Course Guidelines

1. **Books.** Required books and materials include:

   Richard K. Neumann, Jr. and Sheila Simon, *Legal Writing*  
   (2d ed. 2011)

   Wanda M. Temm & Julie M. Cheslik, *Missouri Legal Research*  
   (2d ed. 2011)

   Core Grammar for Lawyers (available at  
   www.coregrammarforlawyers.com)

   Class codes for *Core Grammar*:
   - Prof. Wilson—Section A: 213-130-4651
   - Prof. Temm—Section B: 213-130-1439

   Supplementary Materials (available at  
   www1.law.umkc.edu/academic/LWP/index.html)

   Recommended books include:


   Anne Enquist & Laurel Currie Oates, *Just Writing – Grammar,  

   Bradley G. Clary & Pamela Lysaght, *Successful Legal Analysis and Writing: The  
   Fundamentals* (3d ed. 2010)

2. **Professionalism Expectations**

   The successful practice of law demands active participation, a high level of commitment,  
   and the utmost professionalism. Becoming a lawyer is much more than passing your course  
   work, graduating, and passing the Bar. You are entering a profession. The duties you are  
   choosing to undertake flow from self-discipline, self-motivation, and recognizing  
   accountabilities you have to your client, the course, and yourself.

   Your prompt presence, in-class contributions, and active engagement are the lifeblood of  
   this course. Failure to meet the expectations contained in these Course Guidelines may result in  
   a course grade reduction, up to receiving an F in the course.

   **Attendance and Engagement:**

   As an attorney, you will regularly be obligated to attend court proceedings, conferences,  
   and client meetings. To help you begin to understand the importance of attendance, the
Lawyering Skills I/Part I course employs the following attendance policy: students who are absent for more than one (1) scheduled instructional sessions, including required individual meetings, will be assessed a grade penalty for each absence above one. There are no excused absences. Students who exceed two (2) absences will fail the course. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact your professor to pick up any missed assignments. Do not expect them to repeat the instruction you missed in class.

Our class time will primarily be devoted to exercises and discussion, which require your attention and participation. Similarly, producing effective work product requires an attorney to be fully engaged in each step of the creative process. Accordingly, we expect you to be fully prepared and engaged both in class and in conferences. You will learn best and most quickly through active engagement, which will help you and your classmates develop your ideas and work product.

*Electronic Communication and Use of Technology:*

- **Cell Phones**
  
  You must turn off all cell phones before class. If your cell phone rings during class, you must leave the classroom and you may not return. You will be marked absent for that class.

- **Course Information**
  
  Course information is posted on either the Lawyering Skills Program website at www1.law.umkc.edu/academic/LWP/index.html or on your course TWEN page. Most of your assignments, handouts, and other course documents will be posted in both places.

- **Email**
  
  We encourage you to communicate with us via e-mail whenever you have simple, straightforward questions. Please use email appropriately by corresponding professionally: make sure that you proofread your emails and that your emails contain correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Professional writing is respectful (addresses professors and deans by title rather than by first name, “dude,” or “hey.”) *That does not mean overly formal.* Overly formal writing tends to be *less* professional because it injects distance—and sometimes even hostility—into what should be a friendly working relationship. Teaching assistants may be addressed by first names. And just as you were taught as a kid, “please” and “thank you” go a long way.

  Avoid sending “train-of-thought” messages. “Train-of-thought” means that you are writing everything that you are thinking, in no particular order. Pause and consider what you are asking of the professor or teaching assistant. When you have more complex or analytical questions or would like to talk through or get feedback on your ideas, please come see us in person to allow a fuller dialogue. There is another reason for this policy. Good writers think about *everything* that they write. They are good editors, and they edit constantly. This policy
helps you establish and develop the habit of a good writer. That translates directly into better performance on everything that you write, including the things that are graded.

While many of us routinely respond to e-mail messages fairly quickly, you should never expect to receive a reply immediately. Twenty-four hours is an appropriate length of time to respond to a message in the professional world.

- Laptop Use

Laptops may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading class information from the course website, or working on an in-class exercise. Recent research has shown that multi-tasking significantly impairs long-term retention of information. For example, email, instant messaging, surfing the Internet, updating your Facebook status, posting on Twitter, reading the news, or playing games are not considered legitimate classroom purposes; such inappropriate laptop use is distracting to those seated around you and is unprofessional. Further, those activities damage your performance and interfere with others’ learning.

While you may be permitted to use laptops in class, we do not believe they are necessary. First, note-taking on a laptop encourages taking dictation rather than taking notes. Second, class will involve many interactive activities that make note-taking difficult. Finally, all of the materials used in class, including PowerPoint slides, will be posted on TWEN following each class. If laptops will be necessary for a particular class, your lawyering skills professor will notify you prior to the class.

While laptops are allowed in class for taking notes and for working on class-related activities, your lawyering skills professor reserves the right to ban laptops and/or other technological devices from the class at any time. If you are using your laptop for non-classroom related activities (such as checking email, Facebooking, surfing the web, playing solitaire, etc.), your lawyering skills professor may ask you to leave class for the day, count you absent, and prohibit you from bringing your laptop to class again.

