Advanced Legal Writing Requirement (ALWR)

The purpose of the Advanced Legal Writing Requirement (ALWR) is to provide students with a rigorous upper level writing experience that will enhance a student’s writing skills in a legal context. ALWR writing projects are designed to challenge a student’s organizational, problem-solving and writing abilities. ALWR writing projects are intended to integrate theory and application, provide an opportunity to implement lawyering skills, and/or provide a basis for advocating a particular position.

Each student must satisfy the ALWR as a pre-requisite to graduation. Except as provided below, students must satisfy the ALWR by meeting the ALWR writing project requirements in an ALWR course at FCSL or through an independent study with a full-time faculty member at FCSL, and earning a grade of “C” or better on the ALWR writing project requirements. Law Review and Moot Court members may satisfy the ALWR by completing a written project (note or appellate brief) that the faculty advisor certifies as satisfying the ALWR.

Students who enroll in an ALWR course that has an exam option must elect within two weeks of the beginning of the semester whether they will satisfy the ALWR in the course, and such election is irrevocable.

General Requirements for ALWR Writing Projects

Use of Sources

1. Each ALWR writing project must be the student’s own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The following quotes are provided to help students understand the expectations regarding originality in the final work product.

Plagiarism: “The act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one’s own mind.” Websters II New College Dictionary 841 (1995) (emphasis added).

“[M]any persons…perceive plagiarism to be only intentional, wholesale copying of large passages, and are oblivious to the fact that borrowed words, phrases and ideas are included in that definition. . . .Comment, Plagiarism in Legal Scholarship, 15 U. Tol. L. Rev. 233, 235 (1983) (emphasis added).

Please refer to the FCSL Honor Code for more information and to the ALWR section of the FCSL web site for more information.
2. With respect to material or ideas in an ALWR writing project that do not originate with the student, the student should retain a copy of that source or maintain a readily-available list of citations, which the student shall submit to the supervising faculty member upon request of the faculty member.

3. Except for ALWR writing projects that consist of simulated client communications or similar drafting projects, ALWR writing projects must contain appropriate citations to the source material. Citations must be proper and complete. Students must accurately use information obtained from sources.

4. Students may not rely on Web sites as a basis for material included in their ALWR writing projects, unless the student discusses each such Web site with the supervising faculty member and obtains the faculty member’s approval for each Web site.

Quality of Work

5. Students must produce a high level written product that would be acceptable to the target audience for the work, which includes the professor as well as practicing attorneys, judges and clients, as appropriate.

6. Each ALWR writing project should adhere to the rules of grammar and punctuation. ALWR writing projects should be well-organized, precise and appropriately formatted based on the type of project and its target audience. The text and footnotes (if required) shall be in Times New Roman 12 point type.

7. Students must comply with the ALWR Project Standards set forth in paragraph 12 below.

ALWR Process

8. Students must submit draft(s) for review and discussion prior to the submission of the finished work pursuant to a schedule determined by the professor, and students must use the feedback to enhance the quality of the ALWR project.

9. Students and their ALWR professor must discuss the grading criteria for each ALWR writing project during the first two weeks of the semester.

10. Students must adhere to deadlines set by the supervising faculty member.

Satisfaction of ALWR

11. All students registering to satisfy the ALWR must submit the “Method for Satisfying the Advanced Legal Writing Requirement” form to the faculty member teaching the course or supervising the independent study within two weeks of the
beginning of the semester. Students satisfying the ALWR through Law Review or Moot Court must submit the form to the appropriate faculty advisor.

The faculty member will submit the completed form to the vice dean at the end of the semester indicating whether the student has satisfied the ALWR. Students seeking to satisfy the ALWR through an Independent Study must also submit the “Independent Study Program Application” as described in Section VI.C. below.

ALWR Project Standards

12. In addition to the general standards set forth above, ALWR writing projects must satisfy the standards set by the supervising faculty member, which will of necessity vary depending on the nature of the course or writing project. Below are basic standards for common types of ALWR writing projects:

Law review articles and similar academic papers

(a) The topic must require the student to do significant research and engage in significant independent legal and/or policy analysis.
(b) The project must be in the form of a law review article, or the functional equivalent of same, with appropriate citation to sources.
(c) The project must be a minimum of 25 double-spaced pages, excluding footnotes.
(d) Wherever possible, the project should use at least 15 different sources and, where possible, sources should be primary sources and/or scholarly materials.
(e) The project should contain a table of contents or table of authorities.
(f) The project must follow the citation form found in the most recent edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, or similar guides as designated by the supervising faculty member. In particular, the project should have footnotes rather than internal citations, and have an appropriate number of footnotes.
(g) With the advance consent of the Vice Dean, the supervising faculty member may revise or supplement these criteria as appropriate to the subject matter of the project and the course.

Non-appellate briefs and memoranda of law

(a) The topic must require the student to do significant research and engage in significant independent legal and/or policy analysis.
(b) The student must write a minimum of 25 double-spaced pages. These pages can be distributed over any number of assignments/projects.
(c) Each project must follow the citation form found in the most recent edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, or similar guides as designated by the supervising faculty member.
(d) With the advance consent of the Vice Dean, the supervising faculty member may revise or supplement these criteria as appropriate to the subject matter of the projects and the course.

**Appellate briefs**

(a) The topic must require the student to do significant research and engage in significant independent legal and/or policy analysis.

(b) The student must write a minimum of 25 double-spaced pages. These pages can be distributed over any number of assignments/projects.

(c) Each project must follow the citation form found in the most recent edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation or similar guides as designated by the supervising faculty member.

(d) Each project should contain a table of contents and a table of authorities.

(e) With the advance consent of the Vice Dean, the supervising faculty member may revise or supplement these criteria as appropriate to the subject matter of the projects and the course.

**Other ALWR writing projects**

(a) Supervising faculty members may establish ALWR writing projects other than law review articles, academic papers, appellate and non-appellate briefs, and memoranda of law, with the prior consent of the Vice Dean.

(b) The Vice Dean must consent in advance that the standards for such proposed ALWR writing projects are the substantial equivalent of the standards otherwise set forth in this paragraph 12.