

**LRWA I for LLMs:
Introduction to Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis**

Course Description:

This course teaches students the fundamentals of legal research, writing, and analysis with an introduction to Bluebook citations. These fundamentals are essential to understanding how to deliver sound and responsive legal analyses to U.S. clients or to other U.S. attorneys.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students are expected to have the ability to draft a predictive legal memorandum using the IRAC structure demonstrating a thorough understanding of how to:

- Correctly identify and formulate a legal issue based on a fact pattern.
- Accurately state a rule synthesized from relevant legal authority that addresses an identified issue.
- Draft a coherent discussion of existing case law as applied to a legal issue using analogical reasoning.
- Succinctly articulate a legal prediction that is likely (or unlikely) to result in a given fact pattern.
- Effectively communicate clear, correct, and concise legal guidance.

Instructional approach:

Students will be expected to complete the required class preparations and submit six written exercises. Students will also engage in workshops that will require them engage with their classmates using prepared material. In lieu of a final exam, students will be asked to submit an open memo that demonstrates their grasp of all the course objectives.

Students should have access to at least one legal research tool (Westlaw or LexisNexis). Students will also be required to complete the Core Grammar for Lawyers Learning Module and a Legal Research Certification from Thomson Reuters. The Certification can be accessed through the link provided under “Required Resources”. More information on how to access the Learning Module is in Part II of this syllabus. Although there is no separate grade for participation, a half-step increase (e.g., B+ to an A) may be obtained by students who show consistently high levels of engagement and are able to comprehensively discuss the assigned preparatory material.

Students will be graded according to the following rubric:

Workshop and class participation	30%
Writing Exercises 1-5	50%
Open Memo	20%

The Writing Exercises will be graded on an expanded pass/fail. Expanded pass/fail grades are the following: high pass (HP), pass (P), low pass (LP), and fail (F). Completion of BOTH the Legal Research Certification + Core Grammar learning modules will replace one Low Pass with a Pass. If there is no Low Pass grade, one Pass will be replaced with a High Pass. NON-

COMPLETIONS (1 or both) will replace 1 Pass with a Fail. The Open Memo will be scored on a six-point grading scale, in quarter-point increments, with a 6.00 being the highest score a student can achieve.

During workshops, students must be prepared to utilize Zoom to present prepared material to the class, regardless of whether they are attending in person or remotely. Students should ensure they have all materials with them during each class, and have the adequate tools needed to edit, save, and transmit documents.

Required resources:

- Access to Class BlackBoard page for reading materials and submissions.
- Core Grammar for Lawyers (“CGL”) (see subscription details in Part II below).
- Foundations of Effective Legal Research Certification (access through www.lawschool.tr.com)

Important Links:

- Class Zoom link: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/2886432706>

Part I: Course Calendar

DATE	TOPIC	CLASS PREPARATION
Week 1 JAN 18	<input type="checkbox"/> Course Overview <input type="checkbox"/> How (U.S.) Lawyers Think and Write <input type="checkbox"/> Types of Legal Writing <input type="checkbox"/> The Legal Writing Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Review syllabus and course requirements
Week 2 JAN 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguishing Authorities <input type="checkbox"/> Statute Mapping	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 2 folder <input type="checkbox"/> Complete CGL Pre Test
Week 3 FEB 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Case Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Case Briefing	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 3 folder
Week 4 FEB 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop : Case Briefing	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 4 folder <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Writing Exercise 1
Week 5 FEB 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Characteristics of Effective Legal Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 5 folder
Week 6 FEB 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Memo Parts and Forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 6 folder <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Writing Exercise 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Foundations of Effective Legal Research Certification
Week 7 FEB 29	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop : Formulating Issues and Rule Synthesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 7 folder

MAR 7	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	
Week 8 MAR 14	<input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Facts <input type="checkbox"/> Analogous Reasoning through Case Illustrations <input type="checkbox"/> Disposal and Counter arguments	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 8 folder <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Writing Exercise 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Issue Statement and Rule Formulation for Open Memo
Week 9 MAR 21	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Formulating the Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 9 folder
Week 10 MAR 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Short Form Answers and Memos	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 10 folder <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Writing Exercise 4
Week 11 APR 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Style Elements and Polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 11 folder
Week 12 APR 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop: Redlining and Editing	<input type="checkbox"/> Read materials in Week 12 folder
Week 13 APR 18	<input type="checkbox"/> AI in Legal Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit Writing Exercise 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete CGL Post Test
MAY 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit Open Memo NLT 11:59PM	

Part II: Core Grammar for Lawyers

Flawless grammar is a cornerstone of professional-level legal writing and requires that you learn some grammar rules that are unique to the field of law. To ensure that you are armed with the grammar skills you need to begin your legal studies profitably, we have adopted Core Grammar for Lawyers (CGL), an online learning tool, for this course.

To purchase your subscription to CGL, go to <https://coregrammarforlawyers.com/login> and purchase a subscription for a minimum of one year. You may renew your subscription when it begins to expire if you enjoy the program.

Purchasing the program is a two-step process. First, you will purchase your subscription. Next, you will “activate” your subscription. When you activate your subscription, enter this exact Class Code (which is unique to our class): **124-215-6636**. Do not borrow a Class Code from anyone else or you may enroll in the wrong section.

If you have already purchased and activated your subscription, you may add your Class Code by going to “My Account” and selecting “Edit Account Information.” Once your subscription is activated, you are ready to begin. The first step is to open the Pre-Test by clicking on the link on the home page (called your “Bookshelf”). Do NOT opt-out of the Pre-Test. Instead, set aside up

to ninety minutes to answer the Pre-Test questions to the best of your ability. Do not consult outside resources. It is a closed book exam. You must take the **PRE-TEST BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON WEEK 2.**

The CGL Learning Module will take you through a series of Lessons and Exercises that must be accomplished throughout the semester. Although you may self-pace, you must have completed the Post-Test **BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON WEEK 13** to receive a Core Grammar completion.

Part III: Rules

Rule 1. Course Attendance & Engagement

1.1 *Course Attendance.* Attendance will be taken during every class session. 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 individual 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 Nields, Associate Dean for Administration and Student Affairs, and Shaun Sutherell, Associate Dean for the LLM/JM Program.

1.3 All communications related to the course should be done using your gm.u.edu email address.

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 if 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.

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 Assignments are due as provided in the Course Calendar.

4.2 In the unlikely event that an assignment fails to upload to a submission folder, a student may email the assignment to the professor directly. The time and date of receipt of the email will determine the timeliness of the submission.

4.3 Extensions will be granted rarely and only for circumstances entirely beyond the control of the student. Students seeking an extension must (1) inform the professor of the emergency before the due date and time for the assignment, if possible, (2) provide a written request to the professor as soon as practicable, and (3) provide documentation if requested. Extensions will not be granted for computer malfunctions, internet service disruptions, or other technology-related issues; such issues are not unexpected or rare.

Rule 5. Format

5.1 Writing exercises 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
- In compliance with any prescribed page limits

5.2 When uploading files for submissions, create file names using the following format:

- For Writing Exercises: **[GMU NetID]_EX[Writing Exercise Number]**
 - Example: For Writing Exercise 1, file name would be: amalayan_EX1
- For Memo: **Open Memo_Spring 2024**
- For Research Certificates: **[GMU NetID]_CERT**
 - Example: amalayan_CERT