WRITING SKILLS

IE University
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Degree course: FIRST
Semester: 1º
Category: COMPULSORY
Number of credits: 3.0
Language: English

PREREQUISITES
SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This course is based on three interlocking abilities which are developed over the fifteen sessions – effective research, critical thinking and research/professional, particularly legal writing.

Using a macro-case study that will stretch over the length of the course the students will learn how to think critically in a written context. They will apply the 4S model (sense, strength, structure and style) to report writing, emails, papers and writing to persuade.

One of the main goals of the course will be the development of research skills so that students understand the critical role this plays in presenting polished, credible and authoritative papers and reports.

A further aim is to develop critical thinking skills in order to fully understand and be able to analyse legal, academic and professional texts in the areas and subjects related to their core degrees and in their future careers.

This course also familiarizes students with the various aspects of the writing process and guides them in the preparation of legal, research, academic and professional papers, as well as written communication (principally emails) across all subjects on their degree. The course provides useful tools and resources while giving students the opportunity to work through the writing process and other related areas such as researching, critical thinking, citing and fast-reading all in a supportive and cooperative environment.
OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS
Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

Find information to develop, support and refute their topics (via the library and the Internet) more efficiently; choose an appropriate and relevant sources.
Be able to use the IE library, Google scholar, Westlaw etc. for effective research.
Be able to recognize credible and non-credible sources that can be used in academic formats.
Correctly and effectively incorporate ideas of others into their writing and avoid plagiarism by using correct citation methods (in-text citations, summarizing, paraphrasing, etc.).
Correctly prepare formatted, organized references (using the APA system which is used in the BBA final projects).
Be able to deconstruct and construct texts using critical thinking methodology.
Quickly and effectively scan texts for key information.
Employ effective argumentation when writing papers and identify errors in other writer’s arguments.
Identify and write structured academic papers, legal memoranda/opinion letters and compare/contrast these as well as other kinds of professional texts and written communications.
Be able to write reports and memoranda that are clear, concise, critical and credible.
Self and peer-evaluate written work for content and organization.
Understand what different styles of writing are and develop the more formal of them through the writing process, knowing when to use and apply different registers.
METHODOLOGY

This course is practical, adapted to the needs of each student, and supplemented with extra material and resources to permit each student to find their own path while acquiring fundamental academic skills common to all IE students. By combining ‘learning by doing’, 360º feedback, self-paced learning and study, group work, access to digital media, lectures, instructor feedback, and specialized workshops, this course places each student at the centre of the entire learning process.

Through a common syllabus and evaluation criteria every student can feel confident that they are receiving the same essential academic skills as their peers. However, the methodology is also designed to be flexible and robust enough to permit students to write on subjects linked to their own degrees, go more in depth in areas where they feel they need to improve, explore in areas that catch their interest, learn at their own speed outside class through the use of videos and on-line materials, and sign up for workshops on specific subject areas that match their needs.

The professor is a facilitator who is there to guide and improve students’ research skills, critical thinking, and academic & professional writing. For this reason, students are expected to come to class prepared to contribute with individual work as well as to work with peers (in pairs or small groups) and as a large group toward mastering the aforementioned concepts. The students will learn through peer review, instructor feedback (in class and on their homework assignments and final paper), critical analysis of texts and group discussion. It is also expected that students will keep up to date with and use the on-line videos and resources to complement knowledge learned in class.

A macro-case (with either legal or business/political focus selected freely by each student) enabling the students to see the practical application of the areas that they learn on the course.

The extremely practical nature of this course is aimed at making students self-aware and self-sufficient in the areas of research, critical thinking and academic and professional writing as these are abilities and skills that they will need in all of their other BBA subjects and beyond.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methodology</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>20.0 %</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
<td>0 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>26.67 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual studying</td>
<td>40.0 %</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>75 hours</td>
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10th September 2019
PROGRAM

SESSION 1 (FACE TO FACE)
Introduction to course (content, rules, evaluation etc.). Explanation of course structure and evaluation system. The 4 S model and introduction to the Macro-Case Studies (4 cases outlined).

SESSION 2 (FACE TO FACE)
Introduction to critical thinking. Close reading and analysis of videos in everyday life. Discovering deeper levels of meaning. Understanding different types of thinking and how these relate to the interpretation of visual images and written text.