- Recording Class

Students may make audio or video recordings of course activity as long as permission is granted by your lawyering skills professor in advance of such recording. To foster a safe environment for learning, however, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of your lawyering skills professor and of any students who are recorded. Unauthorized distribution of such materials is a violation of academic standards and may violate copyright laws and/or privacy rights. Students found to have violated this policy are
subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

**Deadlines:**

Attorneys must adhere to strict court-imposed deadlines or risk malpractice suits and court sanctions. You are advocates in training and will be subjected to similar standards. All assignments must be submitted on time at the time indicated for the individual assignment on the Syllabus. **Absent exigent circumstances, writing assignments submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of F.** If multiple drafts of a paper are submitted to the Assignment Drop Box, only the last draft submitted will be graded. If the last draft submitted is submitted after the deadline, that paper will receive a grade of F. A paper submitted even minutes after the deadline will be considered late. The time stamp on the Assignment Drop Box will be the official clock for late penalties. **All writing assignments are required. Failure to turn in a paper within 48 hours of a deadline will result in an automatic F in the course.** Papers turned in late will not be critiqued. Each professor will decide if you may have a conference on a late paper.

If you wish to have a Lawyering Skills faculty panel consider waiving this penalty, you may file a written plea, signed with your blind lawyering skills grading number (not your name), setting out the reasons, and submit that written plea to Elizabeth Couzens at couzense@umkc.edu. **Do not submit such pleas to your lawyering skills professor or the Administration Office.** Students who submit such a plea to anyone other than Elizabeth Couzens as detailed here may receive a course grade reduction.

Neither your lawyering skills professor nor the administrative office will entertain requests to waive late penalties, and you should not ask them to do so. Therefore, failure to submit the request to Elizabeth Couzens at the outset would be viewed as an attempt to circumvent the procedure for late penalty requests and could result in a grade reduction.

The only grounds considered are exigent circumstances. Exigent circumstances do not include computer problems. A handout of suggestions to avoid computer catastrophes is posted on the course website. We suggest you follow those suggestions on every assignment.

**Format of Assignments:**

Courts routinely reject pleadings that do not conform to simple formatting requirements. For this class, you must adhere to the formatting requirements set out in the Local Rules of Court for the UMKC Lawyering Skills Program posted on the Lawyering Skills Program website and TWEN along with the directions for preparing each assignment. You are responsible for reviewing and following these rules. Your assignments must include the required cover sheet containing a completed Declaration of Compliance. A missing or incomplete cover sheet constitutes unprofessional behavior and may result in a course grade reduction. If you are having any trouble preparing or submitting an assignment electronically, you must email your assignment to Elizabeth Couzens at couzense@umkc.edu.
Collaboration vs. Individual Competence:

Attorneys must be able to work on their own and in teams. This course aims to strike a comparable balance between fostering individual competence and encouraging collaborative learning. Collaboration will permit you to enrich each other’s ideas and to learn from each other. At the same time, when you start your first law-related job, your classmates will not be nearby, and your colleagues will often be too busy to brainstorm with you or to review your work before you submit it to a senior attorney. Accordingly, this course encourages you to collaborate with your peers, but within limits.

The Honor Code and the Plagiarism Policy apply to all assignments in this course. Both are available as part of the Supplementary Materials available at www1.law.umkc.edu/academic/LWP/index.html. Each student is expected to do his or her own work. If you have any questions about what is and is not permitted, please do not hesitate to ask your professor. Apart from permitted collaboration and in-class peer edits organized by your lawyering skills professor, the work you submit must be your own—no one may review or edit your work. This includes family or friends, whether or not they happen to be attorneys, and other law students.

Interacting with Others

You are expected to treat each other, all faculty members, all members of the Law School and University staff, and all people within the University community with civility and respect. Some areas of professionalism often overlooked include email etiquette; prompt arrival for classes, meetings, appointments, and oral argument; and respect for members of the staff. Unprofessional conduct may result in a course grade reduction.

3. **Required Computer Training**: Three sessions of Computer Assisted Legal Research training are required and count as classes for attendance purposes. These sessions will be held on May 23-24.

We chose for your training to focus on the three major providers of computer-assisted legal research. Realize that technology changes at a rapid pace. Indeed LexisAdvance was not available when your research workbook was sent to the printer. Also realize that law firms sometimes do not embrace new systems quickly. Many firms will continue using a prior platform. Thus, focus your understanding on the process of research rather than the bells and whistles of a system.

4. **Due Dates**. Major writing assignments must be submitted electronically in your lawyering skills professor’s assignment drop box on TWEN. Assignments must be on time. Deadlines for writing assignments are absolute.
5. **Grades:** Final grades in the course will be assigned by your lawyering skills professor using letter grades A-F with assignments weighted as follows:

- Application Exercise .................. Peer-evaluated
- Rule Development Exercise ............ Faculty feedback and peer-evaluated
- IRAC Exercise ......................... 10% of your final course grade at the end of Fall 2013.*

*If your grade on Exercise 5 in the Fall 2013 course is higher than your grade on IRAC Exercise, the IRAC Exercise grade will not count in the computation of your final grade. Instead, your Exercise 5 grade will be used for that percentage. For example, your grade on IRAC Exercise is a C+ and your grade on Exercise 5 is a B. If Exercise 5 is weighted 40%, the B grade would now be weighted 50% instead of 40% and the C+ grade would not be counted at all. **This option will not apply to students who receive an F on Exercise 3 as a late penalty.**

**Core Grammar for Lawyers:** This is an online, self-diagnostic, self-directed learning tool that will allow you to work independently to develop the grammar, punctuation, and style skills that are critical to your success as a legal writer. You may purchase a one-to-three-year subscription. Before the first day of class, you must take the pre-test.

If you receive a score of 80%, no further work is needed. If you do not receive a score of 80%, you should do the online exercises at your own pace. The program will tell you which areas you need to work on the most. In individual conferences, we may review your progress on these exercises. When you are ready, you can take the post-test. You need to achieve an 80% to pass the course. You may take the post-test repeatedly.