

LWI One-Day Workshop: Penn State Law (University Park)

Tips and Advice for Novice Legal Writing Professors

December 9, 2020

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (EST)

Zoom Link for All Presentations: TBA

Passcode: TBA

10:00-10:15	Hari Osofsky (Dean of Penn State Law and the School of International Affairs; Distinguished Professor of Law; Professor of International Affairs; Professor of Geography)	Welcoming Remarks
10:15-11:05	Amy Stein (Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University) Kirsten Davis (Stetson University College of Law)	<i>I Said What I Meant and I Meant What I Said: Providing Students with Meaningful Feedback</i> Commenting on student work is one of the most difficult and also one of the most important parts of the job of a legal writing professor. I have developed a method of grading student work that provides consistency between students, as well as significant individual feedback. In this presentation, I will share samples of the general rubrics I prepare which serve the dual purpose of providing students with information as to how their paper should be structured, as well as ensuring that I am consistently looking for the same things as I grade papers. I will also discuss the individual summative comments that I prepare. Finally, since we can't ignore the pandemic elephant in the room, I will discuss how I've been able to effectively transition from grading hardcopy papers to grading online. <i>What Are You Teaching, Anyway?: A Philosophy and Rhetoric of Legal Writing</i> This presentation challenges participants to theorize the discipline of legal writing and to think deeply about what it is that they are doing in the legal academy as teachers (and scholars) of

		legal writing. Participants will leave the session with a new way of thinking about their work as faculty working with law students—a pursuit that is far more than teaching students how to “write like lawyers.”
11:05-11:15		Break
11:15-12:05	Elizabeth Sherowski (University of Detroit Mercy School of Law)	<i>Change Your Syllabus, Change Your Life</i> The syllabus is usually the first thing that your students experience in our course — and we never get a second chance to make a first impression. By changing the focus of the syllabus from rules and policies to explanations and support, we can change our students' (and our) view of the course. Participants will leave this presentation with a new outlook on syllabi, teaching, and life.
12:05-12:15		Break
12:15-1:05	Jim Dimitri (Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law) Emily Grant (Washburn School of Law)	<i>Neuroscience & Legal Writing: Using Reading Science to Teach Editing Skills</i> “Proofread more than once.” “Edit on paper.” “Set your draft aside for a while before you come back to edit it.” Do modern principles of neuroscience support the editing advice we give to our students? In particular, how might studies about our brains’ activity while we read text inform the way we teach effective editing practices to our students? This presentation will explore this topic and offer possible answers to these questions. <i>Students at the Front of Classroom</i> French author Joseph Joubert wisely noted that “To teach is to learn twice,” and we can employ this maxim in our classrooms in a variety of ways. This session will focus on ideas for how to use students to teach concepts to their classmates, thereby solidifying their own grasp of the subject matter. And it will provide ideas for ways to manage and direct students at the front of the

2:50-3:00		Break
3:00-3:50	<p>Suzanne Rowe (University of Oregon School of Law)</p>	<p><i>Conferencing for Formative Assessment and Professional Development: Best Practice for New Professors</i></p> <p>Individual student conferences offer some of the best possibilities for teaching legal writing, especially if you are guided by best practices. Drawing on articles from legal writing scholars, we'll discuss how to provide formative assessment in this important setting, whether in-person or online. We'll also address the opportunities and challenges for students' professional development in individual and small-group conferences. Come with specific questions and tough situations, and we'll work through them together.</p>
3:50-4:00		Break
4:00-4:50	<p>Joan Rocklin (University of Oregon School of Law)</p> <p>Rebekah Hanley (University of Oregon School of Law)</p>	<p><i>Success with Softer Skills</i></p> <p>The authors of <i>What the Best Law Teachers Do</i> identify the ability to build relationships with students as a hallmark of what “the Best Law Teachers” do. But how do law professors build relationships with their students? There is no one way. This presentation is an open-ended discussion of the variety of ways in which law professors help their students feel connected to and at ease with their professor and their legal writing classroom.</p> <p><i>Great Right Out of the Gate: Capitalizing on the Strengths of a Novice</i></p> <p>Some aspects of our work become stronger—and easier—with experience. But only some. This presentation invites participants to celebrate ways in which being a novice is an advantage—a strength to be exploited, not a weakness to be cured. For example, with novelty comes great energy and enthusiasm. Also, inspiration and creativity can reach great heights during a professor’s early years in the discipline. Finally,</p>

		a new professor's relative proximity to the work of practicing lawyers or the student experience can offer a source of credibility, a library of recently deliberated legal issues, and a reservoir of empathy.
4:50-5:00	Nicole Chong (Associate Dean and Professor of Legal Writing, Penn State Law)	Closing Remarks