

Lawyering Skills I: Legal Writing (“LW”)

Syllabus | Fall 2025 | LAW 510A-951 | Bruegger



Class Meetings

Tuesday & Thursday: 11:00 am-12:00pm (virtual), or in person with advance notice.

Friday: 9:00-10:00am (virtual), or in person with advance notice.

Contact Info

Prof. John Bruegger

Email: TBD

Office: Teams during office hours or by appointment

Office hours: Fridays 2:00-3:00 pm or [by appointment](#).

Teaching Assistants

There will be teaching assistants further into the class, and I will provide their information shortly.

Administrative Assistant

Katie Rumsey Katie.rumsey@siu.edu

NOTICE: Legal Writing and Legal Research classes will be combined and connected for certain sessions and projects. Certain weeks will be dedicated to one subject or the other. Legal Research weeks may be in a different classroom. Check the syllabi for both courses.

Course Description, Overview & Learning Outcomes¹

Welcome to LW! Every attorney, no matter what you hope to do after graduation, needs to know how to write well. This course will teach you how to write in the format that is not only the “typical” but the expected format of legal writing. The new format may be a struggle but give into it and it will help you write more effectively for exams, legal writing assignments, summer law clerk tasks, the Bar exam, and beyond. Short answer: embrace the CREACC.

Your performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of short written assignments, worksheets, online modules, class participation, and memoranda. The workload for this course typically will involve about four hours of preparation outside of class every week, along with more extensive time for the Final Memorandum.

This class is closely connected and will share class time and some assignments with the Legal Research course.

This course complies with the School of Law’s Credit Hour Policy and will require **at least 42.5 hours of total work per credit.**

Laptop Ban Policy (modified for remote classes)

To encourage comprehensive listening and avoid digital distractions, **digital devices such as phones, tablets, e-readers, etc., will not be allowed** during the class session unless an in-class activity is assigned that requires a digital device. Obviously laptops or desktops are required for connections. I would prefer if you did not connect to the class using a phone.

Physical skeleton outlines for notes will be distributed at the beginning of each class, and students can take their class notes on those (or in a notebook) and later add them to their digital devices after class as review.

Students needing accommodations should contact me ASAP.

¹ The syllabus is likely to change as the semester progresses depending on the speed at which we move through content. Please check D2L to make sure you have the most updated syllabus. If there are any changes to the syllabus, they will be announced.

Assigned Materials

- Required Texts
 - C. Coughlin, *A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis*, 4th ed (2024), ISBN 9781531020705 [herein referred to as “ALW”]
 - *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (22nd edition) [herein referred to as “BB”]; either online on the spiral bound version, **but it must be the 22nd edition that came out in 2025.**
 - Other readings will be distributed as required
- Required Technology
 - Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises Subscription [Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises 2025-26 Edition: Login](#) [herein MBIE]
 - Class Login Code:
 - **Discount Code: SIULAW25**
 - **yearlong subscription may used in LWII as well*
 - A laptop, desktop, or other appropriate device for accessing class sessions.
 - D2L page for assignments, announcements, and more
- Strongly Recommended
 - Wydick & Sloan, *Plain English for Lawyers*, 7th ed (2024), ISBN 9781531023492.

Grading & Assessment Methods

This course is required to adhere to the mandatory first year grade distribution (i.e. the 1L curve). *Note: I have seen grade lines forced to be drawn by 1/2 point, so remember each point counts.*

Mandatory Pass/Fail Graded Assignments:

- Memo 1 –Separate Assignments and re-draft – 4 pts each
- 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*
- ***On time, satisfactorily completed assignments that show effort was made will receive full points. Otherwise, submissions that are late or show little effort will receive zero points.***

Graded Assignments

- Memo 1 – Final Draft – 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

Attendance, Participation & Professionalism

- Active participation and professionalism – 5pts. As future attorneys, you are expected to maintain professionalism throughout your personal and professional lives. I expect the same in class.
- If a student is not prepared to discuss assigned materials when called upon or fails to actively participate in class activities, the student will be marked absent for that class, and the student's grade may be lowered. Students may have a maximum of four absences (partial or total) as per Simmons Law School policy.

