

## LL.M. Legal Research and Writing – Fall 2009 Course Syllabus

### Texts

#### **Required:**

Nadia E. Nedzel, *Legal Reasoning, Research and Writing for International Graduate Students* (2d ed. 2008)

Bryan A. Garner, *The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style* (2d ed. 2006)

#### **Recommended:**

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (18<sup>th</sup> ed. 2005)

### Course Description

This is the first of a two-part course for LL.M. students, foreign exchange students, and Humphrey Fellows. In any culture, the style and form of writing are as important as content. This course is designed to enable foreign-educated students to start analyzing, problem-solving and writing like an American lawyer. This is an important asset for a number of reasons. First, as trade and industry globalizes, you may find yourself in increasing contact with American corporations, lawyers, mediators and judges. Knowing how these parties approach legal issues will be an advantage if you encounter them in your professional life when you return to your home countries. Second, for those students who choose to practice law within the United States, legal reasoning and writing will prepare you for the fundamental responsibilities that an American lawyer handles.

In the fall semester, students will work on (1) developing strong English writing skills, particularly in the legal setting and (2) using common law legal reasoning and analysis to solve complex legal issues. Students will be asked to draft letters, case briefs and an American style interoffice memorandum.

In the second semester, students will (1) learn how to conduct independent legal research, (2) use correct American style citation (bluebooking) and (3) draft persuasive motions for American courts. The final project will be drafting a motion based upon each student's independent research.

### Course Requirements and Assignments:

You must attend each class. If you cannot attend a class, you must notify me in writing in advance. You may email me at [krug0047@umn.edu](mailto:krug0047@umn.edu).

There will be several unannounced in-class writing exercises. In-class writing exercises will be handed in at the end of class and will count toward your final grade. You will not have an opportunity to make up a missed, in-class exercise.

Assignments must be handed in on time. Each student will have one, five day extension for one assignment. This means that if the assignment is due on a Wednesday, you will have until the following Monday to hand it in. If the paper is not turned in, you will receive a “0” for that assignment.

Each paper will be graded with a plus (+), check plus (√+), check (√), or check minus (√-). A plus means exceptional work. A check plus means above average work. A check means satisfactory work, and a check minus means below average work but still acceptable. Your final grade will be based on your class participation, in-class exercises and the five papers that are due throughout the semester.

### **Extra Assistance with Assignments:**

Honor Code 3.02(b) states that it is a violation of the Honor Code to “submit as one’s own any written assignment partially or totally written by another unless specifically permitted to do so by the written instructions governing the assignment.” Accordingly, it is a violation of the Honor Code to seek assistance from any outside source in writing a paper to be handed in for a grade before the final grade is given unless you receive specific permission from the course instructor.

Holly Overgaard (2L) is the teaching assistant for this course. Students are permitted to seek assistance from her for assignments due in this class. Ms. Overgaard will hold weekly office hours in Room N229. Her schedule will be posted at a later date. Students may drop in to see her at her scheduled office times, or schedule an appointment in advance during these times by contacting her at [over0196@umn.edu](mailto:over0196@umn.edu). She will be available both to answer questions about assignments before they are due, and to go over specific comments made on a paper after you have received it back with an evaluation mark. Students may not seek assistance from other writing tutoring sources on an assignment before it is due without the explicit permission of the instructor.

**Schedule and Assignments:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Assignment (to be completed by the day listed)</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>
Sept. 9	Read Nedzel: Chapter 1 (pages 18-30 only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal, Academic Writing</li> <li>• Case Briefing</li> </ul>
Sept. 16	-- Read Garner: Chapter 4 --Write a case brief based on <i>Lestina v. West Bend Mutual Ins. Co.</i> , 501 N.W.2d 28 (Wisc. 1993), found on pages 31-37 in the Nedzel textbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good writing style: Paragraphs, sentences and words; formatting</li> <li>• Letter writing</li> </ul>
Sept. 23	--Read Nedzel: Chapter 2 -- Write a 2-3 page letter using the formatting discussed in class. The letter should be addressed to Ms. Muria Kruger, 229 19 <sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55105. The letter should explain your plans for the 2009-10 academic year, specifically addressing 1) your professional goals for the academic year and your plans for accomplishing those goals; 2) any possible obstacles to reaching those goals and how you plan to deal with those possible obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing Authority</li> </ul>
Sept. 30	Read handouts on outlining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading citations, basic bluebooking</li> <li>• Outlining</li> </ul>
Oct. 7	Read Nedzel: Chapter 3 Complete Exercises 5 & 6 from Nedzel, page 63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRAC</li> <li>• Breaking Down Rules</li> </ul>
Oct. 14	Hand in Hartley Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Precedent</li> </ul>
Oct. 21	Read Garner: Chapter 14 Hand in Washburn Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience</li> <li>• Memo Format</li> </ul>
Oct. 28	Read handouts on plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotations</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> </ul>
Nov. 4	Hand in first draft of closed memo at Information Desk NO CLASS THIS WEEK	
Nov. 11	Read Nedzel Chapter 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewriting and Style</li> </ul>
Nov. 18	Hand in second and final draft of closed memo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam preparation</li> </ul>
Dec. 2	Read handouts on exam preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam Preparation and Taking Skills</li> </ul>