

WRITING AND LEGAL REASONING
Spring 2026 - Day and Evening Class
Director: Professor Anne Hemingway

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS – 12/3/25

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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, including links to videos and CALI lessons, will be posted under the Course Material tab on the **TWEN** page. You will need to register for **CALI**. 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.**

Professionalism: 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 set to “vibrate” only.

ASSIGNMENTS DUE FOR EACH CLASS

Week of January 19th: Course overview. Introduction to Legal Analysis. Proofreading. 1

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

Wednesday: Review of Plagiarism. Introduction to Legal Issues and Reading Cases.

Writing Skills Exercise: Proofreading (in class)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* – Ch. 1 pp 7-18, Ch. 2 pp 19-25
Just Writing Ch. 1, pp 1-21.

Week of January 26th: Reading and briefing cases. Thesis & Topic Sentences. 2

Monday: Reading and briefing cases.

Wednesday: Continue briefing cases. Analyzing Legal Issues. Thesis and topic sentences.

Writing Skills Exercise: Paragraphs (in class)

Required Reading and Assignment Due: *The Lawyer's Craft* – Ch. 2, pp 26-38 and Ch. 3, pp 40-62; *Just Writing* – Ch 2 & 3, pp 23-45; Materials on TWEN.

Week of February 2nd: Rule-Based Reasoning, Issue Spotting, and IRAC. 3

Monday: Rule-Based Reasoning and Issue Spotting

Case Brief #1 Due: Langer v. Superior Steel

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

Wednesday: Legal Analysis Organization: IRAC

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

Week of February 9th: Continuation of IRAC. Outlining – Papers, Class Notes, Exams.
Preparing for Exams. 4

Monday: Continue IRAC. Students will be assigned Short Answer IRAC #1.

Writing Skills Exercise: Passive Voice (in class)

Wednesday: Discussion of outlining for papers, classes, and exams, and preparing for law school exams. Assign the 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*. *Just Writing* Ch. 1, §1.2 and Ch. 5, §5.1-5.5 Effective Sentences.

Week of February 16th: 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 23rd: 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 and Ch. 7, pp 115- -143. *Just Writing* Ch. 5, §5.7. *Materials on TWEN*.

Week of March 2nd: The Legal Memorandum 7

Monday: Discussion of Analysis Paper – describing the law.

Writing Skills Exercise: Fragments (in class)

Wednesday: Introduction to the legal memorandum

Analysis Paper Due

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

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

Week of March 9th: Rule Synthesis 8

Monday: Assignment of the inter-office legal memorandum first draft

Case Brief #3 – (completed during class)

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

Torts Outline #1 Due: January 21st – March 6th

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

Week of March 16th: 9 **SPRING BREAK**

Week of March 23rd: 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. Organization of the discussion section.

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 30th: Legal Authorities and Citations ¹¹

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

Wednesday: Introduction to binding v. persuasive authority and legal citations.

Short Answer IRAC #4: Contracts IRAC

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

Week of April 6th: Headings and Subheadings ¹²

Monday: Headings- section headings, major/minor headings, and subheadings.

Writing Skills Exercise: Modifiers (**in class**)

Wednesday: Final discussion on the inter-office legal memo;

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

Week of April 13th: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 #5: Torts IRAC (**completed during class**)

Week of April 20th: ¹⁴

Monday: NO CLASS – PATRIOTS' DAY

Wednesday: CONFERENCES

Week of April 27th: E-Memos. Preparing for Finals/Wrap up. ¹⁵

Monday: E-memos and email correspondence.

Writing Skills Exercise: Commas

Wednesday: TBD – Final Exam Review

Inter-office Legal Memorandum -Final Draft Due

Week of May 4th: ¹⁶

Monday: Final Exam

Torts Outline #2 Due: March 6th – May 2nd