

LAW 3721 - Legal Writing

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 43990,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Matthew Ritzman

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Matthew E. Ritzman, Ph.D., J.D.

Instructor Professional Qualifications: Dr. Matthew E. Ritzman is an attorney licensed in Ohio and Michigan. He maintains an active labor and employment practice. He previously served in government for 18 years, including five years as an attorney for a federal agency handling unfair labor practice litigation involving both unions and employers. Dr. Ritzman has also taught college courses for more than ten years.

Academic Credentials

Juris Doctorate, Law, The University of Toledo—College of Law, 2019

Ph.D., Education - Curriculum and Instruction, The University of Toledo, 2014

Master's, Educational Technology, University of Toledo

Bachelor's, Criminal Justice, University of Toledo

Associates, Criminal Justice, Owens Community College

Instructor Office Location: DeBartolo Hall 401

Instructor Office Phone: 330-941-3448

Course Description

3721. Legal Writing. A continuation of CRJS 3720, this course covers more advanced computer assisted legal research techniques, as well as the drafting of legal documents such as legal memoranda, civil pleading, affidavit, legal correspondence, and other legal forms. Prereq.: CRJS 3720. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Legal Research and Writing for Paralegals 10th Edition	Deborah E. Bouchoux	978- 1- 5438- 4758- 1
Required	Court Decisions - as assigned.		

Text book is available online at <https://ebooksbasic.com>

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	1. Chapter 1, pp. 3–29. The chapter introduces the paralegal's research role, sources of law, identifying holdings, the research process, and basic case citation. 2. Course Syllabus	Introduction to Legal Research and Sources of Law	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
8/31	Textbook - Chapter 2, pp. 31–59.	Federal and State Court Systems	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm



9/7	Chapter 3, pp. 61–83 and 91–104. The assigned portions emphasize federal and state statutory sources, research techniques, court rules, and citation without requiring extensive treatment of every historical publication method.	Statutory Research	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/14	Chapter 4, pp. 107–122 and 137–158. These Cases and Judicial Opinions portions emphasize understanding judicial opinions, research features, case briefing, and citation. Writing Assignment:		Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/21	Chapter 5, pp. 161–192.	Legal Research	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
9/28	Chapter 6, pp. 195–210 and 221–237. The assigned sections focus primarily on encyclopedias, treatises, Restatements, and their research value.	Secondary Legal Authorities	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
10/5	Chapter 7, pp. 239–272. The chapter surveys specialized research tools including dictionaries, form books, uniform laws, and jury instructions.	Additional Legal Research Tools	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
10/12	Chapter 8, pp. 273–312. The chapter covers citation manuals, primary and secondary authorities, short forms, signals, quotations, electronic sources, and cite checking.	Legal Citation	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
10/19	Chapter 9, pp. 315–335	Special Research Problems	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
10/26	Chapter 11, pp. 388–425.	Lexis, Westlaw, and Artificial Intelligence	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
11/2	Chapter 12, pp. 447–472	Developing a Research Plan	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
11/9	Chapter 14, pp. 505–530	Fundamentals of Effective Legal Writing	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
11/16	Chapter 17, pp. 602–621	Writing an Objective Legal Memorandum	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
11/23	Chapter 17, pp. 602–621	Writing an Objective Legal Memorandum	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
11/30	Chapter 18, pp. 623–650.	Persuasive Legal Writing and Court Briefs	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm
12/7	Chapter 18, pp. 623–650.	Persuasive Legal Writing and Court Briefs	Complete readings and Blackboard assignments by Sunday at 11:59pm

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.