

UGRD_YPHSL_2620_LAW4081_ONG EE ING



Singapore Management University

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Code & Title

LAW4081 - Legal Writing Masterclass

Effective Start Date

11/01/2027

Offering Unit / Department / School

YPHSL

Course Career

Undergraduate

Course Units

CU:

1

Grading Basis

GRD - Graded

Course Description

This SMU-X course will give SMU law students opportunities to work one-on-one with graduate mentors to produce high-quality case commentaries or shorter-form legal articles, with an aspirational goal of publication. As well as enhancing their legal knowledge, students will hone their writing and editing skills, and learn to communicate their analysis in a manner which is helpful to both lawyers and non-lawyers. This will also help students develop their body of work as they move from school into practice.

Students should propose their own ideas (ideally involving issues of practical significance, analysis of which would be helpful to practitioners and/or the general public), so that they can be matched with a mentor with the appropriate expertise.

Students will work closely together with their graduate mentor on their commentaries or articles, crafting their work and receiving feedback and comments on a pre-agreed schedule. Students can also build up their networking skills through these mentorships.

At the end of the course, students will have produced one case commentary or article of around 6,000 words. The students can submit their papers to SMU Lexicon or other forums. (Publication is not a requirement for the course grade, but the course will help you towards that goal.)

SMU Graduate Learning Outcomes

Multidisciplinary knowledge

Competencies

Professional and Business Ethics

Course Area(s)

AREA - Law Electives, AREA - Legal Studies Electives, RQCP - LAW106_606, RQCP - LAW107_607, RQCX - LAW4063, ENRL - Open to Undergraduates & GJD

Simple Requirements

LAW106_606 & LAW107_607 - Pre-req

Type

Prerequisite

Complete ALL of the following Courses:

- LAW106_606 - Legal Research and Writing I
- LAW107_607 - Legal Research and Writing II

LAW4063/LAW4081 - Mutually Exclusive

Type

Antirequisite

Enroll in the following Courses:

- LAW4063 - Advanced Legal Writing: Student Publishing

CLASS SECTION INFORMATION

Instructor(s)

ONG EE ING ONG (eeingong@smu.edu.sg)

Instruction Mode

In Person

Assessment Components (New)

Category*		Weightage*				
Class Participation and Activities		10				
Description	Individual Group?*	or	With Component?*	Writing	With Component?*	Oral
Class Participation	Individual		Yes		Yes	

Category*		Weightage*		Assessment/Submission Period*		
Projects/Assignments		20		Week 5		
Description	Individual Group?*	or	With Component?*	Writing	With Component?*	Oral
Skeletal (detailed outline)	Individual		Yes		Yes	

Category*		Weightage*		Assessment/Submission Period*		
Projects/Assignments		45		Week 10		
Description	Individual Group?*	or	With Component?*	Writing	With Component?*	Oral
Article - 1st draft	Individual		Yes		Yes	

Category*		Weightage*		Assessment/Submission Period*		
Projects/Assignments		25		Week 15		
Description	Individual Group?*	or	With Component?*	Writing	With Component?*	Oral
Article - Final Submission	Individual		Yes		Yes	

Instructional Methods and Expectations

Article (90%)	Skeletal (detailed outline) – 20% 1st draft – 45% Final submission – 25%
Class participation (10%)	Attending all sessions; being adequately prepared for each session; appropriately incorporating mentor comments in the drafts/submitted version.

There will be no final examination.

Assessment Criteria. Guidelines will be provided for each of the graded components mentioned above. Attendance at all sessions is **mandatory**. Students are to contact the instructor and mentor if they are unable to attend a session. ***Unexcused absences will result in a lowering of the class participation component of the final grade and/or the final grade itself.***

It is also expected that students will conduct themselves **professionally**, both in and out of class. This includes behaving in a mature, courteous manner towards classmates, the course instructor and the mentors, as well as complying with instructions and course policies, as would be expected in a work environment. ***Failure to do so will also result in a lowering of the class participation component of the final grade.***

This course will resemble an apprenticeship in legal writing. The student will work closely with the course instructor and mentors to produce an article of strong quality.

The instructor and mentors will monitor the students' work at every stage, including: approving the paper topic, reviewing and commenting on the interim versions, and reviewing and commenting on the final product. The mentors will focus on helping the student improve in his/her analysis and attain a better understanding of the topic in question. The course instructors will oversee the mentor-student relationship, as well as review the students' submissions with focus on the quality of the student's writing and editing.

Weekly Lesson Plan

Note: The syllabus/schedule is meant only as a guide and is subject to amendment.

Week	Topic
1	In-class session with course instructors and mentors § How to start writing § Principles of good legal writing § Editing – best practices 1st student-mentor meeting: Discussing and agreeing on topic for their paper.
2-4	In-class sessions § How to conduct research; refining and researching your topic; doing pre-emption checks & literature reviews § Individual student-instructor meetings for feedback and progress Students to work on <i>skeletal</i>
5	Submission of <i>skeletal</i> . 2nd student-mentor meeting: review <i>skeletal</i> .

6-10	Students to work on <i>draft</i>. In-class sessions § Dissecting journal articles and the structure thereof. § Developing/supporting a thesis. § Individual student-instructor meetings for feedback and progress.
11	Submission of <i>draft</i>. 3rd student-mentor meeting: review <i>draft</i>.
12-14	Students to work on <i>final version</i>. In-class sessions § Guest lecture (Singapore Academy of Law editors on the publication process); other guest speakers as helpful. § Student small-group feedback sessions (workshopping their papers and getting feedback on their main struggles); the entire class to share and learn from each other.
15	Students to submit <i>final version</i>.

Recommended Textbooks and Readings

As recommended by the course instructor and mentors.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offence.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx>.

Responsible Use of AI

The University recognises the importance of equipping students with the skills to navigate an AI-driven world. While AI tools may support learning, they must be used judiciously and responsibly. Students must not present AI-generated output as their own work.

Each course may set specific guidelines on the use of AI in assessments. Students are required to follow these guidelines carefully and should seek clarification from the instructors if uncertain.

Misuse of AI constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will be subject to the same penalties as other acts of academic dishonesty.

Copyright Notice

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Accessibility

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. Students who anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability are encouraged to inform the course instructor as soon as possible. Students may also contact the university's disability services team if they have questions or concerns about academic provisions: accessibility@smu.edu.sg. Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.