



Introduction to Writing Research Papers

Fall Semester 2019

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Who are we?



- Hillary Gell
- Ethan Snyder '20



Who are you?

- Student planning to satisfy upper division writing requirement through an individual research project
- Student planning to satisfy upper division writing requirement through a course
- Student who wants to learn about writing research papers in general



Plan for today

- Tips for writing research papers
 - Tips for researching will come from Rob Truman and Mari Cheney on September 18
- Outline of Lewis & Clark requirements
- Presentation of strategies for completing individual research Capstone
 - Also helpful for WIEs and written work completed for courses!



Lewis & Clark Requirements

- What's What: “Demonstrate articulate, thoughtful, and well-structured analysis of the subject matter, based, where appropriate, on careful and competent research.”
- No double dipping!



Lewis & Clark Requirements

- Two upper division writing requirements:
 - Writing Intensive Experience (WIE)
 - *Course*
 - *Individual research*
 - Capstone
 - *Course*
 - *Individual research*



Lewis & Clark Requirements: WIE

- Develop your writing ability
- Must involve substantial instruction/coaching and feedback on writing skills
- Single or multiple projects: client letters, memos, briefs, traditional scholarly papers



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Broader than WIE
- Develop your writing ability *and*
 - Conduct thorough research
 - Synthesize and present results of research
 - Conduct critical legal analysis of results
- Single project
- **Mandatory rewrite required**



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- No particular format required
 - What's What: "A student could undertake a survey and analysis of a legal doctrine in one or more jurisdictions, draft a mock merits or amicus brief for a pending case, or prepare materials that educate the public about a certain area of law."
- Traditional Capstone resembles law review article
- Select faculty supervisor who will accept your preferred format



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Typical law review article: persuasive writing with predictable organization, explains complex issue and supports thesis
- Nearly every sentence will require a citation
 - *Bluebook* footnotes unless otherwise instructed



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Use format of articles as template for own work
 - Introduction: “Hook,” Thesis, Roadmap
 - Background: Facts, statutes, cases to set up issue
 - Analysis: Synthesis of research, Analysis of research (evaluate current approaches)
 - Argument: Persuasion
 - Conclusion: Reiterate points supporting thesis, restate thesis, call to action

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

Traditional Capstone	Description	Persuasive writing equivalent (Lawyering)
Thesis	Position you want reader to adopt	Conclusion
Background	History of issue; explanation why issue is important	Facts
Analysis (proof)	Evaluation and criticism of existing law or approach to issue; proof and arguments supporting your approach to issue; refutation of counter-arguments; predictions about positive outcomes if your position is adopted	Rule; Application
Conclusion	Succinct restatement of main proof leading reader to adopt your thesis; reiteration of thesis; call for action	Conclusion



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Develop project management skills
 - Parameters
 - *Thesis*
 - *Supervisor*
 - *Audience*
 - *Timing*



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Develop project management skills
 - Stages (not linear!)
 - *Prewriting, thesis identification*
 - *Researching*
 - *Outlining with persuasive headings and sub-headings*
 - *Drafting*
 - *Revising*
 - *Editing*
 - *Proofreading*

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- **Thesis versus Topic**

- Topic = Issue; Thesis = Position on Issue (Someone should do something)
- Thesis should address “live” legal issue
- Choose a thesis of personal interest!
 - *Strong opinion*
 - *Recognize counter-arguments and effectively respond*
 - *Avoid burnout*
- Convince your reader that your position on the issue is the best position/solution



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

– Thesis versus Topic

- Sample Topic (too broad): The Clean Water Act
- Sample Topic (appropriately narrow): When the Clean Water Act requires Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations to obtain an NPDES Permit.
- Sample Thesis (too neutral): This paper discusses the effects of the Gulf oil spill.
- Sample Thesis (appropriately persuasive): Those responsible for catastrophic oil spills, including the recent calamity in the Gulf, should be criminally prosecuted.

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

– Supervisor

- Seek supervisor with knowledge of area of interest to provide guidance
- What's What: "A student may not write a Capstone paper for an adjunct faculty member without prior approval of the Associate Dean of Faculty [John Parry]."
- Ask early
- Establish clear expectations
 - Supervisor-specific guidelines supersede general advice
- Read any materials provided by supervisor
- Check in about questions or concerns



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- **“Rewrite memo”** for supervisor
 - Reflect on writing choices made
 - Notice other changes to make
 - Avoid possibility that supervisor feels ignored or suspects insufficient effort



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- **Audience**
 - Supervisor
 - Law review editors and readers?
 - Practicing attorneys?
 - Assume skeptical



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- **Timing**
 - Consider stages, other commitments, personal work style
 - Divide project into chunks
 - Set personal deadline for each chunk
 - Schedule blocks of time on calendar
 - Keep self accountable
 - Be focused and flexible
 - Reward self when task accomplished!



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Where are you looking for topic ideas?
- Are you an independent and self-motivated worker?
- Are you too attached to your topic?
- Are you keeping track of your work as you go?
- Are you staying in touch with your supervisor and with the Writing Center?



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- Just a few tips for writing professionally:
 - Quote sparingly
 - Avoid contractions
 - Revise every sentence exceeding three lines
 - Favor active voice



Lewis & Clark Requirements: Default Syllabus

- **Default syllabus** for individual research WIEs and Capstones applies unless supervisor opts out
 - See default syllabus handout
 - Default syllabus also available in What's What
 - One-semester and Two-semester versions
 - **IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE TWO-SEMESTER VERSION, YOU MUST SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE WRITING CENTER DURING THE SECOND SEMESTER OF YOUR PROJECT!**



Writing Center

- Staff: Hillary Gell and Kelci Schmidt
- Contact: Wood Hall 128C, legalwrt@lclark.edu, 503-768-6873
- We can help you with...
 - Tackling writer's block
 - Revising organization
 - Editing to improve sentence-level clarity
 - Incorporating feedback productively
 - And other areas!