

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

**LRWA I: Introduction to Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis  
FALL 2022 SYLLABUS**

LAW 096-all sections (2 credits)

---

**Program Administration**

Suzanne FitzGerald

Director, First Year Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis Program

Hazel Hall, Room 433B

(703) 993-9679

[sfitzg11@gmu.edu](mailto:sfitzg11@gmu.edu)

Office hours: Mondays, 1 to 2 pm, and by appointment

Michelle Trumbo

Assistant Director, Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis Program

Hazel Hall, Room 433C

(703) 993-8086

[mtrumbo2@gmu.edu](mailto:mtrumbo2@gmu.edu)

Office hours: Mondays, 10 to 11 am, and by appointment

Ashley Matthews

Reference Librarian

Hazel Hall, Law Library, Room 143

(703) 993-8604

[amatthe@gmu.edu](mailto:amatthe@gmu.edu)

**Textbooks & Subscriptions**

Required texts:

- Christine Coughlin et al., [A Lawyer Writes: A Practical Guide to Legal Analysis](#) (3d ed. 2018) (“ALW”) (electronic version free through Lexis Study Aids)
- Eric P. Voigt, [Legal Research Demystified: A Step-by-Step Approach](#) (2d ed. 2022) (“LRD”) (free access to Core Knowledge with purchase of text)
- [The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation](#) (Columbia Law Review Ass’n et al. eds., 21st ed. 2020) (“Bluebook”) (electronic or hard copy)

Required one-year subscriptions (follow “Start-up Instructions” posted on LRWA I Main Page):

- [Core Knowledge for Lawyers](#) (“Core Knowledge”) (free with purchase of LRD)
- [Core Grammar for Lawyers](#) (“Core Grammar”)
- [Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises](#) (“MBIE”)

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

Optional resources:

- Richard Wydick & Amy Sloan, Plain English for Lawyers (6th ed. 2019) (or any earlier edition) (electronic version free through Lexis Study Aids)
- Linda Barris, Understanding and Mastering The Bluebook: A Guide for Students and Practitioners (Legal Citation) (4th ed. 2020) (companion text to MBIE)

**TWEN**

Pages to add:

- LRWA I Main Page
- LRWA I [Instructor Name] Section (LAW-096-section #)

Students must be enrolled in both the main course page and their section page. The main page contains material relevant to all sections. The section pages have instructor-specific material and assignment drop boxes. Please note that LRWA I section numbers differ from section numbers for doctrinal courses, so check your schedule to confirm your LRWA section. **Students may not join a TWEN section page other than their own.**

**Course Description**

LRWA I is a skills course that focuses on the fundamentals of legal research, writing, analysis, and citation that are essential for law practice. The writing projects this semester are predictive in nature. Students will learn to use research tools to find the law, to use legal reasoning to analyze the law and solve client problems, and to communicate their findings in written forms expected in the legal profession.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

- Locate primary and secondary authority relevant to a legal problem
- Distinguish between mandatory and persuasive authority
- Read and interpret cases and statutes
- Correctly articulate a rule from a case
- Synthesize, analogize, and distinguish cases
- Write using the basic structure of legal analysis
- Understand the form and content of an office memorandum
- Use basic case citation
- Use grammar, syntax, and tone appropriate for the intended audience and purpose

**Course Format**

All sections of LRWA I follow a uniform syllabus, with uniform assignments and deadlines. Most weeks, LRWA I will meet in a small-group setting led by an instructor. All sections will also have a Writing Fellow, a third-year law student who will serve as a teaching assistant and mentor. On research weeks, research instruction will be led by a law librarian.

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

**Assessments and Grading**

Course grades will be based on performance on written assignments, skills exercises, and class participation and professionalism. The course is graded on a B+ curve, and students are evaluated relative to the students in their instructor section. The chart below summarizes how each assessment will be used to calculate the final grade in the course.

