ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS: AN OVERVIEW
Spring 2016

Section 2: Wednesdays, 11:10-1:10
Section 1: Wednesdays, 1:20-3:20
Williams 520 A/B

The continuing purpose of this class is twofold: (1) to give international lawyers a foundation for their study of the American legal system, including brief introductions to selected legal fields, and (2) to provide opportunities for students to develop and practice their legal English skills. The course will provide practice in all four areas of language learning within the context of the law: writing, speaking, listening, and reading, but will depend significantly on students’ initiative to avail themselves actively of those opportunities.

This will continue to be a lecture and discussion class, including in-class exercises, writing, and unannounced quizzes or assessments based on the previous week’s homework or classwork. Small group work and peer review will provide important opportunities to practice speaking on legal topics, critiquing legal writing, and honing the “language of the law.” A portion of most of the classes will be devoted to legal vocabulary or usage.

Practice writing about, discussing and analyzing short common law cases is integral to this course. Recognizing that law students in regular law classes are expected to brief every case read in preparation for class (and later for reference in studying for exams), you are expected to brief every case read in this class as part of your homework, whether the brief is specifically assigned or not. These briefs are for you to reference in class as a part of class discussions and exercises. Sometimes these briefs will be collected, sometimes not. At times you may be given time in class to refine your brief on your own or with a peer editor. The concept is to develop the habit and improve your ability to think through or analyze cases and write briefs that are helpful and on-point.

Class Policies and Practices

1. You are required to attend all classes. If you must be absent from class, you must email me prior to your absence. Punctuality is imperative.
2. You are required to complete all assignments and in-class exercises for the year to pass this course. Follow directions carefully. Reading and assignments must be completed prior to class.
3. Bring a hard copy of all assignments to class unless otherwise instructed. Some assignments will be collected and some will not be collected, but will be referred to in class.
4. No computers may be open in class unless otherwise instructed. Bring your laptops to class in case you need them, but do not open them up unless otherwise instructed.
5. You are expected to participate actively in class. This being a language class, active individual involvement in this class is integral to learning to speak the language of the law.
6. Cell phones must be out of sight during class. Please tell your family to call Kimberly Martin, Graduate Programs receptionist, at [insert phone number], if they have an emergency while you are in class. She will send someone to notify you.
7. PowerPoints will be posted on TWEN a few days after class, but keep in mind they are outlines and will not comprehensively cover everything discussed in class.

**Class Topics This Semester**

Following are the main topics to be covered during the semester. Topics may be adjusted from time to time in accordance with the class’s needs. Some topics we will study in parallel. For the most part, we will be following the topics in *Strategies*:

- **Follow-up on Gideon**
  - The public defender system
  - *Pro bono* service
- Introduction to torts (3-4 classes)
- Introduction to contracts and drafting documents (3-4 classes)
- Introduction to property (2 classes)
- Statutory interpretation (1 class)

**Speaker:** Prof. Timothy Westmoreland on the legislative process

Within the context of these topics, we will also continue to build legal vocabulary and focus at various times on usage, plain English vs. legalese, concision, commonly litigated words, how to write a business letter and a business email, and related legal language topics. I am hoping to engage speakers on human rights and international law.

**Weekly Assignments**

**Preparation for class is essential and mandatory.** Class time is of little value without preparation. Assignments will generally be given on a week-by-week basis for the following week. They will be posted on the TWEN calendar. Please follow directions carefully.

All assignments are required and those that are collected *must* be submitted on the due date (the next week after assigned unless otherwise specified). If an extension of the due date is needed, you must contact me prior to the due date of the assignment.

In most cases you are to turn in a hard copy of those assignments that are collected. Please note those instances when you are to submit your work instead through the TWEN drop box. Even if homework is not collected, **have a hard copy on hand for reference during class** discussion, for correcting in class, or for revision during peer review.

Some assignments will be corrected or reviewed in class rather than collected – I will tell you during class whether you are to turn them in. Some assignments are for background information or practice and may not be discussed specifically in class – if you have any questions, please check with me.

**Formatting:**
- Double space all assignments.
- Case briefs – Limit to one page to the extent possible.
- Use headings as instructed in class.
- Fold paper in half vertically and write your name and section number on the right side.
Some assignments will require peer editing by another student who does not speak your native language, in which event that student must sign “Reviewed/edited by [name]” on your work. You are then to revise your first draft after considering your peer editor’s suggestions and making other improvements. Then on the due date hand in (1) the first draft of your work showing the peer edits and (2) your carefully proofed revision. As a peer editor yourself, consider your editing an important part of your own work, just as it is in practicing law. I will be looking over your editing comments to be sure they are carefully considered, helpful, and reflective of the material presented in class.

You are encouraged to correct papers returned to you and hand the revision back in to me to look over again to assure that you have understood how to correct your mistakes and have learned from them.

**Long-term assignments**

1. Brief oral report on an article discussing a legal topic of interest (not a current events article)
   Rolling due dates: Please sign up on TWEN for a date to present your oral report.
2. Observation of or participation in pro bono service, with report – hard copy
   Due date for report: Last class, April 27
3. Section 1: Report on observation of oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court – hard copy
   Due Date: April 20

Please refer to the handouts describing the above assignments.

If you wish to receive my comments on your assignments that are due the last day of class, either 1) submit the assignment a week early, or 2) submit with your assignment a stamped, self-addressed envelope (“SASE”) so I can return it to you.

**Texts**

We will continue with these texts:

*Strategies for Legal Case Reading and Vocabulary Development* (2007), Susan M. Reinhart
   – primarily for reference
*The Constitution of the United States*, with amendments – for reference

Other readings will be posted online or handed out.

Please bring the *Strategies* text with you to class every week, as well as any text needed for the past week’s homework.

**Dates to Note**

2/17/16 Classes do not meet.
3/9/16 Spring break – no class
4/20/16 Due date for report on observation of the U.S. Supreme Court – hard copy
4/27/16 Last class; due date for *pro bono* assignment – hard copy