

**English 105i: Writing in Law
Fall 2015**

Instructor: Ben Bolling

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Office Hours: T, Th 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

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Course Introduction:

In “ENGL 105i: Writing in Law,” we will analyze the rhetorical and stylistic conventions that govern professional and academic writing in the legal field. We will study how genres function in this discipline and learn how to adopt genres to fulfill our own purposes and meet the needs of an audience. Writing is not simply a talent bestowed upon the fortunate few and denied the rest of us—it is a skill that can be mastered through practice, diligence, revision, and informed feedback. In this class we will work to understand and perform the principles of effective written communication while developing the skills necessary to confidently navigate various forms of discourse.

To those ends, we will move through a sequence of units designed to give you practice in many of the skills and techniques that professional lawyers and legal scholars use to collect, organize, analyze, and present their arguments and research findings. You will have the opportunity to conduct your own research in these fields and to compose your own examples of the genres that professionals and scholars use to communicate their findings. The ultimate aim of this course is to provide you with the composition and communication skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Course Objectives:

- Understand genres, conventions, and rhetoric as they relate to the field of law;
- Generate discipline-specific compositions in appropriate genres;
- Conduct primary and secondary research using online databases and library sources;
- Speak professionally, especially about legal arguments; and
- Review and revise your own work and assist others in revising their work.

Required Text:

- *The Tarheel Writing Guide (2015-2016 ed.)*

Recommended Text:

- Guest-Pryal, Katie R. *Short Guide to Writing About Law*

Course Overview: I have organized “ENGL 105i: Writing in Law” according to the following principles:

Workshop format: In order to explore a range of discourse communities, cultivate oral communication skills, and maximize our knowledge of research methods and resources, our class will function as a supportive community of scholars. Each of you will be assigned to a small workshop group. Your group will provide feedback on your compositions, serve as discussion partners, and act as smaller cohorts in the larger community. My instruction will emphasize process: how to read, write, analyze, interpret, understand, and create oral, written, or multimedia texts. Your compositions will be our primary texts and your constructive engagement in the work of your colleagues will prove integral to our communal development. You will receive valuable feedback from your peers and, in turn, will build skills in critical reading and analysis, managing group dynamics, and collaborative composition.

Computers: You will be required to use computers to conduct activities in this course, so I ask that you bring your laptops to class *every day*. Allow time and seek assistance for any technical issues that arise when completing computer-based activities (information and technical assistance are available at <http://help.unc.edu> or by phone at 962-HELP). You should observe appropriate behavior during all computer-based activities related to this class. Engaging in activities deemed to be offensive or inappropriate may be considered violations of the UNC Honor Code.

Sakai: Sakai is a web-based instructional environment that will provide our digital home for this semester. Here, you will find the course syllabus, assignments, notes, reading materials, resources, and important announcements/reminders. To sign into Sakai, go to: <https://www.unc.edu/sakai/>. Your username and password are your university Onyen and password. Please make sure that you are comfortable with Sakai’s setup and functionality. Don’t be afraid to ask for help with any Sakai-related issues. Discomfort/confusion are not valid excuses for failure to complete a Sakai assignment or for not completing an assignment on time.

Professionalism: Professionalism for “Writing in Law” has five components – Community, Responsibility, Respect, Communication, and Collegiality— explained broadly below:

- **Community:** Because this discussion-based class depends on the input of all class members, your professionalism will be evaluated in part by your peers via group evaluation reports (“The Jury Box”).
- **Academic Etiquette:** Tolerance for diverse opinions voiced in class and online is essential. In order for us to learn from one another, we have to allow each other to make mistakes, and/or to offer unpopular positions for debate.
- **Cell Phones:** Before class begins, please turn your cell phones off. If your phone rings or if you send texts during class, I will make every possible effort to embarrass you.
- **E-mail:** E-mail is the easiest and most convenient way to contact your colleagues and me. My e-mail address is listed on the front of the syllabus. If you e-mail me

during my office hours, I will usually respond immediately, unless I am with a student. **Otherwise, I will respond within 24 hours during the school week (M-F). Please do not e-mail a question about an assignment due in fewer than 24 hours. In all other cases, if you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the school week, please re-send the message.**

- **Attendance:** Because this class is a workshop, your attendance, preparedness, and active participation are integral to our success. **Attendance is mandatory.** Each absence beyond three (3) will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third (1/3) letter grade (e.g. a B becomes a B-, a B- becomes a C+, etc.). Seven or more absences will result in automatic failure of the class in accordance with UNC-CH policy. Incompletes will not be given.
- **Preparedness:** Tardiness disrupts the workshop environment and is disrespectful of your colleagues and me. Repeated or excessive tardiness may be counted as an absence, so please arrive on time. If you come to class without a draft on a scheduled workshop day, you will be considered absent. Failure to complete unit projects on time will adversely affect your grade. I do not accept late work.
- **Conferences:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. Please see me during my regularly scheduled office hours if you have any questions, if you are struggling with an assignment, or if you would like to chat. You do not need an appointment to stop by during office hours, although those who have an appointment will take priority. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know and we will arrange another mutually convenient time.

