

# USC Gould

## School of Law

### LAW 513: Effective Writing for Professionals

**Units:** 2

**Day/Time:** Tuesday, 7:30PM – 9:10PM

**Location:** LAW 130

**Instructor:** Calimay Pham

**Contact Info:** cpham@law.usc.edu

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

#### Course Description

This course is designed to study and practice writing in business and legal settings. The goal of this course is to teach students writing structure based on audience, tone, form, and purpose. The course will address the fundamentals of business writing including electronic mail, business letters, formal reports, and memos, with an emphasis on clear and concise writing. The course will also address the fundamentals of legal writing including IRAC, with an emphasis on legal analysis in addition to clear and consistent writing.

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify the purpose and audience for your writing
- Recognize and accommodate diverse audiences
- Compose documents appropriate to audience, tone, form, and purpose
- Produce clear and concise writing
- Edit for appropriate style to help improve the ability to write effectively
- Communicate about the law in a clear, consistent, and convincing way

#### Prerequisite(s); co-requisite(s), or recommended preparation:

None

#### Required Materials (e.g., textbooks or other)

- Bryan A. Garner, HBR Guide to Better Business Writing (2013)
  - ISBN-13: 978-1422184035
- Jennifer M. Romig & Mark E. Burge, Legal Literacy & Communication Skills (2020)
  - ISBN-13: 978-1531012618

#### Optional Materials

None

#### Description and Assessment of Assignments

Assignments will be the main method of assessment for this course, since the learning objectives relate to developing writing skills. Students will practice the skills they learn by writing and submitting various forms of written work.

Writing assignments are listed below, and specific instructions for each will be provided in class a couple weeks prior to each due date. Each assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale. **See Late Assignment Policy below.**

Brief presentations will be given in class throughout the semester. Each student or group of students will be assigned a different topic related to a grammar or writing issue. Presentations will account for 10% of each student's final grade.

One final written assignment will account for 30% of each student's grade.

Participation credit will account for 10% of each student's grade. Participation includes arriving to class on time and providing meaningful feedback on class topics. Frequent, unexplained absences will result in a lowered participation grade.

### Grading Options

This course may be taken for a numeric grade or CR/D/F.

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Memo/Report Assignment	12.5
Business Information Assignment	12.5
Legal Information Assignment	12.5
Legal Analysis Assignment	12.5
Final Assignment	30
Presentation	10
Participation	10
Total	100

### Master of Studies in Law (MSL) Grading Policy

The grading system for the MSL program at USC Gould uses both numbers and letters, ranging from 1.9 or 4.1, with letter-grade equivalents ranging from F to A+. "CR" is assigned as the satisfactory passing grade in courses that are not graded numerically or when a student has elected to take a numerically grade courses on a CR/D/F basis.

Percentage/Course Total	Numerical Grade	Letter Grade
100	4.1	A+
99-95	4.0	A
94-90	3.7	A-
89-87	3.3	B+
86-83	3.0	B
82-77	2.8	B-
76-73	2.6	C+
72-62	2.4	C
61-53	2.2	C-
52-47	2.0	D
46 and below	1.9	F

## **Assignment Submission Policy**

Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments will be submitted via Brightspace.

## **Late Assignment Policy**

Late work is highly discouraged. Assignments are considered late if they are not posted by either the stated time for any given assignment or by 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time (PT) on the day they are due. Late assignments receive a 10 percent deduction for each day they are late, with no credit given for work submitted after 72 hours (three days) from the original due date.

Technical issues are not considered acceptable excuses for late work. Be sure to back up your work and have a plan for completing your coursework even in the case of computer problems or lost Internet access. Students are expected to contact the Help Desk immediately for assistance if technical issues are present within Brightspace. If, for whatever reason, students are unable to submit their work by the stated deadline due to technical issues, they should email their professor a copy of the submission (preferably by or before 5:00 P.M. Pacific Time) and continue to work with the Help Desk to resolve any technical issues.

