

Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School
Lawyering Skills II: Legal Writing – Section 2
Spring 2026

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Kaitlyn Poirier

Email: kaitlyn.poirier@siu.edu

Office: Room 250

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM and by appointment.

Teaching Assistant Information:

Olivia Miller – olivia.m.miller@siu.edu

AJ Valor – angel.valor@siu.edu

Jenna Zumbahlen – jenna.zumbahlen@siu.edu

Class Sessions:

Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:30 PM in Room 202.

Course Description:

This course will provide you with a strong foundation for drafting persuasive legal documents. You will also develop new lawyering skills including how to: (1) navigate a federal civil case; (2) communicate with opposing counsel; (3) argue in court; and (4) how to cite to statutes and other legal authorities.

Course Learning Objectives:

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

1. identify potential legal issues when presented with a case file;
2. draft pleadings, motions, discovery requests and responses, memorandums in support, and professional emails;
3. use persuasive language in your writing;
4. track your billable hours;
5. correctly cite to legal authorities;
6. use explanatory parentheticals and cite to multiple authorities in a single citation sentence;
7. interact with opposing counsel and a supervisor;
8. argue issues in court; and
9. engage with other students using active listening, empathy, allyship, and respect.

Required Texts and Materials:

1. Point Made: How to Write Like the Nation's Top Advocates by Guberman (2d ed.)
2. Point Well Made: Persuasive Oral Advocacy by Hon. Vaidik and Diaz-Bonilla (2d ed.)

3. The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st or 22nd ed.)
4. Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises subscription

Attendance and Timeliness:

The attendance policy for this class is stricter than the law school's standard policy. 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 If you miss more than four classes, you will be withdrawn from the course or receive the lowest possible grade.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.). **You are responsible for keeping track of how many absences you have.**

I expect each of you to be on time to class—just like you will need to be on time for your internship, the bar exam, court, etc. **Once I close the door to the classroom at the beginning of class, you are not permitted to enter and will be considered absent if you are not in the classroom.**

Grading:

You will be required to complete several assignments in this course. At the end of the semester, I will add the points you earned for these assignments together with our participation grade (more on that below). 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.

Here are the assignments you will be doing this semester:

1. **Writing assignments** - You will be assigned assignments to improve your persuasive writing and other skills.
2. **Mini oral argument** – Develop a 5-minute oral argument on a fun issue, then argue it in front of a judge and audience.
3. **Interactions with your supervisor** – You are now an attorney at Hart & Ferris, LLC. During the semester, you will need to communicate with your supervisor via email.
4. **Interactions with opposing counsel** – You will need to interact with opposing counsel both in and out of court.
5. **Complaint** – Your client has at least one legal cause of action against another person. Time to start a lawsuit by drafting a complaint.
6. **Motion for pro hac vice** – Try drafting a very simple and to-the-point procedural motion.

7. **Answer** – File a response to a complaint filed against your client.
8. **Motion to transfer venue** – It seems like the complaint filed against your client should be transferred to a different court
9. **Motion to transfer venue argument** – You wrote the brief. Now it is time to argue.
10. **Discovery request** – Draft requests for production, requests for admission, and interrogatories to serve on opposing counsel.
11. **Discovery request response** – Discovery is not a one-way street. Respond to opposing counsel's discovery requests.
12. **Motion for summary judgment** – You believe your client is entitled to judgment as a matter of law on one or more legal issues. You need to write a motion and memorandum in support to convince the court that it should rule in your client's favor.
13. **Oral argument on motion for summary judgment** – Argument day!
14. **Notice of appeal** – Draft and file a notice of appeal with the appropriate United States Circuit Court of Appeals.
15. **Billing sheets** – You have been keeping track of your billable hours all semester. Turn them in to your supervisor for review.
16. **Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises** – Complete online exercises that will help you learn to cite authorities properly.
17. **Bluebook Exam Part 2** – 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.
18. **Scavenger Hunt** – Do a scavenger hunt to show off your legal research skills.

Participation Grade and Netflix Pass:

As mentioned above, I will consider participation when determining your final grade in this course. I expect that you come to class ready to participate: 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!

For your participation grade, I also take into account your professionalism. In other words, I will consider whether you behave with integrity and if you act respectfully towards your colleagues and myself.

Assignment Deadlines:

All lawyers operate on deadlines, whether they are set by your supervisor, 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 the motion, 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.

If you know in advance of an assignment deadline that you will not be able to complete the assignment on time for a legitimate reason (illness, etc.), file a motion asking for an extension of the deadline as soon as possible. I will then decide whether to give you extra time to complete the assignment.

Ban on Plagiarism, Collaboration, and Generative AI:

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 not allowed to collaborate on assignments unless I give you permission to do so. This means you may not obtain written material or communicate about the substance of the assignment with others (including your fellow students). You are also not allowed to use generative AI (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) help you complete your homework assignments.

If you have plagiarized, collaborated, or used generative AI while working on an assignment that you turn in to me for a grade, you will receive **zero** points for that assignment, **and I will take away 10% of the total points you earned in the class at the end of the semester**. I will also follow the procedures outlined in the school's Honor Code. If you are found in violation of the Honor Code, you can face serious penalties, including expulsion. Long story short, **DON'T DO IT**. If you have any questions about this policy, just ask me.

Class Recordings:

This class is automatically recorded every day. If you would like one or more of these recordings, send me an email. If you attended that class, I will send you the recording. If you did not attend the class, you need to explain in the email why you were absent. I will send you the recording if you were absent for a legitimate reason (illness, you were participating in a school-related activity, family emergency, etc.).