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Single IRAC	5%
Closed Memo	20%
Open Memo	40%
Skills Exercises	15%
Conference drafts, research plan, annotated outline	15%
Other class preparation, participation, and professionalism	5%

Written Assignments:

On written assignments, whether draft or final, students should submit the highest quality work that they are capable of when the assignment is due, as would be expected in law practice. Students will receive feedback in various forms, including oral and written comments from instructors and Writing Fellows as well as comments from peers in the context of supervised peer review. Instructors will respond as supervising attorneys and teachers, not as editors. An instructor may, for instance, correct an error the first time it appears but leave it to the student to correct the error throughout the rest of the paper and in future assignments. Students are expected to integrate readings, exercises, feedback, and classroom instruction to self-edit their work.

Anonymous Grading:

The Single IRAC, Closed Memo, and Open Memo assignments will be anonymously graded, meaning that the instructor will not know the identity of the writer when grading. Students must select anonymous grading numbers (AGNs) for these assignments before the deadline listed in the assignment memo. Anonymously graded assignments will be graded on a six-point scale, in quarter-point increments, and the instructor will report the high, low, and mean grades for the section. The six-point scale is described in the “LRWA Grading Guide” posted on the LRWA | TWEN Main Page.

Skills Exercises:

**Students must enter the correct class codes** on the Core Knowledge, Core Grammar, and Mastering the Bluebook platforms **to receive credit for their work**. Class codes are posted with the “Start-up Instructions” on the LRWA | Main Page.

*Core Knowledge/Research Exercises:* Research exercises are due as indicated in the Course Calendar and must be completed on the Core Knowledge platform. Each exercise will be

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

evaluated on a credit/no credit basis. A student will receive credit if the student successfully completes the exercise before the deadline.

*Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises:* MBIE will help students learn the Bluebook, a uniform legal citation system, and will be completed independently online. Each MBIE exercise will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. To receive credit, a student must correctly answer at least 60% of the questions in the exercise before the deadline. A student may revisit exercises as many times as necessary before the deadline to achieve the minimum score. Students are encouraged to complete the exercises as soon as possible because they will help students with the citation expected on written assignments. Students struggling with citation should seek help from a Writing Fellow.

*Core Grammar Exercises:* Core Grammar for Lawyers is an online tool designed to ensure that students have the grammar skills expected in the legal profession. **Do not opt out of the Pre-Test.**

The Core Grammar exercises are divided into lettered sections, each of which contains four lessons. J.D. students must complete the Pre-Test, complete or test out of all lessons in sections A through F, and must achieve a score of 85% on the Post-Test by the deadlines in the Course Calendar to receive credit. LL.M. students must complete the Pre-Test, complete or test out of all lessons in sections A through F, and must achieve a score of 75% on the Post-Test by the deadlines in the Course Calendar to receive credit. Students may take the Post-Test as many times as necessary before the deadline to achieve the minimum score.

Class Preparation, Participation, and Professionalism:

The Course Calendar contains weekly class prep assignments, and these assignments may be supplemented by individual instructors. Unless otherwise indicated, such assignments must be uploaded to the “Weekly Class Prep Assignments” box under “Assignments & Quizzes” on the instructor’s TWEN section page **before** the start of class.

Class prep assignments are “entry tickets” for class, and students should not expect individualized feedback on class prep assignments, although such feedback may occasionally be provided. Class prep assignments are designed for students to prepare for class, to attempt new skills, and to stay on schedule for graded projects. Class prep assignments also allow instructors and Writing Fellows to gauge student understanding of concepts and guide instruction accordingly.

A good-faith effort is required on all assignments. Failure to complete class prep assignments may result in a failing grade for the course. Additional work may be assigned when a student’s original assignment does not demonstrate minimum competency.

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

Students are expected to participate in class and behave as professionals. Participation and professionalism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Completing reading and other assignments before class
- Fully engaging in class discussions and exercises
- Demonstrating a willingness to experiment with new skills and approaches
- Exhibiting respect for classmates, Writing Fellows, librarians, and instructors
- Preparing for individual meetings with an agenda, emailed in advance to the instructor (see below)
- Asking questions after attempting to find answers using available resources
- Using technology appropriately

An in-depth discussion of professionalism is posted in the Week 1 Folder on the LRWA I Main Page, and a description of appropriate preparation for individual meetings follows.

