (the Bluebook – print or online version)

Recommended: Joseph M. Williams, Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity & Grace

**You are expected to have read the reading** assignments, which lay the foundation for classroom discussion and exercises and for your independent writing assignments, and the classroom discussion will assume your familiarity with and build from the assigned readings rather than going over them explicitly. Of course, questions about the substance of any reading assignment are always appropriate within the seminar discussions themselves or outside of class, but the class time is intended to be largely interactive and not lecture-based. As you read the assigned portions of the text, your goal should not be memorization of the content. Instead, focus on gleaning (1) an idea of what the chapter covers regarding strategy, content, and other major themes; (2) an understanding of the writing techniques discussed and how and when they can be used; and (3) an awareness of the priorities and main concerns involved in the particular genre of legal writing.

**\*\*Bring the R&C textbook with you to class each week, as we will use its exercises and assignments during class time.**

**Assessment**:

This is a Special Requirement course, in which your grade will be primarily based upon a series of writing assignments throughout the semester rather than on an exam or single end-of-semester paper. Assignments should be submitted directly to the professor through the course TWEN page; print copies of some assignments will also be required. Class participation will also factor into the grade for the course. The minimum requirements for passing the course include timely and satisfactory completion of all assignments and regular attendance at class.

Each major assignment will have specific goals; some goals will be specified by the professor, and some goals will be specified by you. Most assignments (other than in-class exercises) will be submitted first as a draft and then as a final product, with an opportunity to receive feedback after the draft is submitted. The grade for each major assignment will be based upon (1) assessment of how successful the draft was in accomplishing the goals for the assignment; (2) evaluation of how effective your revisions to the draft document were in addressing the feedback you received on the draft, and thus how successful the final document was in accomplishing the goals for the assignment; (3) professionalism/polishing/timeliness of the draft and final documents. Please note that drafts are expected to be complete and polished; they are only designated as “drafts” because there will be an opportunity to rewrite the document to address substantive issues before it receives a grade. In addition, the seminar will incorporate in-class writing exercises during most classes, the quality of which will be considered in the class participation portion of the grade for the course.

All of your writing for the semester – your draft and final versions of each assignment, your goal statements for each assignment, your comments on your peers’ draft assignments, your in-class writing exercises, and your reflection memos – must be posted in the appropriate subfolder of the folder assigned to you on the TWEN site. This will be your portfolio for the seminar. In addition, a copy of your comments on peers’ draft assignments must also be posted in the folder for the person on whose paper you commented. The professor will post her comments on your draft assignments in your folder as well, so that all material relevant to each assignment can be easily located. All of the folders will be accessible to all members of the class, as an important part of the seminar is learning how to give and receive critical feedback on professional writing.

Keep in mind that the Student Disciplinary Code and plagiarism policy, as well as expectations of professional conduct, apply and that the **material required to be posted on the TWEN site is not permitted to be shared outside of the seminar.**

Feedback on final documents and the grade received on each major assignment will not be posted on the TWEN site but will be individually conveyed to students.

The following indicates how each major assignment and class participation factor into the final grade for the course – but these percentages as well as the assignments themselves are subject to change if we (as a class) agree to a different allocation during our first few workshops based on your interests and preferences:

* First Project (Part 2: Controlling Meaning – Statutes) – 10%
* Second Project (Part 2: Controlling Meaning - Contracts) – 10%
* Third Project (Part 3: Shaping Meaning and Response – Objective Statement of Fact) – 10%
* Fourth Project (Part 3: Shaping Meaning and Response – Discussion Section) – 20%
* Fifth Project (Part 3: Shaping Meaning and Response – Argument Section) – 20%
* Sixth Project (Part 5: Creating Tone – General Correspondence) – 10%
* Class Participation (includes timeliness of assignments, attendance, in-class writing exercises, peer reviews of partners documents, reflection essays, goal-setting statements, and active engagement in classroom activities) – 20%

**Major Assignment Deadlines** (note that there will be additional small assignments, such as in-class exercises, reflection essays, and peer reviews, due on a weekly basis – but most of these small assignments will be completed during class time); all of the writing projects listed below are due at the start of seminar unless otherwise specified:

