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SCHOLARLY WRITING

Law 510 (001)
Fall 2026

Getting Started. Please register for the course website as soon as you receive your Westlaw password during orientation. [The TWEN website can be found here](#). The course website will be used for all course materials (other than the required textbooks) and all communications regarding the course.

Course Objectives. Scholarly Writing introduces students to writing and editing for scholarly legal journals. The primary emphasis of the course is the mechanics of writing a publishable quality case note or comment in one of George Mason's legal journals. The course also introduces students to editing and source checking professional pieces selected for publication by the journals. Scholarly Writing therefore seeks to improve the legal writing and editing skills of individual students, as well as the overall quality of George Mason's legal journals. Students receive two (2) total credits for this class. One (1) credit is "in-class" and one (1) credit is "out-of-class."

Learning Outcomes.

- Identify a proper, manageable topic for an academic article
- Identify proper authority supporting and opposing each proposition stated in the article
- Create a background section that gives context
- Propound a thesis in the style of an academic article and defend that thesis
- Apply the rules of legal citation for academic works

Required Course Materials.

Jessica Lynn Wherry and Kristen E. Murray, *Scholarly Writing: Ideas, Examples, and Execution*, 4th Edition (2025) Carolina Academic Press

Assignments and Deadlines.

Class schedule and deadlines set forth below. Note that this class does not meet as a group every week. Consult the schedule below for details.

Except for instances described in AR 4-4.1(b)(ii), faculty may not grant deadline extensions for final papers (i.e. any written assignment that accounts for 50% or more of the final course grade). The Assistant Dean, Student Academic Affairs has exclusive authority on this matter. Excuses

and requests for a deadline extension must be presented, with appropriate documentation, to the Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs. Except in emergencies, deadline extensions must be sought in advance of the scheduled deadline.

Final Paper Requirements. To receive credit, your paper must meet the following requirements:

- 8,000 words minimum (text and footnotes)
- Make a contribution to the field of legal literature
- Include the fundamental components of a paper, including a title, introduction, background section, proposed solution (i.e., a well-supported affirmative argument, and persuasive responses to common objections) and conclusion.
- Display clear organization and writing
- Properly cite all sources using the Bluebook format using footnotes.
- Word document. Double spaced. New Times Roman 12 point for text. New Times Roman 10 point for footnotes. Number all pages at the bottom of the page.
- Submit the paper by the due date, subject to a letter grade penalty for each day late as set forth below.

Grading. Scholarly Writing is a credit/no credit (“CR”/“NC”) course. Under Academic Regulation 4-6, “CR indicates work equivalent to a C or better on the A+* through F scale,” and “[t]he grade of NC indicates work that falls below the equivalent of a C on the A+* through F scale and does not qualify for credit towards the Juris Doctor degree.”

To determine whether a student will receive credit for the course, I will first assign each final paper a letter grade from A through F, based on the paper requirements above. Per AR 4-4.1(b)(iii), I will deduct a full letter grade for each 24-hour period that the paper is submitted beyond the deadline.

To receive CR, in addition to the paper, you must complete all assignments and fulfill the attendance requirement set forth below.

Attendance. Regular and punctual attendance of scheduled class sessions is a course requirement. Academic Regulation 4-1 provides: “If a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session.” I will monitor class attendance by circulating a sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class session.

Recording Class is Prohibited. *No student is permitted to video, audio, or photograph class sessions.* Academic Regulation 4-2.2 provides an exception for students with disability accommodations through written permission by the Disability Services office.

Laptops, Mobile Phones and Other Devices. You may use a laptop, tablet etc. to take notes during class or access course materials. You may not use such devices for any other purpose during class.

Office Hours. Some of our class sessions will be used for individual meetings with students. I encourage you to contact me to set up other meetings to discuss your paper as needed.

George Mason's Legal Journals. I have no authority over individual journals' membership determinations. Please direct all questions about journal operations to your editorial board and/or faculty adviser. Likewise, the journals' editorial boards and faculty advisers have no authority over my evaluations of your work for this course.

Use of AI. You may use generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to help you with research. The use of such tools is subject to the following limitations, however. First, you may not use such tools to assist in actual drafting. The words in your paper must be *your* writing. Second, you are ultimately responsible for all content, both substantive content and citations. If, for example, citations in your paper do not exist or fail to cite the appropriate source, you will be held responsible. Multiple inaccurate citations with this type can be grounds for receiving No Credit in the course.

Academic Integrity. The Academic Standards require all students to uphold the highest personal integrity. Among other things, the standards provide that: "Students are responsible for ensuring the work they are submitting is their own created work. This includes checking to make sure that any information that was not their own creation is properly attributed to the original source, as well as working within the guidelines provided by the professor of the class regarding submitted work. Facilitating misconduct in the form of providing unauthorized resources, tests, or solutions for others is a violation of the university's academic standards and will be dealt with as such. Additionally, students should request an explanation of any aspect of the professor's policies that they do not fully understand."

CLASS SCHEDULE, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DEADLINES

Class Sessions (4:00 - 6:00 p.m.)	
Monday, August 17	Introduction to Scholarly Writing Topic Selection (Thinking stage: finding a topic) • Read pages 21 - 41 Wherry & Murray • Skim 3 student note samples in Wherry & Murray appendix (focus on the brief outline of each note and the italic comments throughout) • Come to class with 1 – 3 topics for discussion
Monday, August 24	Librarian Presentation Topic Selection (Thinking stage: developing a thesis) • Read pages 41 – 55 Wherry & Murray (focus on the “quiz” on pages 54 – 55) • Come to class with a tentative thesis for 1 or more topics
Due: August 30: Topic Selection (1 – 2 paragraphs)	
Monday, August 31	Detailed Outlines (Preparing Stage) • Read pages 57 – 74; 78 - 80 Wherry & Murray
Wednesday, September 9	Individual student meeting to discuss your topic/thesis (sign up on TWEN)
Monday, September 14	Individual student meetings to discuss your topic/thesis (sign up on TWEN)
Due: September 21: Detailed Outline	
Monday, September 21	First Draft (Executing Stage) • Read pages 93 – 94; 110 – 116; 124 - 135 Wherry & Murray
Monday, September 28	Individual student meetings to discuss your outline (sign up on TWEN)
Monday, October 5	Individual student meetings to discuss your outline (sign up on TWEN)
Monday, October 19	Individual student meetings to discuss your outline (sign up on TWEN)
Due: October 25: First Draft (minimum 8,000 words)	
Monday, October 26	Student presentations
Monday, November 2	Student presentations
Monday, November 9	Student presentations
Monday, November 16	Student presentations
Due: December 1: Second Draft (minimum 8,000 words)	

You will attend one of these class sessions to present your paper and comment on your peer's papers.

Due: January 4: Final Paper (minimum 8,000 words)