

Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School
Lawyering Skills I: Legal Writing – Section 4
Fall 2024

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Kaitlyn Poirier

Email: kaitlyn.poirier@siu.edu

Office: Room 250

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 AM to noon, by appointment, and anytime my office door is open.

Teaching Assistant: Sharilyn Lane

Email: sharilyn.lane@siu.edu

Class Sessions:

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-2:30 PM in Room 204

Course Description:

This course will provide you with a strong foundation for drafting non-persuasive legal documents. You will also develop new lawyering skills, such as interviewing a client, interacting with supervisors, and correctly citing legal authority in documents.

Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should learn how to:

1. draft office memos, request for information letters, client letters, and professional emails;
2. identify pertinent facts when presented with a case file;
3. analyze statutes and case law to determine the applicable rule of law;
4. effectively organize your writing;
5. edit legal writing;
6. correctly cite to authorities;
7. conduct client interviews; and
8. engage with other students using active listening, empathy, allyship, and respect.

Required Texts:

1. Legal Writing by Neumann, Simon, and Painter-Thorne (5th ed.)
2. The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed.)
3. Plain English for Lawyers by Wydick and Sloan (6th ed.)
4. Any supplementary materials that may be uploaded on the D2L course management website

Attendance:

The law school's policy regarding attendance applies to this course. Rules of the Southern Illinois University School of Law Academic Year 2024-2025 at pgs. 24-26, https://law.siu.edu/_common/documents/rules/sol-rules.pdf.

In short, you are allowed to miss only **FOUR** classes during this course. If you miss more than four classes, you will be withdrawn from the course or receive the lowest possible grade. The only exception to this rule is if the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs excuses your absence for extraordinary circumstances (such as military service, jury duty, death of an immediate family member, etc.).

Grading:

You will be required to complete many writing assignments and exercises in this course. I have listed the assignments and exercises that will be graded below, as well as the maximum number of points you may earn for each of them. At the end of the semester, I will add all of the points you have earned for these assignments together. This will determine your final grade for the course.

I will provide you with grading criteria for each assignment as it is assigned. If you have any questions about how I will grade assignments, please ask me.

1. **Email communications with supervisor (10 points)** In this course, you will be assigned the role of either a legal intern at the Illinois State's Attorney's Office or a summer associate at the law firm of Lakshmi, Gordon, & Berry, LLC. During the semester, you will need to communicate with your supervisor at the State's Attorney's Office or law firm via email.
2. **Outline for closed memo (10 points)** You will be asked by your supervisor to write a memo analyzing a legal issue in your case. In preparation for your closed memo, you will need to prepare an outline.
3. **Draft closed memo (40 points)** You will receive all of the law and facts you need to draft this memo. No outside research is permitted. I will give you written feedback on your draft memo .
4. **Final closed memo (50 points)** This is a final version of your closed memo.
5. **Bluebook Exam (30 points)** There will be an in-class Bluebook exam during the semester. The exam will be open book, but you will need to be familiar with the Bluebook to finish in time.
6. **Request for Information (20 points)** In your role as a legal intern or summer associate, you will need to craft a letter requesting information from people or entities involved in the case.
7. **Draft open memo (50 points)** Because you did such a great job on your closed memo, your supervisor will ask you to write another memo analyzing additional legal issues in your case. However, this time you will need to conduct your own research to find applicable law and utilize it in your memo. I will give you written feedback on your draft memo.

8. **Final open memo (100 points)** This is a final version of your open memo. But be warned, your very demanding supervisor might ask you to analyze one additional issue in this memo...
9. **Client letter (20 points)** Your open memo is complete! But now you have to summarize the information in your memo and relay your thoughts to a client.
10. **Writing Exercises (50 points)** You will be assigned exercises to improve your writing skills throughout the semester. To earn all 50 points, you need to demonstrate that you are proficient in these skills. Turn the exercises in on time and do your best.
11. **Participation (20 points)** I expect that you come to class ready to participate. In other words, read any material that I have assigned for that day's class, complete any assignments, and be prepared to contribute to that day's discussion. You can contribute to the discussion by volunteering to answer a question, making an observation, or respectfully debating with me and/or your classmates. I might also call on you with no advance notice, so be prepared.

I recognize that there might be days that you do not want to participate in that day's discussion. Maybe you did not have time to read the materials or stayed up too late watching Netflix. No judgment. It happens. **ONCE** per semester, you can opt out of that day's discussion. Either send me an email or write a note and place it on my lectern before class saying you are opting out. I will not call on you that day. Use this power wisely—you only get one free day!

