

Lawyering Skills I: Legal Writing § 3
Syllabus Fall 2025
Professor Caitlín Gossett

Professor Contact Information:

Caitlín Gossett, caitlin.gossett@siu.edu

Room 240

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1pm – 2pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistant Contact Information:

Jarrick Honn, jarrick.honn@siu.edu, 831-917-6414

Room 0266B

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 2pm -3 pm or [Book time to meet with me](#)

Class Sessions:

Tuesday & Thursday 3:00pm - 4:00pm, Classroom 204 (LSAR 204)

Friday 9:00 am - 10am, LSAR 204

Required Texts:

- Richard Neumann, Jr., Sheila Simon, ad Suzianne Painter-Throne, Legal Writing (5th ed., Wolters Kluwer 2015). ISBN 978-1-5438-5438-5864-8
- The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed.)
- Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises Subscription [Mastering The Bluebook Interactive Exercises 2025-26 Edition : Login](#)
 - Login Code:
 - Discount Code: SIULAW25

Recommended Texts:

- Black's Law Dictionary (12th ed)
- Strunk and White, The Elements of Style (4th ed.)

Course Overview & Objectives

This semester focuses on developing the foundational writing and research skills for lawyers. These skills serve as your first set of “tools” in your lawyer’s “tool kit.” In this course you will learn how to:

- a) participate in the legal community through writing and speaking effectively
- b) understand and research case law and statutes.
- c) apply the law to new sets of facts by identifying legal issues and then
- d) effectively communicate your analysis within the legal community.

Some of the concrete skills you will build include: write a legal memorandum, interview a client and cite sources of law. You will also begin build your core values as a lawyer by learning how to establish credibility within the legal community and complete legal tasks with an awareness of how law impacts and individual or a group.

Part of successfully completing this course will involve participating in class discussions, team work, patience, grace with yourself and your classmates and active listening.

Developing effective legal research and writing skills requires time, critical thinking and incorporating feedback.

Assignments

Assignments will include: reading, in-class group work, citation exercises and exam, and written memorandum . This syllabus posted on D2L. All written assignments must be submitted on D2L as a MICROSOFT WORD DOC on the due date. Failure to complete any assignment fully can affect whether you receive a passing grade for the course.

Microsoft Word is FREE. [Download Microsoft 365 for free through SIU.](#)

Graded Assignments

- Memo 1 – 30 pts
- Citation Exam on Online Mastering the Bluebook – 10 pts
- Client Interview – 15 pts
- Memo 2 – First Draft – 8 points
- Memo 2 – Final Draft – 80 pts
- Online Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises – 2pts each
- Other in class exercises as assigned – 2pts each
- Teaching Assistant and Professor Required Conferences – *Minus 3 pts if missed*

Assignment Due Dates

Due dates are strictly enforced. It is your responsibility to make sure an assignment is turned in on time even if are not in class the day it is due. Extensions are generally not permitted and will be given only circumstances beyond your control.

Class Participation:

Each student is expected to participate in class discussion having read the material for the day. During group work and projects, all group members are expected to equally participate to the learning efforts and deliverables of the group.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken in class and attendance records will be kept. Violation of this rule shall subject the student to penalties”

Students may have no more than a maximum of **four absences** (partial or total) for any reason. The attendance requirement is not subject to modification by a professor, nor may a professor excuse an absence. If the absences allowed under this provision have been exhausted, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may grant leave and relief from the regular attendance requirement in extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to: (1) military service; (2) representing the law school at a moot court, mock trial, law review, or official function; (3) jury duty; (4) religious observances; (5) the birth of a child; (6) the death of an immediate family member to include grandparents; (7) major non-elective surgery or a prolonged hospital stay; or (8) to comply with federal or state antidiscrimination laws, other applicable laws, or SIU policies.

It is expected that students will review the slides and materials and view the recording of any classes they missed and come to Office Hours with questions.

Recording Policy

For the benefit of students who are unable to attend a particular class due to an unavoidable circumstance, it is my hope that class sessions will be recorded and made available for viewing. Students must request the recordings directly from me. These recordings and materials are not to be shared with students outside the class.