First Project: Draft due Jan. 25; final due Feb. 1

Second Project: Draft due Feb. 8; final due Feb. 15

Third Project: Draft due Thurs. Feb. 23 by 5 pm; final due March 8

Fourth Project: Draft due March 29; final due April 12

Fifth Project: Draft due April 19; final due April 26

Sixth Project: Draft will be written and uploaded in class on April 26; final due May 1 by 5 pm

**Formal Requirements for Assignments:**

Unless instructed otherwise for a particular assignment, all assignments must be double spaced, with 1-1/2 inch margins on all sides, and in at least 12-point font. Two-sided printing is permissible for print copies. There will not be specified word limits for most assignments, but we will discuss as a group what the reader’s reasonable expectation might be for each assignment and conciseness will be one of the qualities considered in the grade for each assignment.

**Late Assignment Policy**:

Late assignments will be accepted, but a pattern of late submissions will have a negative impact on the class participation portion of the course grade; late submission of any assignment without an extension will also have a negative impact on the grade for that assignment. Extensions of time will only be granted if requested in writing via email to the professor in advance of the deadline (unless it is impossible to do so, as in the case of a family emergency, sudden illness or injury) and good reason is given. Also, late assignments may receive no written comments or other feedback, at the professor’s discretion.

**Attendance:**

Class attendance is required. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on the class participation portion of the course grade. If you need to be excused from a class, you must (unless circumstances make it impossible to do so) contact the professor before class via email to request permission, which will only be granted for unavoidable circumstances. Unavoidable circumstances means illness or injury, illness or injury of a dependent family member, a death in the family, religious holiday, or a job commitment that cannot be rescheduled, such as a court hearing. Determination of unavoidable circumstances is up to the professor.

Because every class meeting will involve in-class writing exercises, any student missing a class should make arrangements with the professor to make up the missed exercises as soon as possible.

**Course Recording Policy:**

The default option applies to this seminar: All of the class meetings will be recorded, but the Law Center will only approve release of a recording to enrolled students meeting one of the limited circumstances set forth in the Policy for Audio- or Video-Recording of Classes (e.g., serious medical situation, religious observance, or family emergency).

Note, though, that because of the workshop nature of the course, listening to a recording of a missed class is an imperfect substitute for attendance. We will be doing many in-class exercises and critiques, with little lecture. Thus, attending class is particularly important. Any in-class work that a student misses must be made up, and it is up to a student who misses a class to make arrangements with the professor for an extension of time to make up the work and a deadline for submitting it.

**Laptop policy:**

A laptop or tablet is a necessary part of the seminar; during most classes, you will be asked to research or write in class.

**Syllabus**:

**[Note: Subject to change as we discuss what the goals/interests of the class members are throughout the course of the semester]**

**Week 1 (1/18): Critiquing Your Own and Others’ Legal Writing; Statutory Drafting**

Read: Sommers article (link available on TWEN site);

R&C pp. 1-7 (Ch. 1);

R&C pp. 28-58 (Ch. 3, through Exercise 1, which we will do in class); and

skim R&C pp. 59-67 (Assignment 2, which will be your First Project)

Due: No more than two-page self-assessment of your (1) strengths as a legal writer;

(2) weaknesses as a legal writer; and (3) primary learning goals for the course this semester. Bring a print copy to seminar; I’ll have you post an electronic version during classtime after you are set up as an administrator on the TWEN site.

**Week 2 (1/25) First Project Peer Review; Setting Revision Goals; Process Discussion**

Read: R&C pp. 10-24 (Ch. 2)

Due: Draft First Project (Ch. 3, Assignment 2, pp. 59-67); submit e-version in appropriate TWEN folder before start of seminar; bring print copy to seminar

**Week 3 (2/1) Reflection on Process; Goals for Second Project (Contract)**

Read: R&C, Ch. 5, pp. 107-126; skim pp. 129-131 (Exercise 2, which we will do in class); and p. 136 (Assignment 2, which will be the Second Project)

Due: Final Draft of First Project – rewritten version of statute (Ch. 3, Assignment 2, pp. 59-67) in light of professor and peer feedback and your revision goals. Submit print copy at the start of seminar; upload e-copy on TWEN before the start of seminar

**Week 4 (2/8) Peer Review of Second Project (Contract); Setting Revision Goals; Planning the Revision Process**

Due: Draft of Second Project – e-version must be posted on TWEN before start of seminar; bring print copy to class