Instructors have discretion over accepting late work without prior arrangement in the case of extenuating circumstances (such as hospitalization, childbirth, major accident, injury or bereavement). Students who experience such a circumstance must notify the instructor as soon as possible of the extenuating circumstance that prevented them from submitting work on time and determine a deadline with the instructor for submitting the work. A doctor's note may be requested. In these instances, the instructor may waive the late penalty listed above. However, students who do not meet the deadline arranged with the instructor will receive a grade of zero on the assignment. Students experiencing life circumstances that disrupt their studies for more than two weeks should consult with their Student Advisor about their grading and enrollment options.

Coursework submitted after the last day of the semester will not be accepted.

This Late Assignment Policy may be revised at any time and for any reason during the course of the semester. If a student has questions about the policy, they should contact their professor immediately.

## **Use of AI in this Course**

As the focus of this course is to develop each student's writing skills, **use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is prohibited**. Except where expressly permitted by the instructor, all work submitted for this course, including exams and papers, must be completed by you, personally. Use of AI tools to generate text as part of preparing your work is strictly prohibited. Submission or presentation of material generated by AI, including summarizing, paraphrasing, or editing such material, will be considered a violation of Academic Integrity. For additional information, please refer to the Academic Integrity and Plagiarism portions of the Gould Student Handbook and the USC Student Handbook.

## **Academic Integrity**

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the Gould student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Assignment Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b> August 27, 2024	The Importance of Clear and Concise Writing / Introduction to Business Writing	Introduction, pp. xv-xx; Section 1, pp. 3-35, <b>HBR Guide to Better Business Writing</b>	
<b>Week 2</b> September 3, 2024	Developing Your Skills	Section 2, pp. 43-87; Section 3, pp. 91-102, <b>HBR Guide to Better Business Writing</b>	
<b>Week 3</b> September 10, 2024	Common Forms of Business Writing	Section 4, pp. 105-131, <b>HBR Guide to Better Business Writing</b>	
<b>Week 4</b> September 17, 2024	Common Forms of Business Writing	Appendices B, D, E, pp. 143-151, 163-168, <b>HBR Guide to Better Business Writing</b>	<b>Memo/Report Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> September 24, 2024	Learning How to Read and Use Business Information	Chapter 6, pp. 109-131, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication</b>	
<b>Week 6</b> October 1, 2024	Introduction to Legal Writing	Chapter 3 pp. 33-46, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication</b>	<b>Business Information Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 7</b> October 8, 2024	Reading Legal Information	Chapter 4, pp. 51-72, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication</b>	
<b>Week 8</b> October 15, 2024	Accurate and Concise Legal Writing	Chapter 17, pp. 381-399, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	
<b>Week 9</b> October 22, 2024	Legal Analysis Foundations	Chapter 5, pp. 79-104, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	<b>Legal Information Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 10</b> October 29, 2024	Working with Facts	Chapter 15, pp. 321-346, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	
<b>Week 11</b> November 5, 2024 <b><u>NO CLASS</u></b>	<b>FRIDAY CLASSES MEET</b>		
<b>Week 12</b> November 12, 2024	Legal Analysis cont.	Chapter 5, pp. 79-104, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	

<b>Week 13</b> November 19, 2024	Clear and Concise Legal Writing	Chapter 18, pp. 403-421, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	
<b>Week 14</b> November 26, 2024	Correspondence Including Email	Chapter 14, pp. 293-316, <b>Legal Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	<b>Legal Analysis Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 15</b> December 3, 2024	Review	No reading	<b>Final Assignment Due December 13, 2024 by 12:00PM</b>

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be emailed to the Student Affairs office, and to ensure anonymity where possible, the Student Affairs office will communicate with faculty as needed. For classroom accommodations, the student can work

directly with faculty to determine how best to implement the modification. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu). You can also contact Student Affairs for more information about accommodations in the law school ([studentcare@law.usc.edu](mailto:studentcare@law.usc.edu)).

## **Support Systems:**

[\*Counseling and Mental Health\*](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[\*988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline\*](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[\*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)\*](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[\*Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)\*](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[\*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment\*](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[\*The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)\*](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[\*USC Campus Support and Intervention\*](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[\*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion\*](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[\*USC Emergency\*](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call  
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.