WR329       WRITING FOR LAW AND LAW SCHOOL

3 Credits
Co-requisites: PS126, PS321, PH 321

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Required Texts:

Course Description:
In this course, students will analyze their writing strengths and weaknesses, increase logical, grammatical, usage, and sentence-level correctness in their writing, improve the rhetorical and structural sophistication of their writing, and document and examine the life and work experiences that make them compelling law school candidates. By examining the structure and rhetorical strategies of a variety of successful law school essays, they will be able to devise a suitable strategy for their own, and complete an advanced working draft by the end of the term. This 3-credit course involves approximately 85 hours of instructional contact through writing assignments, on-line activities, and testing.

Learning Goals and Outcomes:
- To become effective self-editors;
- To recognize, avoid, and fix common logical fallacies, grammatical and usage errors, and sentence- and paragraph-level structural problems;
- To master a variety of rhetorical tools for writing persuasively;
- To produce an advanced working draft of a law application essay.

Course Requirements:
- Diagnostic writing assignment (10%): a timed, at-home essay using a typical law school application prompt.
- Revision project (10%): students will analyze and revise an essay written for a prior course.
• Resume project (20%): students will draft a complete resume, and identify the experiences or skills that might be showcased in the law school essay. This project will involve a portfolio of 3 one-page narratives.
• 3 Quizzes testing the student’s ability to identify and fix logical fallacies, usage errors, and sentence structure errors (30%).
• The draft of a law application essay (30%): the portfolio for this project will include a rhetorical analysis of a model essay chosen from the textbook.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Although this is an on-line course, we will act, to an extent, as if the course meets on a Tuesday/Thursday schedule. Most readings, exercises, quizzes, discussions, essays, and assignments must be completed/turned in/posted by the Tuesday or Thursday they are due.

Under Blackboard Course Documents you will find folders for Weeks 1-8; the first document in each folder will be a complete weekly schedule of topics, readings, exercises, assignments, and activities for that week. You always will have access to the given week’s materials/assignments, plus the following week’s materials (for instance, in Week 2 you will be able to see Week 3’s schedule and assignments as well).

Computer issues: Be advised that I have little control over the computing situation, and little training in troubleshooting. If you are having technical difficulties, please consult the OSU computer Help Desk directly (a link has been posted to our Blackboard page).
Please use only your Onid e-mail to send attachments.

My responsibilities: I will contribute to the discussion forums as a participant, and to some extent, a moderator. In addition, I will e-mail grades and comments for each project you submit; you will receive these comments within 10 days of posting your assignment.

Office Hours and Availability: It is unlikely that I will be able to respond to work or e-mails on the weekend. My normal hours in office are from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please feel free to call my office during these hours if you need to discuss an assignment or have questions about the coursework.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: Diagnostic writing (timed, typed, at-home; based on a typical law essay application prompt).
Tuesday: diagnostic writing exercise will launch as an exam in the Week 1 folder.
Thursday: diagnostic writing exercise must be submitted no later than midnight.

WEEK 2: Revision project begins. What are law school admissions officers looking for in the essay? Some early brainstorming.
By Tuesday: submit a clean copy of an academic essay to the Week 2 Revision Project Discussion Forum.
By Thursday: Complete the Week 2-3 Revision Project Editing Sheet (Week 2 Course Documents) for your own essay.

WEEK 3: Punctuation and sentence structure errors; dangling modifiers. Quiz 1.
By Tuesday: 1) Read Strunk and White, I, “Elementary Rules of Usage.” Exercises/pretest. Complete the Week 2-3 Revision Project Editing Sheet for your two peers and submit it to your own working group’s Week 3 Editing forum.
By Thursday: Start revising on your Revision Project Essay, which must be turned in to the Assignment link by Tuesday of Week 4. Quiz 1 (active vs. passive voice, parallel structure, sentence structure errors) must be turned in by midnight.

WEEK 4: Concision and vividness; Active vs. passive voice; effective paragraph structure; Quiz 2. The Resume Project begins
By Tuesday: Read Strunk and White, II, “Elementary Principles of Composition.” Exercises/pretest. Week 2-3 Revision Project must be submitted to the Assignment link by midnight.
By Thursday: Quiz 2 must be submitted by midnight. Read Guidelines for the Resume Project; Read OWL guidelines for resumes (External Links, Week 6 folder); all students will be assigned to a Working Group with its own Discussion forum.

WEEK 5: THE RESUME PROJECT
Commonly misused words and expressions; diction and word choice problems. Logical fallacies.
By Tuesday: Read Strunk and White, III, “A Few Matters of Form” and IV, “Words and Expressions Commonly Misused.” Exercises and pretest.
By Thursday: Quiz on usage and diction. Working Draft of Resume due, and must be posted to your Working Group Discussion Forum for critique.

WEEK 6: THE RESUME PROJECT, CONT.
For Tuesday: Visit OWL websites (External Links, Week 5 folder) on Logical fallacies. Read the information; do exercises. Turn in exercises on logical fallacies to the Week 6 Discussion forum (create one fallacy of each type); you must identify and correct the logical fallacies submitted by one of your peers. By Thursday: Quiz 3 on Logical Fallacies. Start Resume narratives. Drafts of resumes must be attached to the Working Group Discussion forum and critiqued by the end of this week.

WEEK 7: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL LAW APPLICATION ESSAYS:
By Tuesday: Choose 2 model essays from The Princeton Review: Law School Essays that Made a Difference. Follow Guidelines for Rhetorical Analysis of Successful Law Application Essay to analyze your model essays. Resume Portfolio must be submitted through the Assignment link by midnight.
By Thursday: Rhetorical analyses are due today.

WEEK 8: THE LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION ESSAY
For Tuesday: Draft of your Law School Application Essay must be posted to the Week 8 Discussion Forum;
For Thursday: Peer Critique; Follow the Peer Editing Workshop for the Law Application Essay.

NOTE: FINAL DRAFT OF ESSAY WILL BE DUE SATURDAY OF WEEK 8.

ACCESSIBILITY
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with accommodations approved through SSD are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through SSD should contact SSD immediately at (541) 737-4098.

HONESTY AND CIVILITY
A plagiarized quiz, essay, or exam will receive an F and a report will be filed with the Student Conduct and Mediation Program. Two reports at OSU can lead to suspension or expulsion. Behaviors that are disruptive to learning will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Student Conduct and Mediation Program for disciplinary action. In keeping with federal law, behaviors that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation will be referred to the Affirmative Action Office.
http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm