

Proposals due January 31, 2023 (issue to appear Summer 2024)

# In limine

## Writing assignments at the transition from undergraduate to law school

You are invited to propose an essay for a special issue of the peer-reviewed journal [Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments](#), guest edited by Antonio Elefano, Lindsay Head, and Brian Larson. *Prompt* publishes writing assignments that authors have used in their classrooms, each accompanied by a short essay (approximately 2,500 words) by the assignment authors, reflecting on the development, delivery, successes, and challenges of the assignment. The journal is peer-reviewed; articles and all supporting supplemental materials are open access and available free of charge on [the journal's website](#). The journal's format and developmental stance toward the peer-review process are perfect for junior and senior teachers/scholars alike, including those who have limited time for scholarship or are unfamiliar with the peer-review process.

In this special issue, the editors seek to spotlight assignments from both undergraduate and law school instructors who aim to support students in the transition to law school. Lawyers are familiar with the motion *in limine*, which advocates make to judges prior to trial. The Latin term *limen* refers to the threshold of a home, so the motion occurs on the threshold. Law students, too, must cross the threshold from undergraduate study to professional school, and that transition is not thoroughly studied. Among the many challenges students face while *in limine* are the requirements of a more formal type of writing in law school than that for which their undergraduate training has prepared them. But many students come to law school having taken some kind of undergraduate writing class focused on legal writing. Meanwhile, critical scholarship and current events counsel some skepticism regarding the conventions of legal communication and rhetoric. Into the legal writing rhetoric environment come teachers who are often contingent workers or hold lower status (whether at the undergraduate or law-school level). Understanding the types of writing assignments students encounter both prior to and during their first year of law school is thus important to legal training, the legal profession, and the broader culture.

Currently, there is limited scholarship on the transition from undergraduate education to law school. Enquist (2005) observes the fundamental differences between undergraduate writing and legal writing. Cabrera (2001) asks whether a stronger foundation in communication skills from undergraduate education could aid in future law school retention. The editors invite both undergraduate and 1L law school instructors to show through their curriculum how they bridge this important gap.

Submissions could include assignments that either broadly or narrowly prepare student for this transition. Undergraduate preparation might take the shape of a specific legal writing course but could also come in the form of courses designed for writing transfer, such as those found in

Writing in the Disciplines (WID) or Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs (Moore & Bass 2017; Yancey 2014). This curriculum might first introduce undergraduate students to the legal field, related fields, or simply professional writing assignments that transfer well into law school, such as a client email or office memorandum. Writing for transfer also expands beyond traditional genres with many contemporary law students exploring narrative structure, storytelling, law in literature, and critical and rhetorical theories of law in their first-year classrooms (Page 2017; Paskey 2014; Posner 2009). The editors would welcome submissions that highlight assignments which creatively engage with the law outside traditional genres. Successful submissions might describe assignments that produce writing for the practice of law, writing about the law, or writing with the law for social action or to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in legal education.

## Submission guidelines

We invite teacher scholars who teach legal communication in law schools or undergraduate courses that center the law or legal writing to submit proposals for the special issue. Each proposal should be 200-300 words and should:

- (a) Briefly describe the assignment that will be the focus of the essay.
- (b) Identify the course in which the assignment appears/appeared.
- (c) Explain the assignment's and the course's place in the transition from undergraduate to law school.
- (d) Identify at least one scholarly theoretical or analytical framework that the author will use in the essay. (The works cited in this CFP may provide an excellent starting point, but we welcome other frameworks. We are also happy to consult with authors looking for starting points here.)

Make submissions and direct inquiries to: Lindsay Head at [LHEAD@STU.EDU](mailto:LHEAD@STU.EDU).

## Timeline

- January 31, 2023: Deadline for short proposals.
- March 1: Special issue editors inform authors of accepted proposals.
- July 15: Articles due to special issue editors.
- July-October: Peer review round 1.
- November-December: Authors revise (if required).
- January 2024: 2nd round of peer review (if required).
- February: Copyediting.
- March: Proofreading.
- April 15, 2024: Articles to *Prompt* production editors for typesetting, etc. (HARD DEADLINE)
- June: Authors and editors review proofs
- July 15, 2024: Issue is out

## Further Reading

Bumiller, K. (2008). *In an abusive state: How neoliberalism appropriated the feminist movement against sexual violence*. Duke University Press.

Cabrera, R. (2001). Retention issues in legal education: The roles of undergraduate educators and of academic support in the Law School. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 3(2), 167-182.

Carlson, A. C. (2009). *The crimes of womanhood: Defining femininity in a court of law*. University of Illinois Press.

Christensen, L. M. (2006). Legal reading and success in law school: An empirical study. *Seattle UL Rev.*, 30, 603.

Crichton, S.-S. (2021). Teaching in the Time of Disruption: A Case for Empathy and Honoring Diversity. *Legal Writing: Journal of the Legal Writing Institute*, 25, 4–14.

Dyszlewski, N. P., Gabriel, R. J., Harrington-Steppen, S., Russell, A., & Tung, G. B. (Eds.). (2021). *Integrating Doctrine and Diversity: Inclusion and Equity in the Law School Classroom*. Carolina Academic Press.

Enquist, A. (2005). Talking to Students About the Differences Between Undergraduate Writing and Legal Writing. *Perspectives: Teaching Legal Research and Writing*, 13, 104.

Flanagan, R. (2015). The Kids Aren't Alright: Rethinking the Law Student Skills Deficit. *BYU Educ. & LJ*, 135.

Fordyce, Jepsen, L. K., & McCormick, K. (2016). Predicting First-year Law School Performance: The Influences of Race, Gender, and Undergraduate Major. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 43(1), 64–77.

Graham, L. P. (2018). Generation Z Goes to Law School: Teaching and Reaching Law Students in the Post-Millennial Generation. *UALR L. Rev.*, 41, 29.

Lombardo, P. A. (2008). *Three generations, no imbeciles: Eugenics, the supreme court, and buck v. Bell*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

McKinnon, S. L. (2010). Review Essay: The Law and Its Bedfellows: Nation Making through the Rhetoric of US Courtrooms. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 96(3), 324–337.

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McMurtry-Chubb, T. A. (2022). *Strategies and Techniques for Integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the Core Law Curriculum*. Wolters Kluwer Law & Business.

Moore, J. & Bass, R. (2017). *Understanding Writing for Transfer: Implications for Transformative Student Learning in Higher Education*. Stylus Publishing.

Ordoover, N. (2003). *American eugenics: Race, queer anatomy, and the science of nationalism*. University of Minnesota Press.

Page, C. (2017). So Very Bad Beginnings: What Fiction Can Teach Lawyers about Beginning a Persuasive Legal Narrative before a Court, 86 *Miss. L.J.* 315.

Pascoe, P. (2009). *What comes naturally: Miscegenation law and the making of race in America*. Oxford University Press.

Paskey, S. (2014). Law Is Made of Stories: Erasing the False Dichotomy Between Stories and Legal Rules. *JALWD*, 11. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2507485](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2507485)

Posner, R. (2009). *Law and Literature: Third Edition*. Harvard University Press.

Weiner, M. S. (2006). *Americans without law: The racial boundaries of citizenship*. New York University Press.

Yancey, K. (2014). *Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*. Utah State University Press.