

WRITING AND LEGAL REASONING
Spring 2025 - Day and Evening Class
Director: Professor Anne Hemingway

Updated January 10, 2025

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 pm – 4 pm or by appointment

Writing Lab: Drop-in Mondays and Wednesdays 4 pm-6 pm

Required Text: *The Lawyer's Craft*, Glaser, Lieberman, Ruescher, & Su
Just Writing, Anne Enquist & Laurel Currie Oates (6th)

CLASS DAYS/TIMES: Monday and Wednesday, 11:00-12:20 p.m.*, 1:00-2:20 p.m.*, and 9:00-10:20 p.m.

***Day students will be randomly assigned to an 11:00 am or a 1:00 pm class.**

Students are responsible for bringing handouts to class. All handouts are on the course TWEN page (<https://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen>), and select **Writing and Legal Reasoning**.

****Writing classes are intentionally kept small for an ideal learning environment. You will be assigned a professor during your first class. Your class assignments will be posted to the course TWEN page on Westlaw(<https://lawschool.westlaw.com/twen>). If you need help logging in, contact Dan Harayda (harayda@mslaw.edu) or Mick Coyne (mick@mslaw.edu).**

Please note: The syllabus is subject to change. You will be informed of changes as they occur.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to address the needs particular to first-semester law students. In addition to improving your writing and grammar skills, you will learn various skills crucial to your legal studies, exam-taking, and writing tasks. You will begin by learning how to conduct legal analysis and spot and analyze legal issues that will benefit you in exam taking and the memoranda and brief writing you will do in subsequent semesters. You will become proficient in briefing cases and writing in the IRAC formula.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grading: Your final class grade will be based on case briefs, quizzes, short writing assignments, an outline, three prepared papers, and a final exam. Class participation and preparedness will also count toward your grade. You should be fully prepared for each class and act professionally at all times.

Assignments: Cases for case brief assignments are in the coursebook for your substantive class unless otherwise stated. Other assigned material will be posted under the Course Material tab on the course TWEN page. Check TWEN for every class. Students are responsible for bringing these materials to class. Assignments should be submitted on time and in the appropriate format.

Late Policy: Assignments are due **at the beginning of your regular class time** on the due date. Any assignment submitted late will have 10% of the total possible points deducted per calendar day (including the day it is due if not turned in at the beginning of class.)

Possible points awarded for assignments:

Case Briefs (3 x 10 pts)	30 pts
Writing Skills Exercises (only 4 will count)	40 pts
Short Answer IRACs (5 x 15 pts)	75 pts
Outline (2 x 5pts)	10 pts
Analysis Paper (IRAC)	25 pts
Inter-office Legal Memo First Draft	50 pts
Inter-office Legal Memo Final Draft	85 pts
Final Exam	100 pts
Total:	415 pts

Attendance Policy: Students must attend all classes on time. If a student has over two unexcused absences, their final course grade will be lowered by 1/3. Any student who misses an in-class assignment will not be allowed to make it up unless the student has informed the instructor that they will not be able to attend class that day **and the instructor has excused the absence.**

A critical component of practicing law is always acting professionally. Since law school is where you learn to become a lawyer, you should always handle yourself professionally. This includes but is not limited to attending class regularly and on time, submitting assignments on time and in the appropriate format, actively participating in class, turning cell phones off *before* class, and not surfing the Internet or using e-mail during class. Also, how you conduct yourself in your interactions—both in person and via e-mail—with the professor and others reflects your professionalism.

Cell Phones and Messaging: Cell phones may not be used during class. All cell phones must be turned off before the class begins except in extraordinary circumstances.

If a family emergency requires you to be reachable, approach me before class and inform me of the situation. In this case, you may keep your cell phone on so long as it is on “vibrate” only.

ASSIGNMENTS DUE FOR EACH CLASS

Week of January 20th: Course overview. Introduction to Legal Analysis. Analyzing Legal Issues. Proofreading. 1

Monday: NO CLASS – Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Wednesday: Review of Plagiarism. Analyzing Legal Issues.

Writing Skills Exercise: Proofreading (in class)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* – Ch. 1 pp 7-18, Ch. 2 pp 19-38
Just Writing Ch. 1, pp 1-21

Week of January 27th: Reading and briefing cases. Thesis & Topic Sentences. 2

Monday: Reading and briefing cases.

Wednesday: Thesis and topic sentences.

Case Brief #1 Due: Langer v. Superior Steel

Writing Skills Exercise: Paragraphs (in class)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* – Ch. 3, pp 40-62; *Just Writing* – Ch 2 & 3, pp 23-45; Materials on TWEN.

