

Public Justice Department Writing Plan

Below is the Writing Plan for the Public Justice Department. Please see your faculty advisor to learn how this affects you as a Public Justice major.

WRITING PLAN

I. Rationale

Public Justice is a program that is concerned with a range of matters beyond the confines of the criminal justice system. It is a field of study that encompasses the origins, missions, goals, policies and methods of the civil and criminal justice systems, as well as the human services system. This multidisciplinary liberal arts program concerns itself with history, public policy, ethics and social and political organization. Public Justice deals with the way laws are made, applied and enforced. It embraces the policies and goals that inspire those laws and for whose accomplishment the laws are a vehicle. The program involves public service and public institutions that are a part of the enterprise of maintaining order in society and, to an increasing extent, responsible for distributing entitlements to the public. Public Justice majors combine a broad-based liberal arts education, in-depth research on topics in which they have a special interest, and supervised fieldwork experience.

Students who wish to pursue careers in the public justice system must be able to speak and write clearly and effectively, analyze and solve problems, observe events and behavior and report their observations accurately, and work cooperatively with others. To properly meet these objectives, writing is imperative. Writing is a process that requires development of research and critical thinking skills.

II. Writing Goals

1. Learn to read critically and analytically various types of written sources: documents, texts, newspapers, legal decisions, criminal records and investigative reports, correspondence.
2. Learn to use primary and secondary sources.
3. Learn to utilize writing effectively to demonstrate mastery of Public Justice vocabulary and subject matter, in term papers, essay exams, research papers, reports, journals, reaction papers, etc.
4. Learn to use the library and on-line sources to conduct research and be able to cite appropriately.
5. Learn to use writing to communicate ideas and interpretations clearly to others.
6. Learn to use writing to summarize and synthesize information from different sources.
7. Learn to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various arguments and interpretations.
8. Learn to properly document sources in research and writing.

III. Writing Program Objectives

Since writing is a developmental process, various levels and types of writing activities and strategies may be employed in the five (5) writing courses mandated for Public Justice majors. Public Justice students will be able to complete their General Education writing requirements with courses drawn exclusively from their major program; however, majors may also complete their writing requirements with one or two writing courses from outside the discipline as approved by the department

A. Writing Courses Mandated for All Public Justice Majors

•**PBJ 201 – PBJ 201** provides an introduction to legal reasoning and the non-criminal legal process. The primary material is judicial opinions, and the course is taught by the case method. The course provides a basic understanding of the nature and operation of civil (non-criminal) law with emphasis upon kinds of legal actions, basic principles of law, and legal reasoning. Its purpose is to expand the student's knowledge and understanding of the American legal process and provide an insight into the way courts function and cases are decided. This is a discussion course.

**Mandated written assignments: All written assignments are due at class-time on the designated date. Late assignments may be reduced in grade for every day they are late. Unless otherwise instructed, you must type or word-process all written assignments. Your written assignments will be evaluated on content [which includes responsiveness to the questions posed by the assignment, extent of research, and quality of reasoning and argument], organization, and mechanics [which includes syntax, grammar, and spelling].

You are welcome and encouraged to consult the Teaching Assistant about your papers before you submit them. *A first draft and a re-write for each of three paper assignments is required as reflected on the course syllabus.* You are also encouraged to discuss your performance on assignments you have received back. If you have questions about the assignments, ask them in advance, when you still have time to do something about it.

•**PBJ 301 - PBJ 301** provides the bridge between the introductory core courses in Public Justice and the required fieldwork experience of PBJ 397. The readings, class discussions, guest speakers, and field observations are intended to help students define their career plans, identify and secure a fieldwork site, learn the basics of organizational structure and management in public justice agencies, and prepare to write a paper comparing theory and practice.

**Mandated writing assignments consist of a professional portfolio and a theory & practice project. Additional writing assignments, such as observation reports, reaction papers, interviews, and essays, are included at the option of individual instructors. Library instruction is a recommended element of this course.

•**PBJ 397 - PBJ 397** gives students an opportunity to compare theory and practice in the context of a supervised fieldwork experience. The practicum allows students to integrate their classroom knowledge with the "real world" of the American system of justice. In this way, students are able to make judgments about the relationship of the "real" and the "ideal," and explore how the system really works. The practicum experience gives students an opportunity to make a critical assessment of themselves, their education, and the profession they are planning to pursue.

**Mandated writing assignments consist of fieldwork reports and a 15-20 page paper comparing theory and practice as it relates to the student's fieldwork. (All theory and practice papers require submission of: 1) outline and annotated bibliography; 2) first draft of paper; and 3) final version of paper.) Additional writing assignments, such as learning agreements, journals, and essays, are included at the option of individual instructors. Library instruction is a required element of this course.

•**PBJ 401 - PBJ 401** aims to enhance students' ability to integrate justice-related concepts and facts while refining their research, writing, and oral presentation skills. It provides an opportunity for Public Justice majors to draw together the various themes and strands of their learning experience in Public Justice and reexamine them in light of their cumulative educational and practical experience through a class presentation and an independent research project of their choice.

**Mandated writing assignments consist of a 15-20 page research paper on a public justice topic of the student's choice and a minimum of six reaction papers responding to class presentations. (This paper requires: 1) a proposal, outline and annotated bibliography; 2) a first draft of the paper; and 3) a final version of the paper.) Additional writing assignments may be included at the option of the instructor. Library instruction is a required element of this course.

B. Elective Courses That will Fulfill General Education Writing Requirements

Public Justice majors will select one of the following courses to complete their writing requirement. These courses will include writing-to-learn and advanced-level writing activities, such as: research papers, article and book reviews, reports, reaction papers, journals, debate papers, and essay exams. Library instruction is a recommended element in these courses. Approved upper division writing courses from other departments may be substituted subject to advisor approval.

Upper Division Electives:

PBJ 347 - Crime and Society
PBJ 350 - Proseminar in Public Justice
PBJ 351 - Report Writing in Public Justice
PBJ 363 - Women and the Law
PBJ 385 - Drugs and Crime
PBJ 425 - Comparative Justice Systems
PBJ 460 - Current Issues in American Law

*An advanced writing course from another department may be accepted with advisor approval.

**If PBJ 201 is taken at a college other than Oswego, an additional advanced writing elective is required.

[10/04]