SESSION 3 (FACE TO FACE)
Introduction to professional writing types, including: general research reports, legal research memoranda, etc. Guidelines and specific tips for better professional writing. Review of function, application and construction of legal research memoranda, business reports, etc.

SESSION 4 (FACE TO FACE)
How to write a good research/business report and legal research memo; Rules and practical assignments focused on analysis of functions and structure of different parts of professional communications. Use of language, particularly discourse markers and linking words. Sample legal research memos and business/research reports reviewed.

10th September 2019
SESSION 5 (FACE TO FACE)
Research skills: Entering the IE library on-line in order to find relevant articles or cases for research paper. Primary vs Secondary evidence and sources. Using Google Scholar. Apply these tools to the investigation of the case study chosen (legal memorandum or research paper).

SESSION 6 (FACE TO FACE)
Correct incorporation of research into academic and professional writing: In-text citation, Plagiarism, APA, Chicago etc. Examining sources in an interview process that have been found for literature review.

SESSION 7 (FACE TO FACE)
How to identify credible sources. How to identify fake news. Critical thinking applied to research.

SESSION 8 (FACE TO FACE)
Note-taking and fast reading: Ability to scan material quickly and find relevant ideas connected with the overarching paper they will be writing on this course. Understanding of learning styles and working memory.

SESSION 9 (FACE TO FACE)
Paragraph writing: what makes a good paragraph and how to construct it; practical session on writing short paragraphs related to the case study selected and peer critique of same

SESSION 10 (FACE TO FACE)
Building the paper: Argumentation. Argumentation in terms of logical arguments, appeals to emotion, use of ethos, logical fallacies, inductive and deductive reasoning, elements of persuasion. Taking apart business proposals in order to identify logical fallacies.

SESSION 11 (FACE TO FACE)
SESSION 12 (FACE TO FACE)
Email writing: review of email writing in legal/professional environment. Top 100 (standard) emailing phrases reviewed; meaning behind common emailing expressions revealed; practical application of these: drafting of emails as per instructions in each case study and peer review of same.

SESSION 13 (FACE TO FACE)
Formal style: Overview of transitions, academic style, QPS, and common mistakes, formal versus informal language. APA style

SESSION 14 (FACE TO FACE)
Critique: Critiquing a colleague’s report paper in a peer review process designed to encourage the reader and writer of the critique to self-reflect as well as help the person whose paper they are critiquing.

SESSION 15 (FACE TO FACE)
Final assessments: Political speech on one of the underlying issues in the 3 case studies developed over the term of the course:
BIBLIOGRAPHY

to be provided at a later point
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grading criteria will be common for all students across all Writing Skills groups. Independently of any variations in how a session is taught, all professors use common evaluation rubrics and criteria. There is also coordination across the interpretation and application of this evaluation. This is done with the students' interest in mind, ensuring objectivity and fairness across the subject.

Regardless of whether a student passes or not in the evaluation part of the course, more than 30% absences on the course is an automatic fail per IE policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Evaluation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>see below for details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>see below for details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>see below for details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Evaluation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>see below for details</td>
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Students will be evaluated as follows:

Continuous evaluation (25% of final grade):
Assignments completed and turned in on time.
Preparation of reading assignments, attendance, and active participation in class, both individually and as part of a group.
Analysis of texts and written tasks
Preliminary paper plus evaluation template.
Homework – research and outline of legal memorandum/opinion or research paper, etc.

Mid-term paper (25% of final grade)
For those doing the legal research memorandum (case studies #1 & 2): a draft memo (250-350 words maximum) consisting of: review of authorities (both legislation and case law) found so far for the final Legal Research Memorandum;
For those doing the business/political research report (case studies #3 & #4): Review of sources (annotated bibliography) connected with the final report

Final REPORT (40% of final grade)
For those doing the legal research memorandum (case studies #1 & 2):
1) Heading: Is all relevant data included?
2) Issue: Is it correct, clear & complete?
3) Brief Answer: Is it brief and does it summarize the reasons in 1 or 2 clear sentences?
4) If more than one issue, is there a separate answer for each one?
5) Statement of Facts: Are sufficient background facts presented to inform the reader of the factual context of the assignment? Will the reader be required to refer to the case file to understand the analysis of the issues? Are the facts organized chronologically or topically? Are the facts presented accurately and objectively? Are legal conclusions excluded from the fact presentation?
6) Analysis: Does the analysis section follow the proper format? (Rule of Law + Case Law Interpreting the Rule of Law plus counterarguments (if any) + Application to the Facts of the case; Is case law presented that is on point and that interprets how the rule of law applies? Is the proper citation presented for each rule of law and authority included in the analysis? Is there a separate analysis section for each issue addressed in the memo? Is the rule of law presented in the analysis applied to the issue raised by the facts of the client's case? Is there a counter-analysis if necessary?

