Wednesdays, 5:30pm to 6:20pm, Room 217 (Autumn)

Professor: Todd A. Wildermuth, toddw2@uw.edu
Chief Comments Editors: Chrissy Elles, caelles@uw.edu; Andrew S. Fuller, shopandy@uw.edu

Course Objectives:
Writing a substantial research paper gives students an opportunity to explore a topic of interest from start to finish, to think critically about the current law, and to consider future developments. Writing at this level is inherently challenging and time-consuming. In the process though, students improve both their writing and their understanding of the law. This two-credit seminar is designed to support second-year students who are writing a note or comment for the Washington Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. The seminar focuses on topic selection, research, and drafting. This is a graded course with multiple assignments. The final grade is recorded after Winter Quarter.

Course Structure and Grading:
The seminar will include short lectures, discussion, small group exercises, and individual conferences to help students develop their note or comment.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their participation/attendance, completion of a research exercise, topic selection exercise, a “whirlybird” outline, a brief presentation, and a winter quarter workplan. These assignments will be evaluated on elements such as timely submission, completeness, and a good-faith effort to make progress.

Drafts will be evaluated on a three-tier basis: Exceeds expectations; Meets expectations; Needs Improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Exercise</td>
<td>7 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Selection Exercise</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Whirlybird” Exercise</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter Quarter Workplan</td>
<td>5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>up to 10 points</td>
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Total possible points = 50 points

Grading Note: Seminar grading is not subject to the mandatory curve. Successful students will turn in assignments on time, demonstrate superior academic performance, and actively participate. I anticipate that final seminar grades will range from B+ to A, with most falling in A- or A range.

Disability-Related Needs
To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS): 011 Mary Gates Hall, uwdrs@uw.edu, 206-543-8924 (Voice), 206-543-8925 (TTY), 206-616-8379 (Fax). If you have a letter from DRS, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need in this class.
Initial Schedule for Autumn 2015 Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Review Orientation Materials</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Finding Your Comment Topic: Independent Research</td>
<td>Workshop: Environmental Legal Research</td>
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<td>October 14</td>
<td>Bring Two Model Articles of Interest &amp; Complete Legal Research Exercise</td>
<td>Small Group Breakout Session With Comment Editors</td>
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<td>October 21 – October 28</td>
<td>Finding Your Comment Topic: Independent Research</td>
<td>Works in Progress: Check in With Your Comments Editor</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>Topic Selection Exercise</td>
<td>Comment Breakdown and Developing Thesis Statements</td>
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<td>November 11</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Veterans Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>“Whirlybird” Exercise</td>
<td>“My Topic” Two-Minute Presentations and Group Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>Winter Quarter Workplan</td>
<td>Workshop: Seeing Things Through</td>
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Comment Editors:

Please note: you will be assigned to a comment editor to assist you in writing your comment. In addition to one mandatory check-in, you are encouraged to meet with your comment editor during their respective office hours each week the journal seminar is not held. And, of course, please feel free to e-mail your comment editor with any and all questions you may have. The Comments Department and their respective e-mails are listed below:

Christie Lundquist (AEIC): lundquc@uw.edu
Chrissy Elles (Executive Notes and Comments Editor): caelles@uw.edu
Andrew Fuller (Executive Notes and Comments Editor): shopandy@uw.edu

Winter Quarter 2016

Draft Intro + Outline 5 points
Winter Quarter Workplan 5 points
Meeting word count #1 10 points
Meeting word count #2 10 points
Meeting word count #3 10 points
Oral Presentation 10 points
Attendance & Participation 10 points

Total possible points = 60 points

COURSE TOTAL = 105 POINTS

Date Topic Readings and assignments Suggested research and writing tasks
1/6 Workshopping draft introduction and outline
Work plan for the spring (50 min) • Sign up in class for Group A, B, or C Workshop slot
• Upload to Canvas and bring to class your draft introduction and outline. Assess your progress over winter break. Make a work schedule for completing the draft.
1/13-2/10 Independent research and writing: seminar does not meet. • On these Wednesdays, upload to Canvas by 6:30 p.m. the following drafts (ungraded):
• Meet with your comments editor and faculty advisor during this time as needed. Keep writing according to your schedule.