All other recordings of the class are prohibited. Unauthorized recordings and unauthorized access to recordings will be governed by the School of Law Honor Code, § II.E.1.g.

General Guidelines & Collaboration Policy

You must do your own work on the assignments. Do not copy anyone’s answers (including AI) or share your work with others. Copying answers or ideas violates the Honor Code.

Plagiarism results when you use another’s work and submit that work as your own. This rule applies not only to copying work by other students, but also to copying language and ideas from other sources, including treatises and cases. How to avoid:

- Acknowledge direct use of a source’s words with quotation marks and a citation.
- Acknowledge any paraphrase of a source’s words with a citation.
- Acknowledge direct use of a source’s idea with a citation.
- Do not copy/use someone else’s or AI’s response to the assignment.

You may talk with the Teaching Assistants and me about assignments, and you may discuss ideas or assignments with classmates. You may not—(except as allowed during in-class group work)

- write an assignment jointly
- edit another student’s writing
- copy anyone else’s work
- use AI’s responses in your writing
- read another student’s writing before it is turned in or before you turn in your assignment

Accessibility Statement

SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Disability Support Services coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval, please contact DSS immediately at 618-453-5738 or disabilityservices.siu.edu. You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to ensure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty. Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreements for each course to the School of Law Registrar's Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations

Emergency Procedures

We ask that you become familiar with Emergency Preparedness @ SIU. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness @ SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts, visit <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.

Saluki Cares and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)

The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal.

A counselor is at the law school every Wednesday from noon until 4:30pm in Room 268 for drop-in appointments.

For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-2461, or siucares@siu.edu, <https://salukicare.siu.edu/>.

. Additionally, counseling services are available through CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) | Student Health Services | SIU).

Safety Awareness Facts and Education

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, resources are here: <http://safe.siu.edu>

Week 1

August 19: Class Introduction

August 21:

N-pp. 1-25, 35-52

B-Rule B1.1 (pp. 3-4) and Index

August 22: MBIE Exercise 1 Due

N: 27-33, 69-78

B: Tables T1-T16 and Index

Week 2

August 26: Memo Exercise 1 Due: Facts & Brief Cases Due

N: pp. 135-144

B: Rule B10

August 28:

N: pp.; 145-162

B: T1

August 29: MBIE Exercise 2 Due

Week 3

September 2: MBIE Exercise 3 Due

N: pp. 91-111

September 4: MBIE Exercise 4 Due

N: pp. 189-98

B: B2-B9

September 5: Memo Ex 2 Due: Rules

N: pp. 165-176

Week 4

September 9: MBIE Exercise 5 Due

N: pp. 69-78

September 11:

N: pp 79-89

September 12: MBIE Exercise 6 Due

Week 5

September 16: Memo 1 Partial Draft Due: In Class Peer Review

September 18: N: pp. 53-52

B: B15 and B18

September 19 Memo Ex. 3 Due: Rules & Case Illustrations Due

Week 6

September 23: N: re-read 165-176

September 25: 179-186

September 26: Required Conferences

September 27: **Memo 1 Due**

Week 7

September 30: Legal Research

October 2: Legal Research

October 3: Legal Research

Week 8 – Midterm Week No Class

October: 6

October: 8

October: 9

Week 9

October 14: Legal Research

October 16: Legal Research

October 17: Legal Research

Week 10

October 21: MBIE Exercise 7 & 8 Due

N: 121-125

October 23:

Memo 2 cases

October 24:

Memo 2 Cases

Week 11

October 28:

N: pp. 201-204

October 30:

B: Index

October 31: Memo 2 Draft Due

Week 12

November 4: Citation Workshop

November 6:

November 7: **MBIE: Citation Exam Due**

Week 13

November 11: No Class

November 13: Bring Memo 2 Updated Draft

November 14:

Week 14

November 19:

November 21:

November 21: Required Conferences

November 22: **Memo 2 Due**