

George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School
LLM – LAW 072
PRELAW International Academic Preparation (Spring 2024)
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Course Overview

This course breaks down how legal education works in the United States, identifies ways in which this system is different from systems outside the U.S., and practices the skills needed to succeed in a U.S. law classroom.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to describe different types of legal education programs in the US, what they can do, and how they operate.
- Students will be able to describe and utilize the best practice for organizing and constructing academic arguments in in a U.S. context – what information is relevant, techniques for persuasion, and how to outline and organize a paper
- Students will be able to recognize U.S. practices of academic integrity, identify using sample writings areas that might cause problems, and implement what they learn in their editing and review practices
- Students will practice class preparation techniques such as annotation, skimming, scanning, and note taking. Students will then apply preparation to class discussions that will encourage them to express opinions and engage in debate.

Zoom Link (for approved students): <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/97055746731>

Course Materials

Optional Text: [Gateway to U.S. Law Schools: Law, Culture, & Context](#) Eun Hee Han, Michael J. Cedrone, & Diana R. Donahoe, Georgetown Law Library (referred to as Gateway” in Class Schedule below).

Available at <https://teachinglaw.com/gateway>

<https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/bluebook>

Online Resources: Links to various resources upon which we will rely in the course will be made available on Blackboard.

Class Participation and Communication

Course information and announcements will be made available on Blackboard (<https://mylawschoolportal.gmu.edu>). Students should check Blackboard daily for course information.

This course will be a hybrid course that utilizes both a seminar classroom and a zoom classroom with simultaneous participation (link is available on Blackboard course page). Students are expected to activate their cameras and participate in class discussion as appropriate.

Email is the best method of communication with Brian Benison (bbenison@gmu.edu). Students should send emails from their registered gmu.edu email addresses. In the event of an emergency or matter requiring urgent attention, students may call 703.993-8853.

Course Grade

The grade for this course will be determined by the final essay. The final essay will be due by the last week of the course and will require an essay of a minimum of 10 pages that includes an introduction and at least two constructed arguments on an approved topic.

Class Schedule

Reading assignments listed below should be completed **before** the class session for which they are assigned. Additional reading materials and resources will be made available via Blackboard for instructional purposes.

	TOPIC Textbook Reading	Assignments and Class Outline
1 01/18	Law School Education Gateway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LLM Programs - The Legal Profession - Class Expectations 	Planning your education Preparing for class Due by next class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self Introduction and Goals statement (1 page, properly formatted) - Think about final paper topic
2 01/25	Identifying Key Information Zoom Link https://gmu.zoom.us/j/97055746731 Gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class Norms - Preparing to Speak in Class - Student Resources 	"How to Brief a Case" Practice annotating 3 articles (to be used next class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USA Today piece covering Supreme Court Case - Economist covering Supreme Court Case - Supreme Court Case Opinion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interacting with Students In and Out of Class - Interacting with Professors In and Out of Class <p>Helpful Resources at Mason</p>	
3 02/01	<p>Creating and Voicing Opinions/ Your Student Resources</p> <p>Gateway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coursework Before Class <p>How to take notes (selection of guides)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting strategies - Annotating - Identifying unknown vocabulary 	<p>Discussion of the case information we read last class</p> <p>Final Paper Topic Due</p>
4 02/08	<p>Generating an Outline</p> <p>Gateway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience Purpose Scope and View - Large Scale Organization 	<p>Turn a brief into an outline (guest lecture from Professor Lemley if possible)</p>
5 02/15	<p>Summarizing vs Synthesizing</p> <p>Gateway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectations Specific to the English Language (all 6 sections) 	<p>Writing for Americans: Dos and Don'ts</p> <p>Limits of additional resources for your law class.</p> <p>Outline of Final Paper Due</p>
6 02/22	<p>Editing: For Yourself, For Your Friends, and For Your Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group edits of the introduction and draft of 1st argument 	<p>Introduction & Draft of 1st Argument of final paper due (4-6 pages)</p>
7 02/29	<p>Rhetoric – Pathos, Ethos, and Logos and how they construct arguments</p>	<p>Draft of 2nd Argument Due (3-5 pages)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We will work in groups to begin to distinguish the differences between explanation and argument- We will practice identifying traits in good argumentation and replicating them in our writing.	
8 03/07	Norms in American Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selection of readings, including professor critiques of other students' works (anonymous)- Group work critiquing and last-minute draft adjustments	Citations Plagiarism Editing Final Paper due 03/11 by Midnight