

# Law School Preparation Institute 2021

## Poli Sci 4323: *LSPI Courts In Action: Legal Analysis and Writing*

<b>Time/Days</b>	11:00am-noon and 1:00-4:45pm, M-F
<b>Location</b>	Physical Science Building, Room 115-morning; UGLC 116-afternoon
<b>Professor</b>	Lisa J Soto
<b>TA</b>	A. Vianey Martinez
<b>Office</b>	Professor Soto: Miners Hall, Room 107 Ms. Martinez: Miners Hall 108, Student Clinical Office
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:lsoto9@utep.edu">lsoto9@utep.edu</a> avmartinez1999@utexas.edu
<b>Phone</b>	747-8581
<b>Office Hours</b>	Professor Soto: on weekends by appointment Ms. Martinez: 4:45-5:45 p.m. M-F

### Course Description

This course addresses the legal system in action by introducing you to legal analysis and legal writing. The course will instruct on reading and understanding the law coming from the courts and the legislature, emphasize strong writing and grammar fundamentals as strategies for effective legal writing, and require you to engage in basic legal analysis and legal writing. The aims of this course include your ability to:

- Improve upon critical thinking and listening skills;
- Actively read and extract key information from judicial opinions and statutory law;
- Understand how to identify legal issues;
- Engage in legal analysis and critically analyze legal information;
- Begin to understand and engage in legal writing;
- Improve upon grammatical knowledge and writing principles for strategic legal writing; and
- Analyze the law, take public policy into consideration, and apply it all to real world situations with real world implications.

### Required Texts & Materials

*The Elements of Legal Style (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)* by Brian A. Garner (referred to as “Garner” on the calendar below)

*A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis* by Christine Coughlin, Joan Malmud Rocklin, and Sandy Patrick (referred to as “ALW” on the calendar below)

Harvard Law School: The Case Studies materials (*provided with permission*)

*Additional materials to be provided throughout the course*

## Assignments & Projects

Various assignments (in-class and homework) will be given throughout phase I, in addition to an individual legal memorandum, a final group project, and a final grammar and writing examination.

## Grading & Policies

Your grade will be based upon the following:

35%: Legal Memorandum

20%: Final Project

10%: LSAT Writing Samples

15%: Grammar & Writing Exercises and Exam

20%: Performance/Participation in Class (including afternoon class assignments & homework)

EC Law School Application Resume

Performance in class means active attendance with meaningful participation and completion of work; I look for quality, not quantity, in terms of your classroom contributions. I may exercise the Socratic Method during the course and expect everyone to have completed all homework assigned and be ready to participate in class each day. It will be evident to me whether you have done your homework reading; I will take that into account as part of your meaningful participation in class.

I expect you to submit all assignments in a timely manner. **Save early; save often; save in multiple places.** Losing material because of computer crashes, equipment-related problems, etc., is never an excuse for late or incomplete assignments. You must complete all of the assignments, regardless of absences. Late assignments will be downgraded one letter grade per day late, up to three letter grades.

A suspected act of plagiarism (or other form of academic dishonesty) will be referred to the Dean of Students. **You should be familiar with ethical guidelines for conduct spelled out in the Student Affairs section of the Handbook of Operating procedures** <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=admin.utep.edu/hoop> and be aware of other University regulations.

You must do your own original work in this class and appropriately identify that portion of your work that is collaborative with others, borrowed from others, or extracted from other sources, including legal materials. Whenever you borrow **original** materials, quote from a source, or use ideas from others, you are legally and ethically obligated to acknowledge that use, following appropriate conventions for documenting sources. You will learn basic legal citation in this course.

Always treat others with respect. This class calls for a high level of critical thinking and robust discussion. I encourage you to voice your perspective and thoughts. I expect differences of opinion and respectful discussion where we may endeavor to understand each other, learn from one another, and learn together. Listening carefully to each other, regardless of whether you agree or disagree, is essential.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. University policy requires that you attend every class. If you do miss a class or part of a class, for whatever reason, you are responsible for finding out about missed information and completing assignments in a timely manner, whether on the syllabus or assigned in the class itself. Missing more than two of my classes may result in your overall course grade being lowered as much as one full letter grade or more. Be punctual. Being late to class and/or leaving early three times counts as an absence. **If you have an emergency or an absence that you believe should be excused, contact me directly to address it, and do so prior to the absence, when possible.**

## **Compositions**

You are expected to produce original, high-quality, sophisticated work. Neatness, visual appeal, and mechanical and grammatical correctness are essential, but do not guarantee that a text is well constructed. I expect you to plan your writing, execute it carefully, then proofread and edit each submission to avoid careless errors. Spelling and grammar check is not a sufficient method of proofreading for grammar or for spelling. Your out-of-class assignments should be composed in a formal tone and high-quality form. Your written documents should also have appropriate margins, spacing, pagination, and formatting. All assignments should comport with the instructions given. If not otherwise specified, default to 12-point Times New Roman font, double spacing, pagination, and one-inch margins all around.