Assignments

There will be a variety of assignments during the semester: reading assignments, in-class group and individual assignments, citation exercises and exam, and written memorandum (partial and full). See below for due dates. These are subject to change if we need to spend more time on a particular concept. This syllabus will be updated and posted on D2L as needed.

All written assignments come with detailed instructions and, unless otherwise noted, must be submitted on D2L as a MICROSOFT WORD DOC on the due date. Usually, the due date is **08:00 a.m. on the due date** unless the syllabus and D2L reflect any differences. You will receive feedback that reflects your performance with detailed suggestions for improvement. Failure to complete any assignment fully can affect whether you receive a passing grade for the course.

Assignment Due Dates & Late Policy

Just as in the court, due dates and times are firm and are strictly enforced. All assignments are to be turned in before the start of your class session via D2L unless the assignment specifically sets a different deadline. Extensions are generally not granted and will be given only for extreme circumstances that are clearly beyond your control. If you are not in class on a day that a written assignment is due, it is still your responsibility to make sure that your assignment is turned in on time. If you are absent on a day of an in-class assignment, you are still responsible for that assignment but can request an extension.

If any *pass/fail assignment* is late without a granted extension, zero points will be awarded for the assignment.

If any *graded assignment* is late without a granted extension, **three penalty points** against total semester points will be imposed for each such late assignment at the moment it is late. If it is handed in more than an hour past the deadline, **three additional points will be deducted and then another three for each twenty-four hours thereafter** until all semester points are exhausted.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are to be submitted via D2L by the due date and time. These should be WRITTEN and SUBMITTED using MICROSOFT WORD DOC – **not Google Docs or iOS Pages**. Other formats

do not have the required formatting features that the legal professional requires and will cause serious issues when converting (trust me, I have seen it over and over). Microsoft Word has the needed features and is FREE. [Download Microsoft 365 for free through SIU.](#)

Class Participation

As a law student, I expect that you will come to class having read the material for the day and ready to participate in the class discussion. Students will be called on in class, often without advance notice (“cold-called”), so be prepared to be responsible for helping me explain concepts and cases. Everyone is expected to participate in class discussion, and you are always free to raise your hand and volunteer an answer, offer a helpful observation, or ask a question. Law school is a learning laboratory, and we can all learn from each other. During group work and projects, all group members are expected to equally participate to the learning efforts and deliverables of the group. If a group member is reported or observed as not participating, deductions from the participation points will be made.

Attendance

Legal Writing/Research class three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) from 9:00-10:00 am. As specified in the Rules of the Southern Illinois University School of Law, “regular attendance to class meetings in all courses is expected and required of all students in accordance with the rule to be announced by the professor at the beginning of each course. 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. I will post the class PowerPoint slides each week to D2L. 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. The actual expression of your responses to the assignments must be your own. Do not copy anyone's answers (including AI) or share your work with others. Copying answers or ideas violates the Honor Code.

As we will discuss in class, 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:

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

A. Dishonest Citation

You will be penalized for dishonest citation. Dishonest citation means—

- Citing a source that does not support the proposition asserted.

- Altering or omitting language in a quotation without indicating the alteration or omission. If you quote, you must quote exactly or indicate alterations and omissions.
- Quoting a commercial summary or research aid as if it is the underlying source.

B. “Talk” collaboration

You may talk with the LW class Teaching Assistants and me about assignments, and it is also permissible to discuss ideas or questions about assignments with other students. 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

This ban on collaboration includes obtaining written materials from *any* other person or AI and/or communicating with any other person about an assignment. This ban on collaboration applies to both graded and ungraded exercises. If you violate the ban on collaboration policy, you can be found in violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. *When in doubt about how to proceed, ask me or a TA.*

C. Ban on Plagiarism and Collaboration

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s work, ideas, or words and passing them off as your own without crediting the source. **Plagiarism is not permitted in this course.** You must acknowledge the use (direct or indirect) of an outside source by using citation.

