

Law School Preparation Institute 2022

Poli Sci 4323: *LSPI Courts in Action: Legal Analysis, Legal Writing, and Oral Advocacy*

Time/Days	11:00 a.m.-noon and 1:00-5:00 p.m., M-F
Location	Miners Hall 300-morning class session Cotton Memorial, Room 201-afternoon class session
CRN	34281
Professor	Lisa J Soto
TA	Sophia Andritsos
Office	Professor Soto: Miners Hall 107 Ms. Andritsos: Miners Hall 108 in Student Clinical Office
E-mail	lsoto9@utep.edu saandritsos@miners.utep.edu
Phone	747-8581
Office Hours	Professor Soto: on weekends by appointment Ms. Andritsos: 5:00-6:00 p.m. M-Th

Course Description

This course addresses the legal system in action by introducing you to legal analysis, legal writing, and oral argument. 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; require you to engage in basic legal analysis and legal writing; and have you present oral argument based on a case before the U.S. Supreme Court. 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
- Engage in oral advocacy by preparing and presenting oral argument.

Required Texts & Materials

The Elements of Legal Style (2nd 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)

Additional materials 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, oral argument presentation, and a final grammar and writing examination.

Grading & Policies

Your grade will be based upon the following:

35%: Legal Memorandum

20%: Oral Argument

12%: LSAT Writing Samples (#2: 3%, #3: 4%, #4: 5%)

18%: Grammar & Writing Final Exam

15%: Performance/Participation in Class (including afternoon class assignments & homework)

EC: Law School Application Resume

Performance in class means 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 whether you have done your reading, and I will take that into account as part of your participation grade.

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 not an excuse for late or incomplete assignments. You must complete all 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 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.

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 should endeavor to understand each other, learn from one another, and learn together. Listening carefully to each other and understanding the foundations of varying perspectives, regardless of whether you agree or disagree, is essential to the learning process.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. University policy requires that you attend every class session. **If you 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.** There are two daily sessions for this class—morning and afternoon. Missing more than two of my class sessions 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. Automated spelling and grammar checks are not sufficient methods of proofreading. 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. If you have any questions, please ask.

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)

Homework Assigned in Class Based on Progress in Class

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 (6/6-6/10)	<p>Preclass assignment due Thursday, June 2nd, at midnight via email; Read ALW & Garner ch. 1 before today's class</p> <p>AM: Grammar & Writing Pretest</p> <hr/> <p>LSAT Writing Sample #1</p> <p><i>Introductions</i> <i>Difference between law school & college research & writing</i></p> <p><i>The Anatomy of Judicial Opinions; How to Read Cases</i></p> <p>Homework: <i>Read Christensen article; ALW ch. 3; Garner ch. 2.1-2.12</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar, syntax, etc., — why it matters;</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>Critical Thinking</p> <p>Case Briefing Brief Workshop</p> <p>Introduction to Legal Analysis</p> <p>Homework: <i>Read ALW ch. 2; read briefing cases; Review Garner ch. 2.1-2.12 again carefully</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>Sources & Systems of Law</p> <p>Review Case Briefs</p> <p>Legal Analysis and Legal Writing</p> <p>Mindset</p> <p>Homework: <i>Read ALW ch 4; Garner ch 2.13-2.21; rev. exercise on binding & persuasive authorities</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>LSAT Writing Instruction; review writing sample #1</p> <p>Analyzing Legal Issues</p> <p>McGonigal: How to Make Stress Your Friend</p> <p>Homework: <i>Read ALW ch. 5 & 6; Garner ch. 2.22-2.28</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>LSAT Writing Sample #2</p> <p>Analyzing Legal Issues I, cont'd</p> <p>Meditation</p> <p>Homework: <i>Read ALW ch. 7; Garner ch 3.1-3.5</i></p>
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 2 (6/13-6/17)	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day Analyzing Legal Issues II & Legal Proofs; Laches Memo</p> <p>Main Writing Assignment Provided</p> <p>Homework: Read ALW chs. 8 & 9; Garner ch. 4.1-4.14</p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day Analyzing Legal Issues II & Legal Proofs Cont'd</p> <p>Legal Citations Legal Research 101</p> <p>Homework: <i>Laches Memo</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>Hardcopy of Laches Memo due at 1 p.m.</p> <p>word of the day</p> <p>Analyzing Statutory Issues</p> <p>Homework: Read ALW chs. 11 & 13; Garner ch. 5</p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>The Deep Issue</p> <p>LSAT Writing Sample #3</p> <p>Memo Parts Review</p> <p>Homework: <i>Read ALW ch. 12; Garner ch. 7.1-7.12</i></p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>Review Issues Presented</p> <p>Memo Q&A</p> <p>Meditation</p> <p>Homework: <i>Reread ALW chs. 7 & 8; Garner ch. 7.13-7.20</i></p>

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 3 (6/20-6/24)	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p><i>Legal Memo Workshop</i></p> <p>Homework: Read ALW ch. 14; Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p>LSAT Writing Sample #4</p> <p><i>Legal Memo Workshop</i></p> <p>Homework: Read ALW ch. 15; Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p><i>Legal Memo Workshop</i></p> <p>Homework: Read ALW ch. 16; Work on Individual Legal Memorandum; review reading materials as reference</p>	<p>AM: Editing Workshop</p> <hr/> <p>word of the day</p> <p><i>Legal Memo Workshop</i></p> <p>Legal Memorandum Due at Midnight</p>	<p>Meet at 500 E. San Antonio 79901</p> <p>8:30-1:00: Court Day Sponsored by the National Association of Women Judges, El Paso Chapter</p> <p>1:30-4:30: Mock Voir Dire Project</p> <p>Oral Argument Assignment</p> <p>Homework: Read All Oral Argument Materials; study for grammar and writing final</p>
Week 4 (6/27-7/1)	<p>AM: Grammar & Writing Final Exam</p> <hr/> <p>Workshops on Oral Argument</p> <p>Homework: Work on Oral Argument; Read Garner, ch. 6.1-6.24</p>	<p>AM: Personal Statements & Law School (Guest: Dr. Riley, Texas Law)</p> <hr/> <p>Workshops on Oral Argument</p> <p>Homework: Work on Oral Argument</p>	<p>AM: Resumes & Vocabulary Words from Oral Argument Materials</p> <hr/> <p>Workshops on Oral Argument</p> <p>Homework: Work on Oral Argument</p>	<p>Oral Argument Presentation All day</p> <p>12th floor 500 E. San Antonio 79901</p>	<p>NO CLASS: Torts Exam</p> <p>Law School Application Resume due at midnight for extra credit</p>

