

To: Incoming UB Law Students in Professor McDuff's Section (3U and 3B)  
From: Professor Angie McDuff  
Date: August 2023  
Re: Legal Analysis, Writing, and Research Class

Welcome to UB Law! I am looking forward to meeting you during our first Legal Analysis, Writing, and Research (LAWR) class on Tuesday, August 22. Before our first class, please do the following:

1. Purchase the three required books for the course:
  - Christine Coughlin et al., *A Lawyer Writes* (3d ed. 2018)
  - Richard Wydick, *Plain English for Lawyers* (6th ed. 2019)
  - *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21st ed. 2020)

All texts are available for purchase at the North Campus Bookstore or from Amazon or other retailers. Please ensure that you have purchased the correct editions. You may purchase print or digital copies of any of these texts. If you are purchasing a digital copy of *The Bluebook*, please make sure you are purchasing directly from: <https://www.legalbluebook.com/>.

This semester, the Coughlin and Wydick texts are available through our law library as e-books. There are also print copies of each text on reserve at the law library for you to review. As you decide whether to buy, rent, or rely on the e-books, please note that all three texts will be useful to you throughout your legal career, there may be a limited number of copies available when you want to borrow the books, and we will be using *A Lawyer Writes* and *The Bluebook* during the bridge and spring semesters as well.

2. Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 in our primary textbook, *A Lawyer Writes*, and the three short articles that have been posted along with this letter: "Putting Law School Into Practice," "Talking to Students About the Differences Between Undergraduate Writing and Legal Writing," and "Ten Tips for Transitioning to Legal Writing." I've also posted several articles in the Law School Tips and Legal Writing Tips modules under Course Documents on UB Learns, our course website; I suggest that you review these materials before school begins or early in the semester. I will continue to add resources to our UB Learns site throughout the semester.

3. Review the syllabus, which I will post on UB Learns under Course Information within the Content Module shortly before our first class. We will discuss the syllabus in our second class on August 23.
  
4. Enroll in Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises (MBIE) and Core Grammar for Lawyers (CGL). We will use these online programs throughout the semester to learn and practice citation and grammar. Please follow these instructions to enroll in both programs. Make sure to use the discount code (you will receive a bundle discount for using both programs) and enter the class code so that I can track your progress throughout the semester. I will provide more information about how we will use both programs in the syllabus and in class.
  - a. Mastering the Bluebook Interactive Exercises
    - i. Go to <https://masteringthebluebook.com/getmbie>.
    - ii. Complete the form, selecting “NY” for your state and “University at Buffalo School of Law” for your school.
    - iii. On the payment page, enter “BUFF2023” in the Access Code field. Your discounted price will appear immediately.
    - iv. Enter your credit card information, verify the purchase, and continue on to create your MBIE account.
    - v. When creating your account, include our class code: 323-162-2399.
  
  - b. Core Grammar for Lawyers
    - i. Go to <https://coregrammar.com/getcgl>.
    - ii. Complete the form, selecting “NY” for your state and “University at Buffalo School of Law” for your school.
    - iii. On the payment page, enter “BUFF2023” in the Access Code field. Your discounted price will appear immediately.
    - iv. Enter your credit card information, verify the purchase, and continue on to create your CGL account.
    - v. When creating your account, include our class code: 323-162-6364.
  
5. Take the Core Grammar for Lawyers Pre-Test.
  - a. Once you’ve enrolled in Core Grammar for Lawyers, login to your account and click on your Bookshelf. At the top you will see the Pre-Test. You must complete the Pre-Test by Sunday, August 27 at 1:00 pm. You should allot approximately an hour to take the test, though of course this may vary.
  - b. Completing the Pre-Test is a required component of your course grade, but the test itself is not individually graded. Rather, it is designed to evaluate your grammar skills at the outset of the semester and to focus your attention on the areas you most need

to improve. As you'll see in the syllabus, you will be required to complete the CGL lessons throughout the semester and conclude by taking the Post-Test. You may test out of certain lessons depending on your performance on the Pre-Test. Please note that some questions on the Pre-Test are specific to legal citation methods that you may not yet be familiar with; not to worry, we will spend class time learning these concepts. In short, please just try your best on the Pre-Test.

6. Finally, please prepare your first writing assignment and email it to me at [angelynd@buffalo.edu](mailto:angelynd@buffalo.edu) by 9:00 am on Tuesday, August 22 (the beginning of our first class). This assignment is an informal, one-to-two-page double-spaced essay in which I'd like you to tell me a little bit about yourself. I will not share these essays with anyone. Please include the following information, in any order or format that you wish:

- Name (including any preferred nickname and preferred pronouns);
- Where you consider "home";
- Why you chose to go to law school and become a lawyer, and why you chose UB specifically;
- Possible career goals;
- What success looks like to you;
- Your view of your strengths and weaknesses as a writer;
- What you hope to learn in this course; and
- Anything else you think I should know at the outset of the semester.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [angelynd@buffalo.edu](mailto:angelynd@buffalo.edu). I'm looking forward to meeting you on August 22.