

To: Students in Legal Skills I
From: Legal Skills Professors
Re: **Course Introduction; Assignments for the first classes**
Date: August 10, 2007

In Legal Skills you will learn life-long skills which are essential to passing the bar exam and practicing law. Legal Skills I is a four-credit course composed of two credits of ***legal research*** and two of ***legal writing***. These terms have specific meanings in laws that are somewhat different than those with which you are familiar.

Legal writing includes the stylistic and mechanical aspects of writing; you are expected to write organized, concise, and grammatically correct prose. In addition, legal writing encompasses much more. It includes articulating sophisticated, complex, nuanced legal analysis that allows the reader to efficiently understand the point the writer is trying to make.

Similarly, **legal research** requires more than the basic skill of knowing how to retrieve information; it is about finding the law — and then wisely judging how to select and use the most appropriate authorities. It is about navigating the complex range of authorities efficiently and understanding which of the many kinds of legal authorities are most important.

Learning in **Legal Skills** is thus about learning analysis. You will read complex documents, draw inferences, and make connections among legal authorities. You will need to be disciplined and organized in your thinking, and explain your thinking clearly.

Legal Skills is also about **being a professional**. You are beginning your professional career as a lawyer, and we expect you to act professionally. Your Legal Skills classes will require you to write, research, and prepare many assignments. You will be called upon in class and required to work with others. As professionals, we expect you to be prepared, on time, and engaged in your learning.

Assignments for the first writing class and the first research class:

To prepare for your first two Legal Skills I classes, please complete the assignments **posted on the Orientation webpage**. These assignments are listed in the documents:

- **Writing** Class 1 Assignments
- **Research** Class 1 Assignments

Each of these documents will provide you with specifics about what you need to do for those specific classes, including what documents to read.

The primary text for Legal Skills – Writing and Research classes – is an on-line interactive text, Teachinglaw.com. Go to www.Teachinglaw.com to sign on. *Please note that this site will become fully operational closer to the start of classes.* **The only other assigned text is The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (18th ed. 2005).**