

**PROFESSOR JANET NEUMAN**  
**PAPER WRITING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES**  
**(FOR SEMINAR PAPERS, INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPERS, EXTERNSHIP PAPERS,**  
**LLM THESES OR LLM SEMINAR PAPERS, “A” PAPERS, ETC.)**

- First:** Read paper guidelines (next page), fill out and return **research proposal** (form attached), and watch Neuman/Rohlf videotape of writing seminar, on reserve in library.
- Second:** Turn in **progress report** on date agreed to in research proposal. A progress report must include the following.
1. A statement of your **thesis**. A thesis asks a question, takes a position, or makes an argument. Look at the introductions to law review articles for examples of thesis statements. The thesis is often in the last paragraph of the introduction and sounds something like this: “The thesis of this article is...” “This article argues that...” This article criticizes X and proposes Y...” Even though your thesis may evolve between now and your final draft, you still need to state what it is at this point in your work. What you are trying to capture in the thesis is the focus of your inquiry and why it interests you.
  2. A description of the steps (in a logical order) that you intend to use to prove your thesis.
  3. A brief summary list of the sources and materials you have reviewed to date, and, separately labeled, sources you intend to review.
  4. Any practical or conceptual problems you anticipate in completing your paper, such as difficulty in obtaining necessary materials, changing developments in the subject area, or thorny questions you are struggling with.
  5. A one (or at most two) page outline of the paper. This is a difficult but critical step at this stage of your work.
- Third:** Turn in your **first paper version** on the date agreed to in the research proposal. (Note that this does not say “draft” or “rough draft”: what is required is your best attempt at a finished paper.) The draft must include the following:
1. A short and punchy introduction that will grab the reader’s attention and interest. The introduction should place the topic in context, and include a very clear statement of your thesis. It should also include a “road map” to the paper, briefly describing the organization of the paper and what the different sections contain.
  2. *Complete* written text, in a logical order.
  3. Footnotes in as close to Blue Book form as possible.
  4. A one-page cover outline of the draft. The outline should note which parts contain “report” and which parts contain “analysis.”
- Fourth:** Turn in the **final** paper on the date agreed to in the research proposal. The final paper must include (in addition to the complete written text, of course!):
1. A table of contents with page numbers. (This should also help you check the logical organization of your paper, and the ratio of report to analysis.)
  2. Footnotes in Blue Book form.
  3. A clear development of the arguments to support your thesis, and a proposal, synthesis, or conclusion that answers the problem you posed in your thesis.
  4. Reader-friendly transitions between sections, letting the reader know where you’ve been, where you’re going next, and why, and thus leading the reader smoothly through your argument.

## **PROFESSOR NEUMAN PAPER GUIDELINES**

These guidelines are further explained in the Neuman/Rohlf videotaped writing seminar, on reserve in the library. The library should also have on reserve a folder containing a collection of writing guidelines from various faculty members, which you can consult as well for further advice.

**Topic selection and thesis development.** This is often the most difficult part of “writing” your paper. A lot of background research is unavoidable in order to get to the point where you can formulate a valid thesis. You should look for an issue or an area for which some research material (i.e., cases and articles) exists, but which has not been overwritten and where significant unresolved issues or questions remain. Sometimes problems occur (1) with topics that have too few sources available or where material is too hard to get in a short period of time, (2) with areas that involve so much non-legal material that the legal aspects are difficult to isolate and explore, (3) with subjects that have no “tension” in them, or (4) with topics that involve so much passion or moral commitment by the writer that it is difficult to engage in the kind of intellectual analysis necessary to write a good paper.

The challenge is to find an area that is of sufficient interest to you, with unresolved issues, and in which you can educate yourself efficiently with available materials to become an “expert” so that you can identify a question you want to answer or an argument you want to make, and then develop the argument and put it on paper, all in a semester. You will do some floundering in the beginning, but that is part of the process, and the object is to put in the time up front to get through that phase and get to the expert/writer phase.