2/17 Workshop 1 (50 min)
• Upload updated draft intro + working title to Canvas by 5:30 on Wednesday, 2/17.

(Everyone)
• Please either participate in the in-class workshop or jot down at the end of the discussion a question or comment that you would have articulated if you had time. Revise your introduction to reflect updated draft, and to respond to comments on 1/6.

Keep writing and revising according to your schedule.

2/24 Workshop 2 (70 min)

CLASS ENDS 6:40p • Group A presentations in class. Group A discussion drafts uploaded to Canvas by 5:30 p on 2/22.
• Groups B & C: Please either participate in the in-class workshop or jot down at the end of the discussion a question or comment for one or more presenter(s). Keep writing and revising according to your schedule.

Date Topic Readings and assignments Suggested research and writing tasks
3/2 Workshop 3 (70 min)

CLASS ENDS 6:40p • Group B presentations in class. Group B discussion drafts uploaded to Canvas by 5:30 p on 2/29.
• Groups A & C: Please either participate in the in-class workshop or jot down at the end of the discussion a question or comment for one or more presenter(s). Keep writing and revising according to your schedule.

3/9 Workshop 4 (50 min)
• Group C presentations in class. Group C discussion drafts uploaded to Canvas by 5:30 p on 3/7.
• Groups A & B: Please either participate in the in-class workshop or jot down at the end of the discussion a question or comment for one or more presenter(s). Keep writing and revising according to your schedule.

Notes:
1. Your draft introduction for Jan. 6 should run on the order of 1000 words, which would put you halfway to the 2000-word minimum for the Jan. 13 deadline. You should at minimum indicate where footnotes go, though they do not need to be fleshed out or filled in.

2. I will hand out ranking slips for your group (A, B, C) choice on Jan. 6. If the preferences do not sort well into the groups on their own, we will assign groups by pulling names at random.

3. Workshop 1 (Feb. 17) will be a pair-and-share session. For 10-12 minutes of the time you will pair with a random discussion partner. For the remaining time we will report out on one specific obstacle you discussed with your partner and seek class thoughts on how to overcome it or work around it.
4. Workshops 2-4 will (Feb. 24; Mar. 2, 9) follow a 15-minute model for each paper: 2 minutes of author commentary, 4 minutes of peer comment, 4 minutes of instructor comment, and 5 minutes of group commentary.

Some Guidelines for Peer Review in Our Group Sessions:

1. Remember that the theme here is “being helpful” and not “being clever.” Try to understand what the author is after. Then make your central concern how you can help your fellow author do better what she or he has already begun.

2. Read the author’s paper and mark it up, either by hand or using a digital change-tracking function. This is where you should note grammatical errors, misspellings, awkward constructions, or other nit-like corrections. There is no need to take these up in the short group discussion.

   • One tip: as fun as using red pen can be, use blue or green or anything else when marking by hand. That feels better to most people.
   • In addition to the in-line markings you make, it is often helpful to make a bulleted list of your overall or summary comments at the end of the paper.

3. You are not expected to be a subject-matter expert in what the author is writing about. That is an advantage insofar as it allows you to read this with the unpolluted mind and fresh eyes. Because you are not deep into the material, you have a much better sense than the author of how the piece reads to an engaged, intelligent, interested reader who has a life outside of the particular topic.

4. Do recognize your limitations, however, and simply give due credit to your ignorance when appropriate. Knowing that all the footnotes have not all been filled in, that the work is in progress, and that you may not have even the minimal background knowledge, it is still alright to comment that claim X may not be accurate, that claim Y may not be as strong as the author believes, or that claim Z may not be resilient to counterarguments, etc. Explain clearly why you think something does not work so the author can address the concern. If it is a mere ignorant misunderstanding on your part, the author can easily fix the writing so other readers do not make the same mistake.

5. Use your four minutes of comment time in class very judiciously, which is to say plan it out. Figure out what one or two main points you would like to get across and settle for those. You want to spend the bulk of your time offering constructive help, which often takes the form of fixing something that is not working. Because that can easily slip into negatives, do be aware of the social context of critique among colleagues. I recommend the compliment-criticism-compliment sandwich:

   • lead briefly with what does work,
   • spend most of your time explaining what doesn’t work and how you might fix it,
   • then quickly conclude by noting how those fixes would take the good parts of the piece and make them better.