

Communication and Legal Reasoning

Section 1 – Silbernagel

Welcome to Communication and Legal Reasoning, commonly known at Northwestern as “CLR5.” Our first meeting of the semester will be on the Thursday of Orientation Week, August 23. I will post a full assignment calendar and course policy statement on the course’s Canvas page before classes officially begin, but there are few things that will be helpful for you to know beforehand.

First, the two required textbooks for the course are: Robin Wellford Slocum, *Legal Reasoning, Writing, and Persuasive Argument* (3d ed. 2011), and *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia Law Review Ass’n et. al. eds., 20th ed. 2015). Note that a fourth edition of the Slocum text is planned for release this fall, but because I was unable to review this new edition before book orders were due I assigned the third edition, not the fourth edition. Although I doubt that there will be many relevant material changes between the third and fourth editions (I still haven’t seen the fourth edition), the assigned readings will be from the third edition. The third edition should also hopefully be less expensive, and you should be able to find used copies of the third edition for sale.

Second, please read Chapters 2 and 3 of the Slocum text (pp. 15-33 and 35-63) before our August 23 class. I will also post a very short article, “Clerks Laud Gorsuch Despite Red Ink,” on the course Canvas page that I would like you to read for the first class as well.

Finally, please do not use laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices in class. I will more fully explain the reasoning behind this policy later, but the short reason is that the use of electronic devices makes classroom learning more difficult, both for the student using the device and the others in the class. In addition, CLR is not a course that requires extensive note taking. You will learn much more from the course by being engaged in class discussions than by trying to make a record of everything that is said.

I look forward to meeting you all on August 23. In the meantime, check the course Canvas page once Orientation begins for more information, and do not hesitate to contact me at b-silbernagel@law.northwestern.edu with any questions.