**Week 5 (2/15) Reflection on Second Project; Goals for Third Project (Fact Statement)**

Read: R&C, Ch. 7, pp. 175-190; skim pp. 190-193 (Exercise 1, which we will do in class) and p. 193 (Assignment 1, which will be the Third Project)

Due: Final Draft of Second Project – upload to TWEN before start of seminar; bring print copy to seminar

**Week 6 (2/22): No class, faculty retreat**

**Due by 5 pm on Thurs. 2/23**: Draft Third Project (upload electronic copy on TWEN)

**Week 7 (3/1) Peer Reviews of Fact Statement Drafts; Objective vs. Persuasive Fact Sections of Legal Documents**

Read: R&C, Ch. 8, pp. 195-216; skim pp. 220-21 (Assignment 2, which we will do as an exercise in class, including a quick read of the statutory provisions and cases listed under “Relevant Law” on p. 221)

Due: Complete Peer Review form for Draft Third Project – upload e-copy on TWEN before start of seminar and bring print copy to seminar

Note: Individual Conferences will be held during class time on March 8 to discuss your portfolio to date and individual writing goals for the second half of the semester; sign up for your time in class on 3/1

**Week 8 (3/8) Individual Conferences; Reflections on Third Project; Planning the Fourth Project**

Read: R&C, Ch. 9, pp. 224-252; review pp. 169-171 and the Relevant Law cited on p. 171; come to your conference prepared to discuss any questions you have about the Fourth Project

Due: Final Draft of Third Project – upload e-copy on TWEN by 10:00 a.m.

Reflection on Third Project – complete and upload your reflection on the Third Project, answering the questions posed by the professor, by 1:10 p.m.

Note: Class will not meet today; instead, students will meet individually with the professor at the times they signed up for in class on 3/1. In addition, students should schedule a time during the regular class time to meet for 45 minutes with their Fourth Project partners to begin the research process for the project (you may use our regular classroom, but it’s also fine to meet elsewhere). Also, a brief reflection on the Third Project is due by 1:10 p.m.

**Week 9 (3/15): No class, spring break**

**Week 10 (3/22) Drafting the Discussion Section for the Fourth Project: Organizational Choices, Rule Synthesis, and Analogical Reasoning**

Due: Research Outline for Fourth Project – expand your research for the Fourth Project and present it in outline form, organized using one of the common patterns discussed on pp. 234-241; upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class (note that this assignment will not be graded; it will be used as a starting point for discussions about the possible organizational schemes, rule formulations, and uses of authority for analogical reasoning in drafting the Fourth Project)

**Week 11 (3/29) Peer Review of Draft Fourth Project; Goals/Process for Revision; Begin Revisions of Fourth Project**

Due: Draft of Fourth Project – upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class

**Week 12 (4/5) Reflection on Fourth Project; Goals for Fifth Project; Begin Fifth Project**

Read: R&C, Ch. 10, pp. 259-283; skim Exercise 1 on pp. 283-84, which we will do in class

Due: Final Draft of Fourth Project – upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class

**Week 13 (4/12) Planning the Fifth Project: Research, Organization, Rule Synthesis, and Analogical Reasoning**

Due: Research Outline for Fifth Project – Read/review the authorities listed under “Relevant Law” on p. 221 for Assignment 2; organize the legal issues as you anticipate presenting them in the Argument section; engage in additional research beyond the authorities listed on p. 221 where you feel it is needed to bolster your persuasiveness; upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class

**Week 14 (4/19) Peer Review of Draft Fifth Project; Goals/Process for Revision; Begin Revision**

Read: R&C, Ch. 14, pp. 382-394 (focus on discussion of persuasiveness and tone to help you in the peer review of the Fifth Project, but keep the details about correspondence in mind for next week, when you will start the final project – a letter to a client)

Due: Draft of Fifth Project – upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class

**Week 15 (4/26)** **Reflecting on the Fifth Project; Crafting Correspondence: Audience and Tone**

Read: R&C, Ch. 14, pp. 364-382; skim Assignment 2 on p. 395, which you will work on in class, with a revised version due by May 1

Due: Final Draft of Fifth Project – upload e-copy on TWEN before start of class; bring print copy to class

Final Sixth Project (revision of letter written in class on 4/26) due by 5 pm on Monday, May 1.