You are also not allowed to collaborate on assignments in this course. This means you may not obtain written material or communicate with anyone (including your fellow students) about an assignment except your me (your professor) and my TAs. This includes, but is not limited to, writing an assignment jointly, editing another student's work, copying anyone else's work, reading another student's work before it is turned in or before you turn in your assignment. ****Note that I consider using AI (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) to be collaboration.** ** Submissions will be run through an AI/Plagiarism checking software. **

You need to learn to write well before turning to AI to supplement. Do not be like these lawyers.

Sara Merken, *Lanyer who used flawed AI case citations says sanctions unwarranted in whistleblower case*, Reuters (Aug. 27, 2024) <https://www.reuters.com/legal/transactional/lawyer-who-used-flawed-ai-case-citations-says-sanctions-unwarranted-2024-08-27/>;

Sam Skolnik, *Lanyer Sanctioned Over AI-Hallucinated Case Cites, Quotations*, Bloomberg Law (Nov. 26, 2024) <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/litigation/lawyer-sanctioned-over-ai-hallucinated-case-cites-quotations>;

John Russel, *Sanctions ordered for lawyers who relied on ChatGPT artificial intelligence to prepare court brief*, Courthouse News Service (June 22, 2023) <https://www.courthousenews.com/sanctions-ordered-for-lawyers-who-relied-on-chatgpt-artificial-intelligence-to-prepare-court-brief/>;

Golriz Chrostowski, *ANALYSIS: Sanctions for Fake Generative AI Cites Harm Clients*, Bloomberg Law (April 3, 2024) <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/bloomberg-law-analysis/analysis-sanctions-for-fake-generative-ai-cites-harm-clients> (“... attorneys should be very careful with their use of generative AI. One misstep may mean a call to their malpractice insurer.”).

If I find that you have plagiarized or collaborated while working on an assignment, you will receive zero points for that assignment, lose professionalism points, and possibly incur other penalties. You will be

reported and may be found in violation of the school's Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. Note that an Honor Code investigation may be reported to the Bar Examiners.

If you have any questions about this policy, ask me. It is not worth it to plagiarize or collaborate.

******Note: if there is any deviation from the class collaboration policy (for example, group work), the instructions on the assignment will be clear about what is allowed.***

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.

Course Standards

When you became a lawyer, you entered a profession requiring ethical behavior, professional competence, the ability to meet deadlines, and an awareness of rules. You will be expected to maintain these standards in LW.

Failure to Follow Instructions Counts against You

Each assignment has detailed instructions. If you are uncertain about what to do, do not guess. Seek clarification or discuss the assignment with me. Point deductions will be made if instructions are not followed.

Lateness Counts against You

Due dates and times are firm and are strictly enforced. Late assignments will receive a point deduction. If a student repeatedly submits late assignments, I will alert the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, which will then contact the student directly.

D2L & MBIE

Assignments, announcements, and other notices will be posted on the D2L platform. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the information posted on D2L prior to the examination. All assignments will be posted on D2L. Citation assignments will not be posted on D2L. Instead, all check the syllabus and go to the MBIE platform for those assignments.

AI Tools Policy

In this class, it is a violation of the honor code to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor, including work produced by a generative AI tool such as ChatGPT, by characterizing that work as your own. In this class, you may not use generative AI for any writing task, including without limitation for generating text or images, outlining, grammar checks, revision to achieve a certain word count, or revision of organization.

The above ban on collaboration includes obtaining written materials from any other person or generated artificial intelligence and/or communicating with any other person about an assignment. This ban on collaboration applies to both graded and ungraded exercises. If you violate the ban on collaboration policy, you can be found in violation of the Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. An Honor Code investigation must also be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if you are cleared of any violation. When in doubt about how to proceed, ask me.