## **Accommodations**

I am committed to following the laws that pertain to individuals with disabilities and to making reasonable accommodations, in accordance with the applicable law, and in consultation with students and Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). If you believe you have a disability for which accommodations are needed or if you already have a documented disability for which accommodations are needed, please (1) notify and consult with CASS as soon as possible (747-5148; Union East, Room 106) and (2) inform me of the accommodations needed, as applicable.

## Weekly Schedule (Provisional -- Subject to change)

Additional Homework May Be Assigned In Class Based on Progress In Class Topics

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 (6/7-6/11)	<p>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing Pretest</p> <hr/> <p><b>Ten Skills Paper Due at 11 a.m.</b></p> <p><i>Introductions</i></p> <p><i>Difference between law school and undergrad research &amp; writing</i></p> <p><i>The Anatomy of Judicial Opinions; How to Read Cases</i></p> <p><i>Case Briefing</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Complete Torts Briefs; Read Garner ch 2.1-2.21</p>	<p>AM: Grammar, syntax, etc., preview—why it matters-legal cases lost on grammar errors</p> <hr/> <p><b>Torts Briefs Due at 1 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>LSAT Writing Sample #1</b></p> <p><i>Critical Thinking &amp; Movie Review</i></p> <p><i>Review Briefs</i></p> <p><i>Introduction to Legal Analysis</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read ALW ch 2 &amp; 4; read memo cases; Read Garner ch 2.22-2.28; list your topic weaknesses</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources &amp; Systems of Law</i></p> <p><i>Mindset</i></p> <p><i>Legal Analysis and Legal Writing</i></p> <p><i>In-Class Legal Memorandum Assignment</i></p> <p><i>Read In-Class Memo Cases</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read ALW ch 5 &amp; 11; Read Garner ch 3.1-3.5; rev exercise on binding &amp; persuasive authorities</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Analyzing Legal Issues I</i></p> <p><i>Finish reading &amp; Review In-Class Memo Cases</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read ALW chs 6, 7, 8 &amp; 9; Read Garner ch 4.1-4.14</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Work on in-class memo chart of issues Due at 1 p.m.</b></p> <p><i>Analyzing Legal Issues I, cont'd</i></p> <p><i>Individual Memo Assignment</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read ALW chs 12, 13, 14 &amp; 15; Read Garner ch 5</p>
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 2 (6/14-6/18)	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>LSAT Writing Sample #2</b></p> <p><i>Analyzing Legal Issues II</i></p> <p><i>Legal Proofs; In-Class Memo Work</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read Garner ch 7.1-7.20</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Analyzing Legal Issues &amp; Legal Proofs Cont'd</i></p> <p><i>In-Class Memo Work</i></p> <p><i>Legal Citations Legal Research 101</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read ALW ch 16</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Analyzing Statutory Issues</i></p> <p><i>Legal Memo Q&amp;A; Parts Review</i></p> <p><i>In-Class Memo Work</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Read Garner ch 6.1-6.24</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>In-Class Memo Work</i></p> <p><i>Legal Memo Q&amp;A</i></p> <p><i>Review Issues Presented</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Catch up on reading</p>	<p><b>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>In-Class Memo Work</i></p> <p><i>Legal Memo Q&amp;A; Parts Review</i></p> <p><i>Review Portions of Memo</i></p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Catch up on reading</p>

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 3 (6/21-6/25)	<p>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</p> <hr/> <p><i>In-Class Memo Due at 5pm</i></p> <p>Homework: Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</p> <hr/> <p>LSAT Writing Sample #3</p> <p>Legal Memo Workshop</p> <p>Homework: Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Grammar &amp; Writing</p> <hr/> <p>Legal Memo Workshop</p> <p>Homework: Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Editing Workshop</p> <hr/> <p>Legal Memo Workshop</p> <p>Homework: Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Discuss and Receive Final Project Assignment</p> <hr/> <p>PM: NO CLASS Work on Legal Memorandum</p> <p>Legal Memorandum Due Saturday, June 26, at Midnight via email to both Prof. Soto and Ms. Martinez Submit by Midnight Tonight for Three Bonus Points</p>
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 4 (6/28-7/2)	<p>AM &amp; PM: Workshops on Final Group Project</p> <p>Homework: Work on Final Group Project</p>	<p>AM &amp; PM: Workshops on Final Group Project</p> <p>Homework: Work on Final Group Project</p>	<p>AM &amp; PM: Workshops on Final Group Project</p>	<p>NO CLASS: TORTS EXAM</p>	<p>NO CLASS: TORTS EXAM</p> <p>Homework: Work on Final Group Project</p>
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 5 (7/5)	<p>GRAMMAR &amp; WRITING EXAMINATION THEN FINAL GROUP PROJECT &amp; PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>Extra Credit Resumes Due at 5 p.m.</p>				