#### Preparation for Individual Meetings with Instructors

Before each individual meeting, students must submit a draft with questions by the deadline in the Course Calendar. The draft should contain specific questions or direct the instructor to specific parts of a paper. Broad questions like “how is my draft?” or “could you explain IRAC?” are not acceptable topics for an individual meeting. Targeted issues like “I am having trouble identifying the key facts that should be included in a case illustration” are appropriate. Students should be mindful that meetings last approximately 15 to 20 minutes and should tailor the agenda accordingly. Instructors may set additional requirements for meetings and will notify students of such requirements in advance.

#### **Where to Get Help**

*Program Concerns:* Professor FitzGerald or Professor Trumbo

*Class Content:* Section Instructor

*Citation, Formatting, and Writing Style:* Writing Fellows

*Research:* Reference Librarians

*Basic Grammar:* University Writing Center

*Accommodations:* George Mason University Disability Services / [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) / 703-993-2474

Please visit <https://ds.gmu.edu> for detailed information about the Disabilities Registration Process. If you have questions about how accommodations are implemented at the law school, please contact Annamaria Nields, Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs, at [anields@gmu.edu](mailto:anields@gmu.edu).

#### **Syllabus Changes**

The Director reserves the right to revise the syllabus, Course Calendar, and LRWA Rules. Students will be notified of any changes, and a revised syllabus will be posted on the LRWA I Main Page.

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

**Course Calendar**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Before class</b>
Week 1 8/22-8/26	Introduction to Course  Introduction to Office Memo  Outlining a Legal Rule	<b>Read/View:</b> LRWA I Syllabus & Rules  ALW Ch. 1 & 4, Appendix A  Week 1 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Jammer Exercise 1 on TWEN Section Page to “Weekly Class Prep Assignments”  Library Tour Quiz on TWEN Main Page
<b>Core Grammar Pre-Test due 8/28 before 11:59 PM</b>		
Week 2 8/29-9/2	Introduction to IRAC  Explaining the Law: Rules & Case Illustrations	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 6-7  Week 2 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Jammer Exercise 2
Week 3 9/5-9/9	Applying the Law Concluding  Revising for symmetry	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 8-9 & Ch. 16 (pp. 259-67)  Week 3 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Jammer Exercise 3 (and bring a hard copy to class)
<b>Single IRAC due 9/11 before 6 PM</b>		
Week 4 9/12-9/16	Research Session 1	<b>Read/View:</b> LRD Ch. 6, 7 & 9  Week 4 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Steps 2, 3, 5 - Lexis+ Common Law Research Exercise on Core Knowledge platform

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Before class</b>
Week 5 9/19-9/23	Organizing Research  Review synthesis  Roadmaps  Case Citation	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 5 & 12  Week 5 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Closed Memo case charts Roadmap
Week 6 9/26-9/30	Individual Meetings	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 16  Week 6 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Closed Memo Conference Draft with list of questions 24 hours in advance of your meeting or in accordance with your instructor's directions
Week 7 10/3-10/7	Facts & Conclusion  WF Citation Workshop	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 14-15  Week 7 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Facts and Conclusion (and bring a hard copy to class)
<b>Closed Memo due 10/9 before 6 PM</b>		
Week 8 10/10-10/14	Research Session 2	<b>Read/View:</b> LRD Ch. 5, 10-11  Week 8 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Step 1 - Westlaw Common Law Research Exercise on Core Knowledge platform

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Before class</b>
Week 9 10/17-10/21	Research Session 3  WF Research Meetings	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 5 (review)  [Optional LRD Ch. 8]  Week 9 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Open Memo Research Plan 24 hours in advance of your WF meeting or in accordance with your WF's directions  Step 4 - Lexis+ Common Law Research Exercise on Core Knowledge platform
Week 10 10/24-10/28	Question Presented Brief Answer  Research Debrief  Using Cases Effectively	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 13  Week 10 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> QP/BA worksheet  Open Memo Annotated Outline
<b>MBIE 1-9; 30-35 &amp; Core Grammar Post-Test due 10/30 before 11:59 PM</b>		
Week 11 10/31-11/4	Open Memo Questions  IRAC for essay exams  E-memos	<b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 18  Week 11 Folder  <b>Submit:</b> Open Memo roadmap and two IRACs (and bring a hard copy to class)