Office Hours

Since this class is primarily remote, I do not have the same “open door” office policy other professors may; however, I have set aside time (listed on page 1 above) just for the purpose of meeting with 1L students. Office hours are an open forum, and everyone is invited in groups. Do not plan to discuss personal items or anything you are not comfortable sharing with a group. Bring your questions for clarification. I’m also available to meet with students 1-1 by appointment. We can meet in person if I am on campus or via Teams. Please use this [Bookings Link](#) to book a time to meet with me that works best in your schedule. If you prefer to meet in Teams during the appointment, please email me directly confirming that preference after making the booking.

Teaching Assistants & Required Meetings

A. Teaching Assistants

This course will have two teaching assistants (TAs). I will provide their information later in the class.

B. Required Meetings:

You are welcomed and encouraged to visit any and all TAs in office hours to get a different perspective as often as you would like. Legal writing (albeit formulaic) offers opportunity for different possibilities for individual flair based on the legal writer, so it is beneficial to learn about the different varieties from professor and TAs. Similar to a law firm where every partner will have a different writing style, so too will every TA and professor.

ALL students **are required** to meet at least once with the TA to discuss Memo 1 before it is due. The TAs are required to mark your attendance at the meetings, and it is your responsibility to meet with them (by 9/26) to discuss Memo 1 before it is due to discuss your questions and concerns. **If you fail to meet with the TAs as required, you will lose 3 semester points.**

Additionally, you **are required** to meet with Prof. Bruegger at least twice to video conference – once about Memo 1 (by 9/26) and once about Memo 2 (by 11/21) – but are welcome to visit more often! **If you fail to meet with the professor as required, you will lose 3 semester points per meeting.**

Signup times and deadlines for the individual conferences will be posted in the schedule below. It is your responsibility (and your points) to meet with the TAs and professor. We will not chase you to meet with us.

Course Plan & Assignments

The below course plan will list the readings and assignments due on each class day. Dates marked in light pink are *outside* of normal class meetings. Assignments must be submitted in Word Document format through D2L. This plan is likely to change. Updates will be posted on D2L and announced in class.

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
Week 1			
August 19 (LW)	Class Introduction & Expectations	<i>Distribute Memo 1 Problem & Syllabus</i>	
August 21 (LW)	How Attorneys Communicate	ALW 1 How Attorneys Communicate ALW 7.3 Explaining the Law: Citing and Avoiding Plagiarism ALW Appendix A, B (sample Memos)	Request Microsoft Office from Saluki Tech and download to computer
August 22 (LW)	Case Reading, Citation Introduction & Rule Intro	ALW 3 Reading for Comprehension	MBIE: Set 1 – State Cases DUE
Week 2			
August 26(LW)	Organization & Structure	ALW 7.1 Explaining the Law: Rules	Summary Memo 1 Facts and Brief Cases Due
August 28(LW)	Roadmaps & Questions Presented	ALW 13 Question Presented, sections I, II & III (pgs. 229-240)	
August 29 (LW)	Case-finding & Organization	ALW 4 Finding Your Argument ALW 5 Organization Your Legal Authority	MBIE Set 2 – Federal Cases DUE
Week 3			

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
September 2 (LW)	Rule-Based Reasoning (WATCH RECORDING)	ALW 8.1 Applying the Law; Rule-Base Reasoning	
September 4 (LW)	Binding, Persuasive, Primary, Secondary Sources	ALW 2 Sources & Systems of the Law	Complete Lecture Quiz (based on recording)
September 5 (LW)	Statement of Facts	ALW 14 Statement of the Facts	Memo 1 Draft Rule Clusters Due MBIE Set 3 – Multiple Parties Due
Week 4			
September 9 (LW)	Statutes	ALW 11 Statutory Analysis	MBIE Set 4 – Reporters Due
September 11 (LW)	Intro to Case Illustrations	ALW 7.2 Explaining the Law: case Illustrations ALW 8.2 Applying the Law: Analogical Reasoning	
September 12 (LW)	How To Use Case Illustrations	No reading due	MBIE Set 5 – Businesses & Organizations DUE
Week 5			
September 16 (LW)	Peer Review of Case Illustrations	No reading due	Case Illustration draft due via D2L for in-class peer review
September 18 (LW)	Arguments	ALW 6 One Legal Argument ALW 9 Conclusions to One Legal Argument	
September 19 (LW)	Discussion Section	ALW 12 The Discussion Section: Introducing & Connecting Legal Arguments	Memo 1 Rules & Case Illustrations Section Due