Deadlines:

All lawyers operate on deadlines, whether they are set by your boss, your client, the court, or yourself. Therefore, in preparation for your future legal career, you will operate on deadlines in this course. This course has "hard deadlines," meaning that you must complete your assignments on time. If you miss a deadline (even by one minute), you are required to send me your completed assignment and a Motion for Leave to File Out of Time explaining why I should excuse the late submittal. Just like Federal judges, I will only grant your Motion if you demonstrate "good cause" for me doing so—and I get to determine what constitutes "good cause." Given the additional time and effort it will take to draft a Motion for Leave to File Out of Time, and the risk that I may still deny the Motion and refuse to accept your assignment, I would make sure to meet all course deadlines.

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 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. Note that I consider using AI (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) to be collaboration. Believe me, you want to be able to write well without relying on AI. Do not be like these lawyers. *See* Josh Russell, Sanctions Ordered for Lawyers who Relied on Chat GPT 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/>

If I find that you have plagiarized or collaborated while working on an assignment, you will receive **zero** points for that assignment. You may also be found in violation of the school’s Honor Code, which can lead to serious penalties, including expulsion. Note that an Honor Code investigation must be reported to the Bar Examiners, even if the student is cleared of any violation.

Long story short, **DON’T DO IT**. If you have any questions about this policy, just ask me.

Class Schedule and Assignments:

Date	Class Number	Class Topic(s)	Homework Assignments and Deadlines	What to Read Before Next Class
8/20	1	Introduction to Legal Writing	1. Respond to supervisor email by August 22	1. Legal Writing Chapters 2 and 3 2. Supervisor email
8/22	2	Rules of Law and How to Navigate the Bluebook		1. Legal Writing Chapter 4 2. Supplemental materials on D2L
8/27	3	Introduction to Statutes and Rules of Law in Statutes	1. Rules of law in statutes exercise due August 29	1. Legal Writing Chapter 9 2. Supplemental materials on D2L
8/29	4	Statutory Interpretation and Bluebooking Statutes	1. Bluebooking exercise due September 3 2. Respond to supervisor email by September 3	1. Legal Writing Chapters 5 and 6.1 2. Supervisor email
9/3	5	Rules of Law in Cases and Bluebooking Cases	1. Bluebooking exercise due September 5 2. Rules of law in cases exercise due September 5	1. Legal Writing Chapters 14 and 16 2. Supplemental materials on D2L
9/5	6	Applying Law to Facts and Introduction to the Office Memo	1. Applying law to facts exercise due September 10	1. Legal Writing Chapters 17 and 20

9/10	7	CREAC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to supervisor email by September 12 2. Closed office memo outline due September 12 3. Draft closed office memo due September 19 4. Final closed office memo due October 3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal Writing Chapters 12.5 - 12.9 2. Supervisor email
9/12	8	Writing Processes and Bluebook Table T6		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal Writing Chapter 23
9/17	9	Citing and Quoting Authority in Your Writing		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supplemental material on D2L
9/19	10	Requests for Information Letters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for information letter due September 26 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Legal Writing Chapter 21.1, 21.4, and 21.5
9/24	11	Paragraphs and Sentences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule meeting by September 26 to discuss my feedback on draft closed office memo 2. Paragraphs and sentences exercise due September 26 3. Respond to supervisor email by September 26 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plain English for Lawyers pgs. 23-32 2. Supervisor email
9/26	12	Active Voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active voice exercise due October 1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plain English for Lawyers pgs. 7-21 and 33-38

10/1	13	Writing Concisely	1. Writing concisely exercise due October 3	
10/3	14	Bluebooking Other Sources	1. Bluebooking exercise due October 15	1. Legal Writing Chapters 18 and 19
10/8	No Class – Midterms			
10/10	No Class – Midterms			
10/15	15	Advanced CREAC	1. Respond to supervisor email by October 17 2. Draft open office memo due November 5	1. Legal Writing Chapter 8 and 10.2 2. Supervisor email
10/17	16	How to Choose and Use Authorities	1. Authorities exercise due October 22	1. Plain English for Lawyers pgs. 55-70
10/22	17	Choose Your Words Carefully	1. Choose your words exercise due October 24	1. Plain English for Lawyers pgs. 76-104
10/24	18	Punctuation and Commas	1. Punctuation and commas exercise due October 29 2. Respond to supervisor email by October 29	1. Supervisor email
10/29	19	Bluebook Exam		1. Legal Writing Chapter 15

10/31	20	How to Conduct a Client Interview		1. Client interview information on D2L
11/5	21	Practice Client Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to supervisor email by November 7 2. Final open office memo and client letter due November 22 at 11:59 PM 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal Writing Chapters 24 and 25 2. Supplemental material on D2L 3. Supervisor email
11/7	22	Client Letters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Client letter exercise due November 12 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supplemental material on D2L
11/12	23	Writing with Co-Counsel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to supervisor email by November 14 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supplemental material on D2L 2. Supervisor email
11/14	24	Editing Someone Else's Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Editing exercise and checklist due November 19 	
11/19	25	Communicating with the Court	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to clerk and supervisor emails by November 21 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clerk and supervisor emails
11/21	26	Formatting and Final Edits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final open office memo and client letter due tomorrow at 11:59 PM (November 22) 	

* All assignments must be submitted before class begins on the due date except for the final open office memo and client letter, which are due at 11:59 PM on November 22.

