

Adjunct Faculty Writing Requirement Supervision

Fall 2009

Dear Adjunct Professor,

A number of you have recently contacted me, in response to student requests, about supervising upperclass student writing requirements. I am writing to clarify our policy for adjunct professor supervision of student writing requirements and to explain the prerequisites for approving a student's paper as meeting the standards of the writing requirement.

As a prerequisite to graduation, each student must complete a program of supervised analytic writing subsequent to the first year curriculum. The student may either complete this requirement a) in connection with a course or seminar that has a paper requirement or paper option or b) in connection with an independent study. A student must complete the upper class writing requirement no later than the end of the semester immediately preceding the student's final semester in law school (i.e. the student's penultimate semester).

We do not expect you, as an adjunct professor, to supervise writing requirements. In fact, we discourage it in most instances. This is largely because most of you are full time practitioners and thus do not have the time to oversee the process described below, which can require several meetings with each student. However, some of you are willing and able to undertake these projects and have done so in the past with the approval of the Associate Dean's office. These courses are listed with the designation "WR" to indicate this approval.

For those of you who do not now supervise writing requirements but want to do so in the future, please contact my office. Our regulations require approval of my office to either offer a course which will satisfy the writing requirement or supervise independent studies.

If you now supervise writing requirements, or wish to do so in the future, I also want to stress what is expected of each student project. To satisfy the requirement, the student must undertake a significant research and writing project under faculty supervision. This includes a) presentation of a topic proposal for faculty approval, b) submission of a detailed outline for faculty comment, c) submission of a rough draft for faculty comment, and d) submission of a final paper.

The final paper must demonstrate significant research and original analysis. The paper should also be well organized, carefully presented and clearly written. The paper must be at least 25 double-spaced typewritten pages including footnotes or, at the discretion of the supervising faculty member, another single work of equivalent magnitude in an electronic medium.

An independent study should receive no more than two credits. In extraordinary cases the Associate Dean may approve an independent study for three credits when it involves substantially more research and analysis than the typical writing project. These cases are extremely rare, however.

If you are offering a course with a paper option or requirement, you must limit the number of papers that are allowed to satisfy the writing requirement to 25 papers. Because of our deadline, you should give priority to students in the first semester of their graduation year.

If you are offering a seminar, you may grant one independent credit (in addition to the two credits for the seminar) for submitting a paper that satisfies the standards of the writing requirement and that involves substantially more work than was required to satisfy the course.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about this topic.

Sincerely,

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