**Analysis.** Sophisticated analysis of some sort is what makes a law school paper something more than a “report,” which you learned how to do very well many years ago. A report simply describes information from other sources, or describes what you have learned from your background research. Because you have spent so much time educating yourself in the general subject area of your paper, it is very tempting to show how much you’ve learned by writing it all down. But that’s just a report, and your paper will not be a successful law school paper if it contains too much reporting, or, heaven forbid, if it is all report and no analysis. Analysis goes beyond description and background to synthesize, criticize, analogize, apply, etc. Synthesis might involve a creative juxtaposition of different areas of law to solve a problem, for instance. Application can also borrow from one area to resolve problems in another area. Criticism can include taking issue with court decisions, legislation, and so forth, and usually is followed by a proposal of some sort. The whole point of analysis is for you to add something new to the subject area. Your paper should include more analysis than report (i.e., 2/3 to 1/3). It is also important that you use **legal** analysis, rather than the analytical approach of some other discipline.

**Craft.** Writing is an absolutely critical tool of lawyers. Strive for good, clear, concise writing, and not the verbose, abstract, overly formal writing that many lawyers in fact do use. Each section of the paper should play a role (clearly stated in the introduction) in developing the argument to support the thesis. Every paragraph should have a topic sentence and should fit logically in the flow of things. Use lots of transitions to end sections and lead the reader on to the next section. Use reader friendly headings (i.e., clear and descriptive) as well, to help guide the reader through your argument. (A good technique if you are having problems is to outline your paper once you’ve written it, to find organizational problems.) Every sentence and every

word should count. Use active voice, declarative sentences, clear sentence structure, clear references (avoid lots of vague reference-type words without clear objects, as in starting sentences with “This...” or “That...” without any noun following it). Read and follow the rules on plagiarism in What’s What. Your paper should be in law review style, rather than brief style (footnotes or endnotes, not citations in text).

**Grading.** I will be looking for the following in my evaluation of your paper:

1. topic difficulty and sophistication
2. proper ratio of report and analysis
3. quality of report: only as much as needed to set context, clarity, succinctness, organization, use of cross references in footnotes for further background
4. quality of analysis: clarity and coherence, comprehensiveness, depth, logic, originality, persuasiveness, organization of argument
5. craft: punctuation, grammar, style, flow, organization, readability
6. how comments on first version were handled
7. accomplishing each of the preliminary steps and meeting applicable deadlines

**PROFESSOR NEUMAN  
RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR PAPER**

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_

BOX\_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL\_\_\_\_\_ PHONE(S)\_\_\_\_\_

SEMESTER OF REGISTRATION FOR PAPER: FALL, SPRING, SUMMER, 20\_\_

TYPE OF PAPER (CIRCLE)      SEMINAR      IND. STUDY(GRADED UNLESS OTHER  
ARRANGEMENT)

EXTERNSHIP    LAW REVIEW NOTE    "A" PAPER ONLY (NO GRADE)

NUMBER OF CREDITS\_\_\_\_\_

INTENDED TO FULFILL WRITING REQUIREMENT?    A:\_\_\_\_    B:\_\_\_\_    NEITHER\_\_\_\_

SCHEDULE (DATES FOR SUBMISSION). **PLEASE CHOOSE AND PLAN CAREFULLY--DO NOT BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC--** BECAUSE YOU WILL BE HELD TO THESE, UNLESS YOU HAVE RENEGOTIATED FOR GOOD CAUSE (**REALLY GOOD**).

PROGRESS REPORT:\_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT:\_\_\_\_\_

FINAL:\_\_\_\_\_

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WORK:

(over)

HAVE YOU RECEIVED CREDIT HERE OR ELSEWHERE FOR WRITING A PAPER ON THIS OR A CLOSELY RELATED TOPIC? HAVE YOU RESEARCHED THIS TOPIC FOR AN EMPLOYER? IF YES ON EITHER, PLEASE DESCRIBE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SPECIFICALLY AND DESCRIBE HOW THIS PAPER WILL DIFFER FROM PREVIOUS WORK.

DO YOU PLAN TO SUBMIT A PAPER ON THIS OR A CLOSELY RELATED TOPIC FOR ANY OTHER CLASS HERE? IF SO, PLEASE DESCRIBE SPECIFICALLY. SUBMISSION OF THIS PAPER FOR CREDIT IN ANY ADDITIONAL COURSE REQUIRES PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL OF BOTH INSTRUCTORS, IN ORDER NOT TO BE AN HONOR CODE VIOLATION.

WHAT OTHER BACKGROUND, IF ANY, DO YOU HAVE WITH THIS TOPIC?

---

Student's signature and date