



# Introduction to Writing Research Papers

Fall 2020

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# Who am I?

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- Hillary Gell, Writing Specialist
- Email me directly: [hillarygell@lclark.edu](mailto:hillarygell@lclark.edu)
- Email the Writing Center: [legalwrt@lclark.edu](mailto:legalwrt@lclark.edu)
- Make an appointment to meet with me:  
<https://lawlib.lclark.libcal.com/appointments/writing>

# Who are you?

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- Student planning to satisfy upper division writing requirement through individual research project
- Student planning to satisfy upper division writing requirement through course
- Student who wants to learn about writing research papers in general
- **PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME IN CHAT BOX FOR ATTENDANCE!**

# Plan for today

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- Tips for writing research papers
- Tips for researching came from librarians on Thursday 9/10
- Outline of Lewis & Clark requirements
- Presentation of strategies for completing individual research Capstone
- Also helpful for WIEs and any written work completed for courses!

# Lewis & Clark Requirements

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- **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

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

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: WIE



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- 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

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- 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



# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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- 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

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



# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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- 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

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

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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## – 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, maintain motivation*
- Convince your reader that your position on the issue is the best option

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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## – 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

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- **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

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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## – **Supervisor**

- Establish clear expectations
- Supervisor-specific guidelines supersede general advice
- Read carefully any materials provided by supervisor
- Ask for sample outlines, papers
- Check in promptly about questions or concerns
- Schedule conversations about feedback in addition to writing deadlines

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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



# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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## – Audience

- Supervisor
- Law review editors and readers?
- Practicing attorneys?
- Expert or layperson?
- Assume skeptical

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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## – **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

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- Where are you looking for topic ideas?
- Are you an independent and self-motivated worker?
  - Does completing your writing project through individual research make sense?
- Are you too attached to your topic?
  - Can you evaluate options objectively?
  - Can you modify your position?
- Are you keeping track of your work as you go?
- Are you staying in touch with your supervisor?

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

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- Just a *few* tips for writing professionally:
  - Quote sparingly
  - Avoid contractions
  - Revise every sentence exceeding three lines and every paragraph exceeding two-thirds of a page
  - Favor active voice

# Lewis & Clark Requirements: Default Syllabus

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- **Default syllabus** in What's What for individual research WIEs and Capstones applies unless supervisor opts out
- 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

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- Staff: Hillary Gell and Caroline Taylor
- We can help you with...
  - Tackling writer's block
  - Revising organization
  - Editing to improve sentence-level clarity
  - Incorporating feedback productively
  - And other areas!