

## ***Writing Workshop Series Descriptions — Fall 2010***

***Week 1: Planning your Legal Academic Writing Process*** In this workshop you will be encouraged to put sound research and writing practices in place at the outset of the semester. Before the workshop, review the legal and academic writing you have done in the past in English and in other languages and consider how your current academic writing may fit into your future professional plans. During the workshop you will listen to a Georgetown Law faculty member who will provide insight into the composition processes and style practices of legal scholars. Finally, after the workshop you will develop a research plan and writing schedule for the semester.

***Week 2: Refining your Seminar Research Scope*** In this workshop you will work on articulating your research topic in English and refining your research scope. Before this workshop, write a one page description or “road map” of your topic. At the workshop, you will present a brief overview of your topic and discuss it with a partner. This exercise can also assist you in preparing for face-to-face conferences with your professors or for other presentations. Longer term goals covered in this workshop include furthering your confidence, credibility, and expertise as you enhance your authoritative academic legal voice in English.

***Week 3: Utilizing Legal English Vocabulary*** In this workshop you will increase your comfort with general and legal vocabulary and terminology, including legal terms of art in English. Before this workshop, make a list of key terms that your research areas may entail. At the workshop, you will be introduced to using a corpus, a tool to understand the nuances of meanings between similar words, find examples of how words are used in context, and figure out appropriate grammatical usage. Referencing a corpus may become a strategy that you use to regularly aid in your legal English reading comprehension and to increase your vocabulary.

***Week 4: Implementing Legal Research Writing Methods and Practices*** In this workshop you will state and substantiate your research claim. Although a thorough review of the literature demonstrates a level of care and rigor, your paper must also include your own innovative thinking on the topic. In this workshop, you will learn how to distinguish these throughout the research and writing process. Bring your research notes to the workshop. Learning to properly attribute your sources during note-taking will prepare you to follow citation conventions when drafting to avoid plagiarism. After this workshop you should be better positioned to gauge when to stop reading and researching and to start drafting your paper.

***Week 5: Writing a Working Draft via an Iterative Process*** In this workshop you will focus on crafting and drafting your paper. Key topics covered include making decisions about what to lead with, anticipating questions, and researching your audience and readers. Bring an outline draft of your paper to the workshop that can be used to progressively refine the paper’s content and organization. Techniques for changing writer’s block to writer’s flow will be suggested. During the workshop you will consult with your peers to review your writing’s readability. After the workshop you will follow-up with experts regarding the paper’s content to check and supplement your research.

***Week 6: Understanding U.S. Legal and Academic Writing Culture*** In this workshop you will gain further understanding of academic and legal writing expectations in the U.S. As you continue to educate yourself on the similarities and differences between legal and academic writing styles in the U.S. and other systems that may be more familiar to you, you will learn to identify and deal with cross-cultural roadblocks that you may encounter. You will also learn to manage situations to reduce anxiety and build your confidence in navigating multiple legal and academic contexts and cultures. Bring questions, examples, and concerns with you to the workshop.

***Week 7: Demonstrating Coherent, Cohesive, and Concise Written Communication*** In this workshop you will refine your argument and evaluate your paper’s overall design, use of subheadings, and support for your thesis or claim. Bring a copy of your paper to do a side by side comparison of the introduction and conclusion. During the workshop you will return to your table of contents to (re)organize your working draft and you will write an abstract. A review of your use of transitions words and phrases may lead to suggestions on how to vary these to increase readability and make smoother transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and paper sections.

***Week 8: Editing and Proofreading your Final Draft*** In this workshop you will improve the readability of your paper. Bring a draft of your paper to the workshop. A peer will provide you insight on how your content is received and how well you have ensured the reader’s processing needs have been met. You will also learn techniques to develop your own personal editing skills and indicators to know when to consult with others. After this workshop you will be encouraged to consider wider audiences for your paper, such as preparing a writing sample for a job, a writing competition, or for future publication.