



Introduction to Writing Research Papers

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Who am I?

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

Who are you?

- 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

- Tips for writing research papers
- Tips for researching came from librarians last Thursday (1/21)
- 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

- **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

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, 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, keeping track of references*
 - *Outlining with headings and sub-headings*
 - *Drafting*
 - *Revising*
 - *Editing*
 - *Bluebooking*
 - *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, maintain motivation*
- Convince your reader that your position on the issue is the best option

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

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

– **Supervisor**

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

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Capstone

- **“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

– Audience

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

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

Lewis & Clark Requirements: Default Syllabus

- **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!**

A decorative pattern of teal-colored leaves and branches is located on the left side of the slide, extending from the top to the bottom.

Writing Center

- 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!