10th September 2019
7) Conclusion: Does the conclusion include a brief summary of the analysis of each issue? Is all of the law discussed in the Analysis section summarized in the conclusion, both enacted and case law? Is new info or authority excluded from the conclusion?

For those doing the Business/Political research report (case studies #3 & #4):
1) Content (research, focus on ideas, incorporation of examples and ideas from bibliography, strength and logic of argumentation).
2) Organization (organization of ideas, arguments, information and citations).
3) Thesis statement (clearly defined and properly formatted).
4) Introduction and Conclusion (coherent and well-developed).
5) Evidence and support (assertions are backed up with reliable sources).
6) Language (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, use of text markers).
7) Correct bibliography and in-text citations.
8) Final Evaluation evaluated on pass/fail basis (10%)

Final Evaluation evaluated on pass/fail basis (10%)
Political speech on one of the underlying issues in the 4 case studies developed over the term of the course:
1) internet security/privacy breaches and whether modern legislation has kept up pace with it;
2) responsibility of online platforms for the contents posted by users and the insufficiency of modern legislation to answer these threats;
3) legalization and market possibilities of marijuana-laced products in Spain (or across EU).
4) pro or against measures such as construction of tiny apartments as an answer to the phenomenon of rising property and rent prices in large cities

Late Submissions
A student will receive a mark of zero for any work (essays or assignments) submitted after the due date indicated by the professor.

PROFESSOR BIO
Professor: **RALPH DZEGNIUK DZEGNIUK**
E-mail: rdzegniuk@faculty.ie.edu

**Professor’s brief bio**
Ralph holds a BA in Political Science and International Relations from York University and a Jurisdoctor Degree in Law from the Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, Canada. After practicing law for a number of years in Canada (where he is still licensed to practice), Ralph entered Academia teaching a variety of introductory courses to Common Law and Legal English as well as working as a Legal Translator (Esp-Ing) in various Madrid-based post-secondary institutions, among them IE, CUNEF, C.U. Villanueva as well as providing private courses on legal writing and drafting held at a number of Madrid law offices, including Ontier, Cuatrecasas, Dentons, Legal department of Bankinter, etc.

**OTHER INFORMATION**
CODE OF CONDUCT IN CLASS

1. **Be on time.** Students arriving more than 5 minutes late will be marked as “Absent”. Only students that notify in advance in writing that they will be late for a specific session may be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

2. **If applicable, bring your name card and strictly follow the seating chart.** It helps faculty members and fellow students learn your names.

3. **Do not leave the room during the lecture:** Students are not allowed to leave the room during lectures. If a student leaves the room during lectures, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter and, therefore, will be marked as “Absent”. Only students that notify that they have a special reason to leave the session early will be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

4. **Do not engage in side conversation.** As a sign of respect toward the person presenting the lecture (the teacher as well as fellow students), side conversations are not allowed. If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. If you do not want to ask it during the lecture, feel free to approach your teacher after class.

   If a student is disrupting the flow of the lecture, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

5. **Use your laptop for course-related purposes only.** The use of laptops during lectures must be authorized by the professor. The use of Social Media or accessing any type of content not related to the lecture is penalized. The student will be asked to leave the room and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

6. **No cellular phones:** IE University implements a “Phone-free Classroom” policy and, therefore, the use of phones, tablets, etc. is forbidden inside the classroom. Failing to abide by this rule entails expulsion from the room and will be counted as one absence.

7. **Escalation policy: 1/3/5.** Items 4, 5, and 6 above entail expulsion from the classroom and the consequent marking of the student as “Absent.” IE University implements an “escalation policy”: The first time a student is asked to leave the room for disciplinary reasons (as per items 4, 5, and 6 above), the student will incur one absence, the second time it will count as three absences, and from the third time onward, any expulsion from the classroom due to disciplinary issues will entail 5 absences.