

Legal Writing & Rhetoric
PLSC316
Fall Semester, 2016
3 credits

Paula L. Dronen, Associate Professor of Legal Studies
Office #269-471-3216
dronenp@andrews.edu
Course Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday 3:30 – 4:45 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to academic and professional writing, particularly argument and analysis, as they relate to the law, including theoretical and practical applications. Assignments will include pleadings, briefs, and memoranda. Students will also develop a philosophical and rhetorical understanding of their function as writers in relation to the law and the legal system. Grade Mode: A-F, I, W.

REQUIRED TEXT

Rulebook for Arguments, 4th Edition.

Bluebook: Uniform System of Citation, 20th Edition.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Legal Writing in a Nutshell, 4th Edition.

For ISBN and price information, please see the listing at the Bookstore at www.andrews.edu/bookstore.

COURSE CREDITS

This course is offered for 3 credits; therefore it is expected that you will spend 9 hours per week during the 15-week duration on academic work for this class. Academic work includes in class time (2 – 75 minutes sessions) and at least 6 hours outside of class time per week spent on reading assignments, written assignments, and group projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand the United States legal system and lawyers' principal role in that system.
 - a. How lawyers interpret and use the texts of U.S. law in advising clients and preventing and resolving disputes.
 - b. The basics of U.S. legal culture: U.S. Constitution, U.S. legal institutions, and federalism.
 - c. The sources of federal and state law and their primary texts.
 - d. The concepts of binding authority, persuasive authority and *stare decisis*.
 - e. The development of the common law.
2. Analyze case law.
 - a. The student will be able to utilize the IRAC method (identify the issue, state the legal rule (the law), analyze the facts in light of the law, and draw a conclusion).
3. Convey techniques of persuasive written advocacy.
 - a. Learn the basic structure of and formatting requirements for persuasive legal pleadings.
 - i. Write a memorandum predicting the probable judicial resolution of a simulated legal dispute in a form that conforms to basic professional conventions regarding analytical support, organization, and style.
4. Conduct basic legal research.
 - a. Understand basic legal research techniques for legal information.
 - i. Include accurate and complete citations
5. Effective verbal communication skills.
 - a. Be able to present persuasive argument(s) with peer review.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Grades for this course will be comprised of quizzes, (if a quiz is given, it will be at the beginning of class time so please be prompt) writing assignments, oral presentations, and class attendance/participation. Quizzes may not be made up due to being tardy or absent unless the tardy or absence is excused (see Attendance & Absences below).

Method of Assessment	Percentage
Quizzes	10%
Writing Assignments	60%
Oral Presentations	20%
Professionalism & Class Attendance/Participation	10%

COURSE EVALUATION

At the end of this course you will be asked to evaluate the content of this course.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Class Attendance. Regular attendance at all classes, laboratories, and other academic appointments are required of each student. Faculty members are expected to keep regular attendance records. The syllabus notifies students of the attendance requirements.

Teacher Tardiness. Teachers have the responsibility of getting to class on time. If a teacher is detained and will be late, the teacher must send a message to the class with directions. If after 10 minutes no message has been received, students may leave without penalty. If teacher tardiness persists, students have the right to notify the department chair, or if the teacher is the department chair, to notify the dean.

Class Absences. Whenever the number of absences exceeds 20% (10% for graduate classes) of the total course appointments, the teacher may give a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence. Registered students are considered class members until they file a Change of Registration from in the Office of Academic Records.

Excused Absences. Excuses for absences due to illness are granted by the teacher. Proof of illness is required. Residence-hall students are required to see a nurse on the first full day of any illness, which interferes with class attendance. Non-residence hall students should show written verification of illness obtained from their own physician. Excuses for absences not due to illness are issued directly from the dean's office. Excused absences do not remove the student's responsibility to complete all requirements of a course. Class work is made up by permission of the teacher.

Please refer to the Andrews University 2016-2017 Academic Bulletin at the link below:

http://bulletin.andrews.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1327#Student_Responsibilities

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

University learning thrives on the rigor of individual investigation, the authentic exchange of ideas, and a corporate commitment to integrity and mutual respect. University learning requires all members of the academic community to behave honestly. Andrews University anchors its practices in the teachings of the Bible as well as in widely established and honorable academic traditions. As the apostle Paul calls us to authenticity in our Christian walk, so the educational institution demands of its participant's true and accurate self-representation. In Ephesians, Paul invites believers "to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:23-24, NRSV). As scholars and as Christ servants, we build His living body through our honesty in all things, both small and great. To that end, Andrews University's faculty and students pledge to learn and grow together, committing to the following Standards and affirming honesty as a core component of an Andrews University education.

Please refer to the Andrews University Code of Academic Integrity at the link below:

https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

PROFESSIONALISM

To prepare students for the professional world, certain behaviors/activities are not allowed in the classroom.

- Cell Phones, Personal Laptops, and Recording devices: Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. Picture taking during class is not allowed. Recording devices are allowed only if pre-approved by instructor, and if approved, under no circumstance are recordings—visual or verbal—to be posted on a public website.

Laptops should not be used for surfing the web or watching movies during class. It is disrespectful and unprofessional to use these devices inappropriately during class.

- Late Assignments are unacceptable unless prearranged with instructor.
- Tardiness

Presentation is important. Your attention to detail, demeanor, and attire factor into how you are perceived as a professional. Active participation in class discussions and critiques is an essential part of learning. Without participating and expressing opinions and thoughts, it is impossible to clarify your goals and develop a personal style.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT

If you qualify for accommodation under the American Disabilities Act, please see contact Student Success in Nethery Hall 100 (disabilities@andrews.edu or 269-471-6096) as soon as possible so that accommodations can be arranged.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.