Week of February 3rd: Rule-Based Reasoning, Issue Spotting, and IRAC. 3

Monday: Rule-Based Reasoning.

Wednesday: Issue Spotting & IRAC

Writing Skills Exercise: Paragraphs & Transition Sentences (Take Home)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: Materials/Video/Cali Lesson on TWEN; *Just Writing* – Ch. 4, pp 47-61.

Week of February 10th: Continuation of IRAC. Outlining – Papers, Class Notes, Exams. Preparing for Exams. 4

Monday: Continue IRAC and issue spotting.

Writing Skills Exercise: Passive Voice (**in class**)

Wednesday: Discussion of outlining for papers, classes, and exams and preparing for law school exams. Assign first Torts outline.

Short Answer IRAC #1 Due: Contracts

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft*, Ch. 17 pp 293 – 304; Materials on TWEN – Read: Article – *Creating an Outline for a Law School Course*. *Just Writing* Ch. 1, §1.2 and Ch. 5, §5.1-5.5 Effective Sentences.

Week of February 17th: Statutory Analysis 5

Monday: Introduction to statutory analysis.

Writing Skills Exercise: Concision

Case Brief #2 Due (Torts): **Martin v. Herzog**

Wednesday:

Short Answer IRAC #2: Contracts (**completed during class**)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* Ch. 5 pp 79-98. *Just Writing* Ch. 6 Effective Words. Materials on TWEN.

Week of February 24th: Analogy-Based Reasoning. Analysis Paper (IRAC). 6

Monday: Expanding IRAC – using case law to analyze by analogy. Students will be assigned the Analysis Paper.

Wednesday: Students will receive last week's graded case brief for review. Discussion of Analysis Paper (IRAC) and comparing facts.

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* – Ch. 4, pp 63 -77. *Just Writing* Ch. 5, §5.7.

Week of March 3rd: The Legal Memorandum 7

Monday: Discussion of Analysis Paper

Short Answer IRAC #3: Torts (completed during class)

Wednesday: Introduction to the legal memorandum

Analysis Paper Due

Writing Skills Exercise: Fragments (in class)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft*, Ch.6. and Ch. 7 pp 115 -136.
Just Writing Ch.9 §§1&2

Week of March 10th: Rule Synthesis 8

Monday: Introduction to rule synthesis – deriving one rule from multiple cases

Wednesday: Assignment of inter-office legal memorandum first draft

Case Brief #3 – (completed during class)

Torts Outline #1 Due: January 21st – March 7th

Required Reading and Assignment Due: Articles/Video Posted to TWEN. Read the inter-office legal memorandum assignment.

Week of March 17th: 9 **SPRING BREAK**

Week of March 24th: The Question Presented, Discussion, and Conclusion 10

Monday: Discussion – cases assigned for the inter-office legal memorandum.

Case Briefs Due: Students read and brief the cases for the inter-office legal memorandum assignment.

Wednesday: Drafting the question presented and the conclusion.

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft*, Ch. 8 pp 145 -155. Students should brief the cases for the legal memorandum. Material on TWEN

Week of March 31st: Legal Authorities and Citations 11

Monday: Introduction to binding v. persuasive authority and legal citations. Continued discussion of the cases for the legal memorandum. Discussion – inter-office legal memo continued.

Short Answer IRAC #5 Due: Contracts IRAC

Wednesday: Discussion – the inter-office legal memo continued.

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft Ch 12.*

Week of April 7th: Headings and Subheadings 12

Monday: Discussion – the inter-office legal memo continued

Writing Skills Exercise: Modifiers (in class)

Wednesday: Final discussion on the inter-office legal memo; Headings- section headings, major/minor headings, and subheadings

Required Reading and Assignment Due: Material on TWEN. *Just Writing:* Ch. 9, §9.6

Week of April 14th:¹³

Monday: Self-Editing Exercise – bring a printed copy of your first draft of your inter-office legal memorandum.

Inter-office Legal Memorandum -First Draft Due

Wednesday:

Short Answer IRAC #6: Torts IRAC (completed during class)

Week of April 21st: 14

Monday: Conferences

Wednesday: Continue conferences, if needed; Review Torts IRAC

Writing Skills Exercise: Commas

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *Just Writing:* Ch. 10, §10.1 -10.3

Week of April 28th: E-Memos. Preparing for Finals/Wrap up. ¹⁵

Monday: E-memos and email correspondence.

Wednesday: TBD – Final Exam Review

Inter-office Legal Memorandum -Final Draft Due

Required Reading and Assignment Due: Materials on TWEN

Week of May 5th: ¹⁶

Monday: Final Exam

Torts Outline #2 Due: March 10th – May 2nd