Evaluation:

Your grade in this course will be assigned based on your performance in the following areas:

First Impressions: Interview	5%
Feeder 1.1	5%
Feeder 1.2	5%
Unit Project 1	15%
Pedagogical Presentation	5%
Feeder 2.1	5%
Feeder 2.2	5%
Unit Project 2	15%
Feeder 3.1	4%
Feeder 3.2	6%
Unit Project 3	15%
Participation	15%

I will calculate your final grade according to the following scale:

A	95-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-94%	C	73-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	0%

Each of these assignments will be detailed in unit sequences and rubrics available on Sakai, but below I've provided thumbnail sketches of each category of evaluation.

Unit Portfolios

- At the end of each unit, you will submit a unit portfolio that contains the unit project, optional revisions of one of the two feeders with a revision report, and copies of the feedback you gave during draft workshops (submission specifics will be detailed on Sakai). The portfolio will determine your grade for the unit. You will submit your unit portfolio electronically via Sakai. **All of your drafts and draft workshop responses must also be posted in the appropriate locations on Sakai at the time the portfolio is due. Missing elements will affect your portfolio grade.**
- Each feeder will be given a grade when submitted, but you may revise it for an improved grade. As noted above, revisions are due in the portfolio. Revisions are optional unless otherwise directed.

First Impressions: Interview: You will prepare a one-page resume, one-page cover letter, and I will conduct 10-minute mock interviews with each of you.

Unit 1: In Feeder 1.1, you and your workshop group will compose a rhetorical analysis of two news articles. In Feeder 1.2, you will compose a rhetorical analysis of the case *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. And for the culminating Unit Project 1, you and your workshop group will compose a case brief and reflection paper on the cases *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Pedagogical Presentation: In a small group, you will offer a five to seven minute presentation on a topic germane to our study of legal discourse communities.

Unit 2: In Unit 2, we will turn our attention to current legal cases before the United States Supreme Court. In Feeder 2.1, you will develop a thesis statement and argumentative research questions to guide your study of a current legal question. In Feeder 2.2, you and your workshop group will present your research and preliminary findings to your classmates. For the Unit 2 Project, you will organize an argument outline and write an introduction and one section of a prospective law review article.

Unit 3: In Feeder 3.1, you will storyboard a five-minute recap of a recent SCOTUS case. In Feeder 3.2, you and your workshop group will compose a transcript and audio summary of your chosen SCOTUS case (http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_audio.aspx). For the Unit 3 Project, you and your workshop group will compose a video summary of your chosen SCOTUS case using *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver's* "Real Animals, Fake Paws" footage (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tug71xZL7yc>).

Participation: The workshop environment can be productive and even enjoyable, but only if we each participate as fully as possible. Participation includes, but is not limited to: constructive contributions to class discussions and activities, engagement with and support of workshop group members, and timely completion of reading, online projects (including "You Be the Judge" responses), and homework assignments.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code: Plagiarism is a very serious Honor Code violation as it is a breach of the academic community's trust. Every piece of work you produce in this class (oral or written) must be your own. You are bound by the Honor Code in all that you do at this University, and so am I. I take that responsibility very seriously. I am required to report any work I believe may be plagiarized. Handing in work that is not your own not only violates the Honor Code, it also ruins the trust between us. If I find you have plagiarized in my course, I will fail you on the assignment – no exceptions – and I will seek additional penalties from the Honor Court. If you are struggling with an assignment, please speak to me. If you are struggling with your time management, please speak to me. Please speak to me if you have any questions. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for breaching the Honor Code. And please remember: this policy applies to drafts as well as final products.

Honor Code

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

Under the Honor Code provisions, you have four general responsibilities:

- Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code.
- Refrain from lying, cheating or stealing.
- Conduct yourself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.
- Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected.

Please submit all written work with the following signed pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.”

Non-Discrimination: This university does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences.