---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Before class</b>
Week 12 11/7-11/11	Individual Meetings	<p><b>Read/View:</b> Week 12 Folder</p> <p><b>Submit:</b> Open Memo Conference Draft with list of questions 24 hours in advance of your meeting or in accordance with your instructor's directions</p>
Week 13 11/14-11/18	Common Issues  Final Editing & Polishing	<p><b>Read/View:</b> ALW Ch. 16 (review)  Week 13 Folder</p> <p><b>Submit:</b> Personalized revision checklist</p> <p><b>Bring (do not submit):</b> Complete and near- final Open Memo</p>
<b>Open Memo due 11/20 before 6 PM</b>		

## **LRWA Rules**

### **Scope of the Rules**

These Rules apply to all students and assignments in LRWA I: Introduction to Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis (“Course”). The Rules simulate court rules that practicing attorneys must follow.

### **Rule 1. Course Attendance & Engagement**

- 1.1 **Course Attendance.** An instructor or Writing Fellow will take attendance during every class session. Students are also responsible for maintaining their own attendance records. Pursuant to Academic Regulation 4-1, a student must be present for at least 75% of a class session to be counted as having attended that session, and any student missing more than 20% of the class sessions will not receive credit for the Course. Each mandatory individual writing conference counts as a class session.
- 1.2 **Excessive Absences.** Any student who may miss more than 20% of the class sessions should immediately notify Annamaria Niels, Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs.
- 1.3 **Postings and Email.** Students must check both the Course main page and their instructor’s section page on TWEN daily for updates to the Course syllabus and assignments. Students must also check their George Mason email account each day.

### **Rule 2. Individual Work and Sources of Assistance with Assignments**

- 2.1 **Restrictions on Writing Assistance and Collaboration Outside of Class.** Except as provided below, students may not request or accept writing, editing, or proofreading assistance from any person, nor may students review each other’s work for this Course during the semester. Because later assignments build on earlier assignments, this prohibition applies to drafts as well as final or graded assignments.
- 2.2 **Permitted Discussion, Group Exercises, and Peer Review.**
  - Students may discuss the problems outside of class as long as the written work product is the student’s own.
  - Students are permitted to, and encouraged to, engage in collaborative writing exercises when directed by their instructor. Instructors or Writing Fellows may distribute student work in class or post student work for instructional purposes, including critique and analysis. Students may also be asked to exchange work in class for peer review exercises. Students should discuss fellow students’ work in a professional and respectful manner.

**2.3 Permitted Writing Assistance.** Students may seek writing assistance on Course assignments from instructors, law librarians, Writing Fellows, the Director, the Assistant Director, and the Writing Center only.

**2.4 Consequence(s) of Violation(s).** Students who violate these rules may receive a “0” for the assignment(s) involved, an “F” for the final grade in the Course, a referral to the Honor Committee, or any combination of these penalties.

### **Rule 3. Plagiarism**

**3.1 Plagiarism.** A student must provide proper attribution when using the words or ideas of another person or a court. Students must use quotation marks when using another writer’s exact wording or when only slightly altering another writer’s wording. Carelessness or lack of intent does not excuse plagiarism.

**3.2 Consequence(s) of Violation(s).** Students who violate this rule may receive a “0” for the assignment(s) involved, an “F” for the final grade in the course, a referral to the Honor Committee, or any combination of these penalties.

### **Rule 4. Submission of Assignments**

**4.1 Due Dates and Times.** Assignments are due as provided in the Course Calendar. **For deadlines “before” a stated time, submissions at or after the stated time are late. Late submissions will receive a “0.”**

**4.2 Submission Method.** Students must follow the submission instructions outlined in the syllabus or assignment memorandum, or provided by the instructor.

