

Senior Thesis Seminar

[Diploma]

Fall 2013

The instructor reserves the right to introduce changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced during class. It is your responsibility to stay informed of adjustments made

Professor: Sarah King
Office Hours: Mondays 14:00-16:00
Course Code: Law 406
Course Time: Thursdays 9:25 and 10:50
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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

Being able to conduct advanced level legal research and produce quality written legal papers is a crucial skill that you should master in order to be successful in the legal profession. Fellow lawyers, judges, and clients will know you and evaluate you based on this skill. Therefore, this course is aimed at teaching you to develop high level legal research, analysis, and writing skills.

The major goal of the course is to prepare you to write the senior project or senior research paper (based on your GPA) – the most significant piece of writing that you will undertake during your senior year and defend it before a committee of experts in law that will judge it in the second half of the academic year. At the culmination of the course, you will complete, at a minimum, the first chapter and an additional subchapter of your senior thesis work and you will be prepared to work with your advisers to complete the final paper. You will also present your work to date to your classmates.

The final assignment, your first chapter + 1 subchapter (minimum length – depending on proposed length of paper) will be due at 5:00 p.m. on December 13th. No exceptions will be made for late submissions.

II. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. understand principles of legal research and ethics;
2. carry out advanced legal research, using national and international legal databases;
3. synthesize and integrate legal data;
4. construct legal arguments and perform advanced legal analysis;
5. organize legal writing in a coherent, structured way;
6. prepare research strategies and employ research methods in the course of the senior project writing;
7. prepare to complete the final version of the senior thesis;
8. prepare to present and defend the senior thesis.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

- (1) The class will meet once a week. Students are **expected to come to classes prepared and be ready** to discuss the given materials. Upon instructors' request each student will be required to submit his/her written assignments. Instructors will call on students randomly to discuss the given case or hypothetical, or to perform any other task (questions etc.).
- (2) Students are expected to **BE ON TIME** for classes. If a student is late, he/she will be marked as **absent for the whole class**, unless excused by the instructors.
- (3) **ATTENDANCE:** Class attendance is required. If a student misses more than 5 class periods, he or she will automatically receive a grade of zero for class participation and attendance.

- (4) Students are required to attend **INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS**. If the student misses individual meeting, he or she is considered to have missed a class period.
- (5) **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**: Due dates and times for all assignments are strict. If the student misses the deadline, late work will not be accepted. Extensions will not generally be granted.

Please, notice that all assignments must be turned in **hard copy** and in an **electronic copy**, unless otherwise indicated. Electronic copies should be uploaded via the **AUCA e-course system**. You may access the system at <http://e-course.auca.kg/>. Please contact the instructor immediately if you have any difficulty accessing e-course.

- (6) Students must observe the AUCA **ACADEMIC HONESTY** policy. All types of **academic dishonesty** (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) are **strictly prohibited**. If a student fails to observe this requirement, instructors may assign an “F” grade for the work or for the whole course depending on the type of assignment and gravity of the academic dishonesty. Students are expected to read and follow the section on the Student Academic Dishonesty of the AUCA Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.
- (7) **CELL PHONES** and any other electronic devices should be either turned off or kept on silent during class. Similarly **LAPTOPS** should be for academic use. If the Professor observes that laptop use is distracting from class participation, laptops may be banned.

IV. EXAMINATION

There are no mid-term or final examinations in this course. Students will be graded based upon their written work and oral performance during the semester.

V. GRADING

The final grade will be determined based on the following components:

Class attendance and participation:	20 %
Topic Defense	10 %
First Sub Chapter	10%
Mid Semester Presentation	15 %
Final Draft Version of Senior Thesis	25 %

VI. COURSE CONTENT

Week	Topics
1	Introductions and Organization
Sept 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction / Discussion of final draft (for this course) expectations • Verify Student Topics • General Feedback on the LRM presentations from Spring 2013 • Organization of a large piece of academic work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to structure a paper ○ Utilizing the outline for both research and writing ○ Effective Introductions ○ Use of Chapters • Sign ups for individuals meetings in Week 2
	Assignment Due in class Week 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Versions of Student Topics, Research Questions, Research Problems, Thesis Statement, Proposed Methodology, Outline of paper and Literature Review

2	Individual Meetings
Sept 12	Bring Revisions to individual meetings *Failure to bring revisions to student's meeting will result in a decrease of one letter grade (for example, an A becomes and A-) **Students will sign up for these meetings. They will be held on 9 and 10 Sept**
3	No Class – Topic Defense
Sept 19	
4	Editing
Sept 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language pitfalls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sentence Structure ○ Grammar • Typos – spell check won't catch everything! • Common errors when writing papers in Russian and translating to English <p>Assignment Due in Class Week 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Subchapter (maybe be any subchapter, it does not necessarily have to be the first subchapter in sequential order)
5	Online Research / Verifying Sources
Oct 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential pitfalls of online research • Verifying sources – how can you tell if a website is a legitimate source • The importance of reading an entire case, not just the excerpt • The importance of going to directly to the source when you see it referenced • Students turn in First subchapter
6	Individual meetings
Oct 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review first Subchapter • Discuss Presentation (Students will be required to present their topics considering the research they have done so far – which will be entire first chapter) <p>Assignment Due October 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of First Chapter
7	Individual meetings
Oct 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review first Subchapter • Discuss Presentation (Students will be required to present their topics considering the research they have done so far – which will be entire first chapter) <p>Assignment Due October 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of First Chapter
8	Presentations
Oct 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Presentations on work to date • First chapter due in class
9	Presentations
Oct 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Presentations on work to date

10	No Class – Day of October Socialist Revolution
Nov 7	
11	Individual Meetings
Nov 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Chapter 1 • Feedback on Presentations
12	Individual Meetings
Nov 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Chapter 1 • Feedback on Presentations
13	No Class – Thanksgiving
Nov 28	
14	Lecture on Citations
Dec 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Bluebook and Chicago Manuel • Review of not just how we cite but when we cite (considering errors in Draft 1)
15	Office Hours – Final Questions for Paper Drafts
Dec 12	**Drafts are due on December 13 at 5:00 – no late papers will be accepted, no exceptions**

VII. COURSE MATERIALS

You will be required to read handouts that will be distributed in class weekly. In addition, you may refer to the following list of recommended materials for further reading:

- Eugene Volokh, “Academic Legal Writing: Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar papers, and Getting on Law Review”, New York, 2010
- Elizabeth Fajans, Mary R. Falk, “Scholarly Writing for Law Students. St. Paul, 2005
- Christina L. Kunz, “The Process of Legal Research”, New York, 2004
- Richard C. Wydick, “Plain English for Lawyers”, Durham, North Carolina, 1998
- Lisa Webley, “Legal Writing”, New York, 2007.
- Michael Murray, “Legal Research Methods,” Foundation Press, New York (2009);
- John Dernbach, “A Practical Guide to Legal Writing and Legal Method,” Aspen Publishers, New York (2007);
- Nancy L. Schultz & Louis J. Sirico, “Legal Writing and Other Lawyering Skills,” 4th ed., LexisNexis, NJ (2004);
- Diana V. Pratt, “Legal Writing: A Systematic Approach,” 3^d ed., WestGroup, St. Paul, Minnesota (1999);
- Linda Edwards, “Legal Writing. Process, Analysis, and Organization,” 3^d ed., Aspen Law and Business, New York (2002);
- Ian Mcleod, “Legal Method,” 7th ed., Palgrave, New York (2009);
- Nadia Nedzel, Legal Reasoning, Research, and Writing, Aspen Publishers, New York (2004).