Accessibility: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with disabilities are eligible to receive “reasonable

accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities” (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/faculty>). If you anticipate such accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Additionally, you may seek out student support services at the Department of Accessibility Resources and Service (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/>) or through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

The Writing Center: The UNC Writing Center is an excellent resource if you would like to pursue additional help with your writing outside of class. In either face-to-face or online sessions, tutors will help you at any stage in your composition process. Tutors will not revise, edit, or proofread your papers for you. However, they will help you organize your paper, think through your ideas, and improve your arguments. For more information about the writing center or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>.

My pledge to you:

I will be available for you as much as possible. I will strive to make this class engaging and intellectually stimulating, and your feedback will always be welcomed. Additionally, please communicate to me any extenuating circumstances and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. This classroom should be a welcoming environment that provides everyone with an equal opportunity for learning. I want you to let me know what I can do to ensure that it is, in fact, such a place. As stated above, my ultimate goal is to provide you with the composition and communication skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Your pledge to me:

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the above requirements. I agree to abide by these requirements.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

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On the course calendar below, I've listed important due dates and reading assignments for each unit. Be advised, however, that homework, additional reading, and other assignments may be added or adjusted throughout the term. Be sure to check Sakai announcements often and to see a classmate for updates if you are absent. Also, listen carefully in class for announced changes and check the calendar for updates.

Any reading should be completed before class on the given day. It is not necessary to complete the exercises included in an assigned section of the handbook unless I direct you to, although looking over these exercises may be to your advantage.

Reading Abbreviations

SGWAL= Pryal, *A Short Guide to Writing About Law*

TWG=*The Tarheel Writing Guide*

Course Calendar
Fall 2015

Week 1

T 8/18 Course Introduction
First Impressions Assignment Introduction and Sign-Up

Th 8/20 **Reading:** *TWG*, Pgs.1-27, 54-57, 112-113, 115-117
SGWAL, Preface and Chapter 1 (available on Sakai)
Complete 2 out of 3 plagiarism exercises on Pgs. 113-115 of *TWG*
Sign and Return Pledge on Pg. 119 of *TWG*
Sign and Return Pledge on Pg. 7 of the Syllabus

Week 2

T 8/25 Unit One Introduction
Semester Assignments Introductions and Sign-Ups

W 8/26 *First Impressions Assignment Complete*

Th 8/27 Group Introductions
Bring U1F1 Articles to share with your group

Week 3

T 9/1 **U1F1 workshop**
Th 9/3 **U1F1 Due**
Review sample U1F2

Week 4

T 9/8

Reading: *Dred Scott v. Sandford*

You be the Judge #1

Th 9/10

Pedagogical Presentations Set 1

You Be the Judge #2

Week 5

T 9/15

U1F2 Workshop

Th 9/17

Reading: *Brown v. Board; Plessy v. Ferguson;*
SGWAL, Chapter 2

You Be the Judge #3

Week 6

T 9/22

U1F2 Due

Th 9/24

Unit 1 Project Workshop**Week 7**

T 9/29

Unit 1 Portfolio Due

Introduction to Unit 2

Th 10/1

U2F1 Workshop**Reading:** *SGWAL, Chapters 3 & 4***Week 8**

T 10/6

U2F1 Due**Reading:** *SGWAL, Chapters 5*

Th 10/8

U2F2 Workshop

You Be The Judge #4

Week 9

T 10/13

U2F2 Presentations

You Be the Judge #5

Th 10/15

FALL BREAK: NO CLASSES HELD**Week 10**

T 10/20

U2F2 Presentations

You Be the Judge #6

Th 10/22

Pedagogical Presentations Set 2

You Be the Judge #7

Week 11

T 10/27

Unit 2 Project Workshop

Th 10/29 **Unit 2 Portfolio Due**
Unit 3 Introduction
Review U3F1 sample
You Be the Judge #8

Week 12

T 11/3 **U3F1 Draft Workshop**
You Be the Judge #9

Th 11/5 **U3F1 Due**
Unit 3 Media Editing Workshop

Week 13

T 11/10 **U3F2 Draft Workshop**
You Be the Judge #10

Th 11/12 **Pedagogical Presentations Set 3**
U3F2 Due

Week 14

T 11/17 **Unit 3 Media Editing Workshop**
Th 11/19 **Unit 3 Project Workshop**

Week 15

T 11/24 **Unit 3 Portfolio Due**
Th 11/26 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASSES HELD**

Week 16

T 12/1 Course Evaluations and Final Thoughts