**Center for Academic Writing/Legal Studies SJD**

**Thesis Writing II - Winter 2020**

**Thomas Rooney**

**Course instructor:** Thomas Rooney, Center for Academic Writing (rooneyt@cceu.edu)

**Office hours:** By appointment (Nador u. 15, Room 214)

**Term:** Winter term 2019-20 AY (for 3rd year SJD students of Department of Legal Studies)

**Course type:** Mandatory

**Credit Value:** 1 credit (2 ECTS)

**Aims of the Course**

The first two aims of this short course are to get you writing (or back to writing) and keep you writing, no matter what obstacles stand in your way. Another aim is to get you to rethink/revise the structure of your dissertation. Finally, the course is designed to help you make your work more accessible. The first thesis writing course in year one looked at planning the PhD dissertation; this one will start by looking once again at the overall structure before turning to its primary focus: the body chapters where you present/discuss your main findings.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

* present findings of comparative legal/constitutional law research in an accessible manner;
* continue to fine-tune your overall structure;
* more effectively structure your dissertation chapters;
* overcome writer’s block and other writing obstacles; and
* continue the writing-up of your dissertation with confidence.

**Registration**

You can find this information on INFOSYS.

**Course Materials**

There is no reader. All of the materials will be provided either in class or via email.

**Requirements**

Attendance is mandatory. As this is a seminar, you will also be expected to prepare for and fully contribute to each session. For seminar 2 you will need to analyze the structure of a chapter you have already written as well as write/revise a short working introduction and outline of a chapter you are now working on. The last four meetings will be in workshop format. You will need to submit the draft of a new chapter to your colleagues for one of these workshops. For the other three you will have to read and respond to the chapters written by your peers. Finally, you will need to attend one mandatory consultation in January to discuss your writing plans and individual problems/concerns.

**Evaluation**

This is a required course, which you will need to pass in order to complete your degree, but as it is a support course (to help you with other work) it will not affect your GPA. It will appear on your transcript as PASS or FAIL

**Course Outline**

**1.**  **The “State of Play” (Week 1)**

The purpose of this session is to get you refocused on the final product of your PhD work: the dissertation. We will discuss where you are in the process, your writing habits, effective strategies to overcome problems such as writer’s block, and how a rolling synopsis can help you rethink/revise your overall structure and keep you focused on your main arguments and key findings.

***Post-Readings***

Wendy Laura Belcher, “Anticipating Writing Obstacles” and “Overturning Writing Obstacles” in *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009) pp. 26-40

Patrick Dunleavy, “Organizing the writing process” in *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, DraftWrite and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003) pp. 148-156

John McPhee, “Draft No. 4” in *Draft No. 4: On the Writing Process* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017) pp. 157-175

Caroline Morris and Cian Murphy, “PhD Problems” in *Getting a PhD in Law* (Oxford and Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 2011) pp. 73-82

***Homework for Seminar 2***

Read “Organizing a Chapter or Paper: the Micro-Structure” in Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD,* pp. 76-102. Then look at a chapter you have already written and make any changes to the introduction, subheadings, sign-posting, etc. (If you don’t have time to revise then make notes on what you plan to change.) Bring the chapter and your notes to the second seminar.

You should also write/revise a 1-2 page working introduction to the new chapter you are writing this term and create/revise an outline for it.

**2.**  **Review of Effective Chapter Structure (Week 2)**

In this session we will turn to the main focus of the course: dissertation chapters. One of the main outcomes of this course is to “present findings . . . in an accessible manner”. One way to do this is to follow Dunleavy’s advice. We will discuss his advice as well as the changes you made to one of your existing chapters. You will then analyze this chapter in a slightly different way. Finally, we will turn our attention to the working introduction/outline of the chapter you are now writing.

We will also schedule the four peer-review workshops and discuss how long your draft chapter will be. The workshops are tentatively scheduled during the second half of the semester, from weeks 7-10, but we can meet earlier or later based on individual needs.

***Post-Readings***

Joan Bolker, “Revising: The Second Draft and Beyond” in *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998) pp. 116-126

Irene Clark, “Writing and Revising” in *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007) pp. 83-102 [See especially “The Revision Process” from p. 91.]

Peg Boyle Single, “The Role of Revision” in *Demystifying Dissertation Writing* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2010) pp. 165-177

***Consultation (before the end of week 4)***

Sign up for a consultation at *ceu.mywconline.com* so we can discuss your writing plans and any individual concerns/problems.

***Preparation for Seminars 3 to 6***

Write a draft of a new chapter and submit it one week before your workshop.

Read and be ready to discuss the chapters by your peers in the other workshops.

**3-6.**  **Peer Review Workshops of Draft Chapters (Weeks 7 to 10)**

The purpose of these sessions is to give and get feedback on individual work. You will critically read participants’ draft chapters and offer constructive feedback on the writing and the content. As non-supervisors but relatively well informed readers, you can offer insights and raise issues that neither the writer nor supervisor may have considered.

***Post-Readings and Follow-up Discussions***

If any issues come up in a workshop I will either send you a post-reading or devote some time to it in our next meeting.

**Further Readings (with library call numbers)**

Patrick Dunleavy, “The End-game: Finishing Your Doctorate” in *Authoring a PhD,* pp. 197-226 **808.02 DUN**

Bryan A. Garner, *Legal Writing in Plain English* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) **KF250.G373 2001**

Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What: Advice for Academics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017 **808.02 JEN**

Caroline Morris and Cian Murphy, “Writing Up” in *Getting a PhD in Law*, pp. 83-92  
**KD 432 M66 2011**

Eugene Volokh, “Writing” in *Academic Legal Writing* (2nd edn, New York: Foundation Press, 2005) pp. 73-100 **KF 250 V65 2005** [While this book has not been written specifically for dissertation writers there is still lots of good advice here.]

**Two Important Style Guides**

*OSCOLA: Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities*. (4th edn, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford 2015)   
[**https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxlaw/oscola\_4th\_edn\_hart\_2012.pdf**](https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxlaw/oscola_4th_edn_hart_2012.pdf)

*The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (19th edn, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Review Association, 2010) **KF245.B58 2010**