** The homework assignments, deadlines, and required reading may change. I will update you if that occurs.

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT
SIU SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL – Fall 2024

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>

Syllabus Attachment

Fall 2024



MISSION STATEMENT FOR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE

SIU embraces a unique tradition of access and opportunity, inclusive excellence, innovation in research and creativity, and outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success. As a nationally ranked public research university and regional economic catalyst, we create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders, improve our communities, and transform lives.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Semester Classes Begin:08/19/2024
Last day to add full-term course (without Dean's signature):08/25/2024
Last day to withdraw from the University with a full refund:08/30/2024
Last day to drop a full-term course for a credit/refund:09/01/2024
Last day to drop a full-term course (W grade, no refund):.....10/27/2024
Final examinations:12/09/2024–12/13/2024

Note: Please verify the above dates with the Registrar calendar and find more detailed information on deadlines at <http://registrar.siu.edu/calendars>. For add/drop dates that apply to shorter-than-full-term courses, please look at the Schedule of Classes search results at <http://registrar.siu.edu/schedclass/index.php>

FALL SEMESTER HOLIDAYS:

Labor Day 09/02/2024
Fall Break 10/18/2024
Veterans Day 11/11/2024
Thanksgiving Break 11/23/2024—12/01/2024

DIVERSITY: Southern Illinois University Carbondale's goal is to provide a welcoming campus where all of our students, faculty and staff can study and work in a respectful, positive environment free from racism and intimidation. For more information visit: <http://diversity.siu.edu>. Additional [informational flyer](#).

OFFICE FOR ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Office for Access and Accommodations 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 <https://disabilityservices.siu.edu>. You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to insure 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.

MILITARY COMMUNITY: There are complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student, and military and veteran related developments can complicate academic life. If you are a member of the military community and in need of accommodations please visit Veterans Services at <http://veterans.siu.edu/>.

STUDENT MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER: The Student Multicultural Resource Center serves as a catalyst for inclusion, diversity and innovation. As the Center continues its work, we are here to ensure that you think, grow and succeed. We encourage you to stop by the Center, located in the Student Services Building Room 140, to see the resources available and discover ways you can get involved on the campus. Visit us at <https://smrc.siu.edu/>.

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SIU COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): Mental health counseling services are available by calling [CAPS](tel:6184535371) at (618) 453-5371. CAPS offers confidential same-day services and ongoing counseling. For after hours crisis care, students are encouraged to call 988, 911, or present to their nearest emergency room.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY (Undergraduate Only): Students who officially register for a session must officially withdraw from that registration in a timely manner to avoid being charged as well as receiving a failing grade for those classes. An official withdrawal must be initiated by the student, or on behalf of the student through the academic unit, and be processed by the Registrar's office. For the proper procedures to follow when dropping courses and when withdrawing from SIUC visit: <https://registrar.siu.edu/students/withdraw.php>.

SIUC'S EARLY WARNING INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EWIP): Students enrolled in courses participating in SIUC's Early Warning Intervention Program might be contacted by University staff during a semester. More information can be found at the University Core Curriculum's Overview webpage: <https://corecurriculum.siu.edu/for-faculty/>.

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

CATALOGS:

catalog.siu.edu
gradcatalog.siu.edu - Graduate policies often vary from Undergraduate policies. To view the applicable policies for graduate students, please refer to the graduate catalog.

CENTER FOR LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

Tutoring: <https://clss.siu.edu/>
Math Labs: <http://math.siu.edu/courses/course-help.php>

WRITING CENTER: <http://write.siu.edu/>

PLAGIARISM: See the Student Conduct Code: <http://srr.siu.edu/student-conduct-code/>

INCOMPLETE POLICY (Undergraduate Only): <http://registrar.siu.edu/grades/incomplete.php>

REPEAT POLICY: <http://registrar.siu.edu/students/repeatclasses.php>

MORRIS LIBRARY HOURS: <https://libcal.lib.siu.edu/hours/>

ADVISEMENT: <http://advisement.siu.edu/>

SIU ONLINE: <https://online.siu.edu/>