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
Week 6			
September 23 (LW)	Adverse Authorities & Policy	ALW 8.3 Applying the Law: Counter-Analyses ALW 10 Policy	MBIE Set 6 – Governmental Parties DUE
September 25 (LW)	Brief Answers & Conclusions	ALW 13 Brief Answer, section IV (pgs. 241-244) ALW 15 Conclusion to the Memorandum	
September 26 (LW)	In Class Writing Day for Memo 1 <i>*Memo 2 Problem Distributed & Discussed</i>		<i>Required Conferences with Prof. Bruegger AND TA RE: Memo 1 DUE</i>
September 28			Memo 1 Due (full Memo) Sept. 28 at 11:59pm
Week 7			
September 30 (LR)			
October 2 (LR)			
October 3 (LR)			
Week 8	MIDTERM WEEK		
October 7	No Class		
October 9	No Class		
October 10	No Class		
Week 9			
October 14 (LR)			
October 16 (LR)			
October 17 (LR)			
Week 10			

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
October 21	How to Interview Clients	Interviewing client from Memo 2 (reread notes and research for Memo 2)	MBIE Set 7 DUE
October 23	Client Interview (scheduled in firms) No Class Scheduled	Read Memo 2 Cases to prep for interview	<i>Prep questions with firm to ask client</i>
October 24	Client Interview (scheduled in firms) No Class Scheduled	Read Memo 2 Cases to prep for interview	<i>Prep questions with firm to ask client</i>
Week 11			
October 28	Other Ways to Communicate	ALW 17 Client Letters	MBIE Set 8 DUE
October 30	Drafting a Client Letter	No reading due	
October 31	Research & Writing Day for Memo 2 (in class)		Memo 2: Submit First Draft 12:00 pm (NOON)
Week 12			
November 4	Citation Workshop with TAs 12:15 -1:15 p.m.	<i>Lunch served</i> <i>Citation Exam Opened</i>	
November 6	Review Memo Format: focus on CREACC & Feedback from Draft Memo		
November 7	Research & Writing Day for Memo 2 (in class)	No reading due	MBIE: Citation Exam DUE Nov. 7 11:59pm
Week 13			
November 11	Polishing your final draft	16 Editing and Polishing	
November 13	In-Class Polishing	In-class Memo 2 Polishing – bring your edited draft!	
November 14	Research & Writing Day – Memo 2		
Week 14			

	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
November 18	LW for finals and the bar exam: issue spotting task memos	No reading due	
November 20	In class mini MPT assignment	No reading due	
November 21	Final Class – Wrapping Up Final Questions on Memo 2 & How to Present to Your Supervisor	No reading due	<i>Required Conferences with Prof. Bruegger re: Memo 2 DUE</i>
November 22			Memo 2 Full Draft Due 11:59pm

This Syllabus incorporates by reference the [Provost Syllabus Attachment](#) and the below Law School Syllabus Attachment.

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT

SIU SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL – Fall 2025

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/>.

DISABILITY POLICY. 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. Please send approved accommodations to your faculty through the DSS online portal.

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. By working closely with faculty, staff, students, and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-2461, or siucares@siu.edu, <https://salukicare.siu.edu/>. Associate Dean Sheila Simon ssimon@siu.edu or (618) 536-8321 is available at the Simmons Law School to help students access university resources. Additionally, counseling services are available through CAPS (*Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) | Student Health Services | SIU*). A counselor is at the law school every Wednesday from noon until 4:30pm in Room 268 for drop-in appointments.

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, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://safe.siu.edu>