U.S. LEGAL RESEARCH, ANALYSIS & WRITING
Georgetown University Law Center
LAWG-844-16 (CRN #: 29467)
Professors Kate Wagner and Tim Work

Syllabus - Spring 2017

Overview: This course’s objective is to acquaint international lawyers with the basics of the U.S. court system and civil litigation, as well as the form and style of discourse used in U.S. legal practice. The course will focus on practical writing and analytical skills that students will be able to apply in any practice setting. By the end of the course, students will be able to undertake a typical U.S. legal research and writing project with minimal further instruction.

Class Schedule: The class will meet for thirteen weeks on Tuesdays: January 17, 24, 31; February 7, 14, 28; March 7, 21, 28; and April 4, 11, 18, 25. Class will be held from 7:55 p.m. to 9:55 p.m. in Hotung 6005.

Professor Contact Information:
Kate Wagner: [redacted]
Tim Work: [redacted]

Office Hours: Both professors are available to meet with students by appointment. Please contact either professor to arrange a mutually agreeable time.

Grading: The grades for this course will be Honors, Pass, and Fail/No Credit. Grades will be based on the final writing assignment (70%) and classroom participation (30%). Any homework that is assigned will be used for classroom exercises, and therefore will be part of the classroom participation grade. Unless extenuating circumstances are present, such as illness or a family emergency, a student cannot pass this class if the student is absent three or more times. If a student will miss a class, the student should contact both professors before that class.

Course Materials: The course uses the following textbook:

Stephen V. Armstrong & Timothy P. Terrell, Thinking Like a Writer: A Lawyer’s Guide to Effective Writing and Editing (3d ed.)

Other assigned texts will be posted on TWEN (Thomson-West’s online course website, accessible in conjunction with Westlaw). When drafting the final writing assignment, students will find it beneficial to have access to The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (20th ed.). The bookstore stocks these, and reference copies are available in the library.

Other texts that students may find helpful include:

In-class computer policy: Having been in law school relatively recently, we believe that having access to computers in class can be distracting for both the students and the teachers. Although you are permitted to use computers in class, they are to be used only for class purposes. If we believe computers are routinely being used for non-class purposes, we reserve the right to prohibit their use during class.

Important Tools for Course: This course will require you to use two important resources: (1) TWEN and (2) an online legal-research service—either Westlaw or LexisNexis (or their next-generation tools, WestlawNext and LexisAdvance) as you prefer. You must “add” this course on TWEN in a timely fashion, and you should ensure that your access to Westlaw and/or Lexis is working properly as well.

Assignment Format: All assignments should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font and double spaced, with 1” margins (top, bottom, left, and right) and a centered page number in the bottom footer. All footnotes should be in 12-point Times New Roman font. Submit the assignments using the assignment drop box on the course’s TWEN site. Pay careful attention to the assignment due dates.

Georgetown Policy on Withdrawal From Class: Under the revised course withdrawal rules, you may withdraw from this class with an Academic Advisor’s permission up until the last scheduled class for this course (as specified in this syllabus) or the day on which you submit work for grading, whichever is earlier. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more information about requesting to withdraw from a course after add/drop.

Class Audio Recording Policy: Because the majority of class sessions will be based around class exercises and interaction that require direct participation, no class recordings will be made. If a student cannot attend a lecture-based class, students may obtain a lecture outline from the professors, and the professors will make themselves available to discuss the subjects covered in that class.

Georgetown Plagiarism Policy: Georgetown University Law Center’s plagiarism policy can be found on pages 105 to 106 of the Student Handbook of Academic Policies: http://www.law.georgetown.edu/campus-services/registrar/handbook/upload/Conduct_Policies.pdf. Plagiarism can be avoided through the proper use of legal citation, which will be taught in this course. Violation of the plagiarism policy may result in a referral to the student-faculty disciplinary committee.

All assignments should be a student’s own work. Students should not work in groups on any assignment unless the professors explicitly state that group work is allowed. Students must ask if they have any question regarding whether group work is allowed. If group work is allowed, each student must turn in his or her own copy of the assignment.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Topics</th>
<th>Assignment Due for Following Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 (Jan. 24)</td>
<td>➢ Discuss a Case ➢ Common Law System ➢ Basic Civil Procedure ➢ Court Structure in the U.S. ➢ Binding vs. Non-binding decisions</td>
<td>Read: <em>Int’l Shoe Co. v. Washington</em>, 326 U.S. 310 (1945); U.S. Const. art. 6, cl. 2</td>
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<td>Week 3 (Jan. 31)</td>
<td>➢ What Types of Cases Do I Cite and When? ➢ Personal Jurisdiction ➢ Choice of Law ➢ Hierarchy of Constitution, Statutes, Regulations ➢ Supremacy Clause</td>
<td>Read: <a href="http://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1716&amp;context=lawreview">http://digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1716&amp;context=lawreview</a> (pages 123-30); case to be handed out in class</td>
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<td>Week 4 (Feb. 7)</td>
<td>➢ Case Citing Homework ➢ Role of the Constitution ➢ Legal Citation and Signals ➢ Sources of Law</td>
<td>Complete citation homework</td>
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<td>Week 5 (Feb. 14)</td>
<td>➢ Westlaw Training</td>
<td>Read: <em>Thinking Like a Writer</em> (chapters 1-2); Handout on email memos</td>
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*Assignments and class topics may change if the professors determine that this would serve the needs of the course.*
| Week 6 (Feb. 28) | ➢ Discuss Research Assignments and the Research Loop  
➢ Supplemental Westlaw Training  
➢ I Have an Assignment, Now What?  
➢ Types of Writing Assignments  
➢ Pre-Writing | Read: Thinking Like a Writer (chapter 3)  
Complete email memo |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Week 7 (Mar. 7) | ➢ Writing Structure  
➢ Tips for Good Writing | Read: Thinking Like a Writer (chapter 4) |
| Week 8 (Mar. 21) | ➢ Troubleshooting (What if I Get Stuck?)  
➢ What if There Is No Law?  
➢ Introduce Assignment | Draft outline of writing assignment |
| Week 9 (Mar. 28) | ➢ Review Outline  
➢ Writing Structure (cont’d) | Draft memo; email to professors by 2:00 PM on Apr. 3; print two copies for class  
Read: Thinking Like a Writer, (chapter 13) |
| Week 10 (Apr. 4) | ➢ Proof Reading  
➢ Peer Review of Drafts | Revise drafts; email to professors by 5:00 PM on Apr. 9 |
| Week 11 (Apr. 11) | ➢ Meeting with Professors between Apr. 10 and 14 (no regularly scheduled class) | |
| Week 12 (Apr. 18) | ➢ De-brief and Questions From Meeting with Professors  
➢ How to Get Better  
➢ Further Resources  
➢ Final Assignment | Begin working on final assignment  
Bring questions about final assignment for next class |
| Week 13 (Apr. 25) | ➢ Questions?  
➢ Pizza Party | Final assignment due by 11:59 PM on May 16 |