**4.3 TWEN Submissions.** For assignments that require TWEN submission, students should access the appropriate drop box on their TWEN section page. Before submitting, students should ensure that they have attached the correct document. Resubmissions will not be allowed.

Because there may be a time delay on TWEN, students should **begin to submit assignments at least fifteen minutes before the deadline** to ensure timely submission. The clock on the TWEN will determine the time of the submission. **Students assume the risk of a late submission by waiting to submit an assignment until the final minutes before a deadline.**

Upon submission, the student will receive a confirmation email that contains the date and time of submission. Students must retain a copy of the confirmation email; this

email will be required if the student has any submission issue or question regarding timely submission of any assignment.

In the unlikely event that an assignment fails to upload to TWEN because of a TWEN malfunction, a student may email the assignment to the Director at [sfitzg11@gmu.edu](mailto:sfitzg11@gmu.edu). The time and date of receipt of the email will determine the timeliness of the submission. In the event of an email submission, the Director may investigate the student's activity on TWEN, including when submissions were attempted via TWEN, and any email submission may be rejected if the student did not first attempt submission via TWEN.

**4.4 Deadline Extensions.** Only the Director may grant an extension of an assignment deadline; students must not direct extension requests to section instructors or Writing Fellows. Extensions will be granted rarely and only for circumstances entirely beyond the control of the student. Students seeking an extension must (1) inform the Director of the emergency before the due date and time for the assignment if possible, (2) provide a written request to the Director as soon as practicable, and (3) provide documentation if requested. Extensions will not be granted for computer malfunctions, internet service disruptions, or other technological issues; such issues are not unexpected or rare.

## **Rule 5. Format**

**5.1 Formatting Requirements.** Unless specifically directed otherwise, all writing assignments must be:

- In Microsoft Word format;
- Formatted for 8-1/2" x 11" unruled white paper with 1-inch margins;
- In black Times New Roman 12-point font (including footnotes and page numbers);
- Left aligned, with indentation to indicate the beginning of a paragraph;
- Page-numbered, with only the typed page number centered at the bottom of the page;
- Double-spaced, with no extra spacing between paragraphs or sections *except* (1) extra space must be added to avoid stranding a heading at the bottom of a page, and (2) footnotes, block quotations, multi-line section headings, and the "Re" line in the main heading must be single-spaced;
- In compliance with the page limit, if stated;
- For office memoranda or portions of office memoranda, in compliance with LRWA Rule 6;
- For anonymous-graded assignments, students must include their anonymous grading number (AGN) in the file name and memorandum heading. No other identifying information should appear anywhere in the file name or the document.

---

---

**ANTONIN SCALIA LAW SCHOOL, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS**

---

---

Students are therefore responsible for excluding their names and for removing metadata from anonymous-graded assignments.

**5.2 Special Formatting Instructions.** Special formatting instructions, different from or in addition to those specified above, may apply to a Course assignment. Whenever students are expected to follow special formatting rules, students will be informed of such expectations in writing.

**5.3 Penalties for Non-Compliance.** Failure to comply with any formatting rule on an anonymously graded assignment will result in a deduction from the final grade for the assignment of one-quarter (0.25) point per violation, not to exceed a cumulative one-point deduction on any given assignment.

**Rule 6. Memorandum Heading**

Office memoranda and portions of office memoranda must have the following heading:

**MEMORANDUM**

To: [INSERT instructor's name]

From: [INSERT student's name or AGN, as appropriate]

Date: [INSERT assignment due date]

Re: [INSERT subject]

---

[INSERT body of memorandum]

**Rule 7. Document Retention**

**7.1 Retention Requirements.** Students must retain one ungraded copy of every assignment submitted and the graded copy returned from their instructor until all grades for the Course are available from the registrar. The student must also retain the TWEN email confirmation indicating the date and time of submission.

**7.2 Retained Documents for Grade Appeals.** Grade appeals on individual assignments are not permitted. Any student wishing to appeal a final Course grade must follow the procedure outlined in the Academic Regulations, and must retain and make available to the Director the ungraded copies, the email confirmations and attachments, and the graded copies of all assignments submitted by the student for the Course.