Digital Devices Policy:

To encourage comprehensive listening and avoid digital distractions, digital devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) will not be allowed in the class unless an in-class activity requires one. You must leave your digital devices in your bags unless such an activity is taking place. I will let you know when you can use them.

I understand that some students might find this policy inconvenient and annoying (I will explain why I adopted this policy on our first day of class). But in exchange, I will provide skeletal outlines in advance of each class that will be posted on D2L. You can print those out and take notes on them, in a note pad, or on a random sheet of paper. **Students needing accommodations relating to this policy should send me an email ASAP.**

Class Schedule and Homework Assignments through Spring Break:

Date	Class Number	Class Topic(s)	Homework Assignments
Before Class			<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the syllabus, paying particular attention to the Attendance and Timeliness section (there are some changes from last semester) by January 12
1/12	1	Introduction to the Course, Oral Argument, and Persuasive Legal Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. None
1/14	2	Persuasion and Practicing Persuasive Legal Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make It Persuasive Assignment due January 21
1/16	3	Make-up class: Life Cycle of a Civil Case, Intro to Rules, and Billing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the materials on D2L about complaints by January 212. Respond to your supervisor by January 213. Start your billing sheet once you read your supervisor's email
1/19			No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1/21	3	Complaints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complaint due January 26 2. Respond to your supervisor by January 26 3. Read the materials on D2L about answers by January 26
1/26	4	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the materials on D2L about motions by January 28 2. Answer due February 2
1/28	5	Introduction to Motions and Briefs and How to Draft a Motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the materials on D2L about stories and themes by February 2 2. Respond to your supervisor by February 2 3. Motion to appear pro hac vice due February 2
2/2	6	Briefs: Components, Stories, and Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read pgs. 3-45 in Point Made by Guberman by February 4 2. Motion to transfer venue and accompanying brief due February 18
2/4	7	Briefs: Introductions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read pgs. 47-89 in Point Made by Guberman by February 9 2. Respond to your supervisor by February 9
2/9	8	Briefs: Factual and Legal Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read pgs. 91-124 (stop when you get to “Analogizing”) in Point Made by Guberman by February 11
2/11	9	Briefs: Argument Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read pgs. 301-312 in Point Made by Guberman by February 16 2. Respond to your supervisor by February 16
2/16	10	Briefs: Conclusions and Proposed Orders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read pgs. 1-4, 25-37 (stop before section 3.7), and 164-175 (stop before section 11.2) in Point Well Made by Vaidik and Diaz-Bonilla by February 18
2/18	11	Intro to Oral Argument Part 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motion to transfer venue and accompanying brief due today 2. Read Chapter 13 in Point Well Made by Vaidik and Diaz-Bonilla by February 23 3. Respond to your supervisor by February 23

2/23	12	How to Do Oral Argument Part 2	1. Prepare for oral arguments
2/25	13	Motion to Transfer Venue Arguments	1. Read the materials on D2L about discovery by March 16
3/2	No Class – Midterms		
3/4	No Class – Midterms		
3/9	No Class – Spring Break		
3/11	No Class – Spring Break		
3/16	14	Discovery Requests	TBD
3/18	15	Discovery Responses	TBD
3/23	16	Deep Dive into Briefs Part 1	TBD

3/25	17	Deep Dive into Briefs Part 2	TBD
3/30	18	Deep Dive into Briefs Part 3	TBD
4/1	19	Deep Dive into Briefs Part 4	TBD
4/6	20	Deep Dive into Oral Arguments Part 1	TBD
4/8	21	Deep Dive into Oral Arguments Part 2	TBD
4/13	22	Motion for Summary Judgment Oral Arguments	TBD
4/15	23	Motion for Summary Judgment Oral Arguments	TBD
4/20	24	Intro to Appeals	TBD
4/22	25	Bluebook Exam	

* All homework assignments must be submitted before 9:00 AM on the due date except as otherwise noted.

** I reserve the right to change the homework assignments, deadlines, and required reading at any time for any reason.

Syllabus Attachment

Spring 2026



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:01/12/2026
Last day to add full-term course (without Dean's signature):01/16/2026
Last day to withdraw from the University with a full refund:01/23/2026
Last day to drop a full-term course for a credit/refund:01/23/2026
Last day to drop a full-term course (W grade, no refund):.....03/27/2026
Final examinations:05/04/2026–05/08/2026

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>

SPRING SEMESTER HOLIDAYS:

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday 01/19/2026
Spring Break 03/07/26 - 03/15/26

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>.

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 OAA immediately at (618) 453-5738 or <https://access.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.

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>.

SALUKI CARES: 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, SIUC 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: Call (618) 453-2461, email sucares@siu.edu, or <http://salukicares.siu.edu>.

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>.

PREGNANCY: Title IX makes it clear that students who are pregnant or have a related condition may contact the Title IX Coordinator to request accommodations or to report any allegations of discrimination. The Title IX Coordinator may be contacted at: *Nick Wortman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 0135 Woody Hall, 900 S. Normal Avenue, Mail Code 6520, Carbondale, IL 62901, (618) 453-6667, equity@siu.edu*.

SIU COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): Mental health counseling services are available by calling [CAPS](http://caps.siu.edu) 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/](http://advisement.siu.edu)

SIU ONLINE: [https://online.siu.edu/](https://online.siu.edu)

SYLLABUS ATTACHMENT**SIU SIMMONS LAW SCHOOL – Spring 2026**

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. The Office of Access and Accommodations, formerly 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 OAA 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://salukicares.siu.edu/>. Associate Dean Shelia 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>