

A Sample Paper for Essays in PLST and JURI Courses

JURI 550

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The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation is the go-to writing guide for all legal writing professionals and students. The *Bluebook* provides a systematic writing method that helps legal professionals clearly communicate with one another. Most importantly, The *Bluebook* provides a comprehensive writing framework that is needed for clearly identifying all sources and legal authority used to inform and support written legal work product. Unlike its distant cousins (MLA, APA, and AMA), *Bluebook* is less about “writing style” and more about providing attribution for sources used. In other words, because legal writing relies predominantly upon other sources to inform its general content, analysis, and conclusions, legal professionals and students must master the range of *Bluebook* source attribution requirements. According to Judge Posner, “A system of citation form has two valid functions: to provide enough information about a reference to give the reader a general idea of its significance and whether it’s worth looking up, and to enable the reader to find the reference if he was to look it up.” Judge Richard Posner, *Reflections on Judging* 97 (2013).

This sample paper is only intended for use in writing basic assignments such as discussion boards, essays, and research papers for PLST and JURI courses where the specific assignment formatting requirements are otherwise unspecified. If your professor has provided formatting guidelines for a specific assignment, follow those guidelines rather than this sample. Also, this sample paper is not intended to be used for any legal document preparation such as case briefs, memos, persuasive briefs, complaints, etc. Your professor will provide templates and/or writing guidelines for those writing assignments along with specific legal document writing requirements.

It is important to keep in mind that it is the courts that dictate writing style requirements. For example, one author explains the requirements for Supreme Court case briefs using a twenty-nine page article! Dan Schweitzer, U.S. Supreme Court Brief Writing Style Guide, 19 J. App. Prac. & Process 129 (2018) (accessed April 26th, 2021, at 8:36 AM), <https://lawrepository.ualr.edu/appellatepracticeprocess/vol19/iss1/8>. The writing style guide produced by the Supreme Court is 266 pages long! District courts, circuit courts, administrative courts, appellate courts, and the like, will provide their own writing style requirements that include font size, margins, spacing, page and/or word limits. As a practicing paralegal and legal professional, you will learn and apply the specific requirements dictated by the court(s) in those jurisdictions where the legal documents will actually be filed.

Here is the good news for you, the student: For now, as an academic exercise, you will follow and apply the more simplistic guidelines provided using the following instructions:

General Essay Formatting

Essays should be written in Times New Roman 12 pt. font on white 8½ x 11 paper, with margins set at one inch on the top, sides, and bottom. Page numbers should appear in the center of the bottom margin; omit the page number on the first page. The first line of every paragraph should be indented ½ inch, and the entire essay should be double-spaced. The title of the essay should be centered on the first line of the body of the essay. Use headings where appropriate; they should be written in title case, bolded and left-aligned. Make sure to consult your assignment instructions and incorporate any additional guidelines into your essay that have been provided by and are required by your professor.

Essay Tone

Be sure to apply third-party voice. Your writing should not directly reflect the writer or the reader, and “I” statements should not be used. Lastly, your writing should be clear, direct, and concise. Avoid flowery language and colloquialisms while consistently maintaining a neutral third party, academic, and professional tone.

Book Citation: Long and Short Citation

Legal writing requires that you place citations within the body of your text. For example, a citation to a book would look something like this: John Adams was very influential in the ratification of the Constitution. Mark A. Beliles and Douglas Anderson, Contending for the Constitution 2 (2005). Further, it has been said that “John Adams understood the connection between the Bible and liberty, and so did a great majority of his fellow founders.” Id. at 3. **OR** your in-text book citation could look like this: Mark A. Beliles and Douglas Anderson, *Contending for the Constitution* 2 (2005). Further, it has been said that “John Adams understood the connection between the Bible and liberty, and so did a great majority of his fellow founders.” *Id.* at 3. The writer may underline **OR** *italicize* the title of the source.

Also note that the “Id.” tells the reader: same source.¹ The number tells the reader: different page. For example: Id. at 3 tells your reader same source, but found on page 3. “Id.” without a page number following will tell the reader: same source, same page. In this instance, “Id.” would tell the reader the information immediately preceding the citation can be found on page 2 of Contending for the Constitution. *Note that a long citation is always applied first. Short citations may be utilized subsequent to the introduction of an appropriately formatted long citation.

¹ “Id.” is short for “ibid” or “Ibidem” which is a Latin term meaning “in the same place.”

Case Law Citation

Basic case law in-text citations should look like this: Katz v. United States, 369 F.2d 130 (9th Cir. 1966). **OR** *Katz v. United States*, 369 F.2d 130 (9th Cir. 1966). A Supreme Court case would look like this: Katz v. United States, 389 U.S. 347 (1967). **OR** *Katz v. United States*, 389 U.S. 347 (1967). For example: In Katz, the Court reasoned that “The question remaining for decision, is whether the search and seizure conducted in this case complied with constitutional standards.” Katz v. United States, 389 U.S. 347 (1967).

Note that the same formatting rule applies: underline **OR** italicize the case names but never both. The writer must choose and apply a formatting style and be consistent with its application throughout the entire assignment. Short citation formatting rules also apply. For example: Id. or *Id.* at 348. (If citing to a different page); or when citing to case law other than an immediately preceding source: Katz 389 U.S. at 348.

Internet Source Citation

When there is no print format or when the print format is vague or unavailable, the student should cite to the Internet source that is available. An Internet citation would look something like this: The Scriptures provide an excellent system of doctrine and principles which are essential for the practical regulation of the lives of people, churches, and communities. This should influence how Christians view the purposes and basis of law as instituted by God because "all of life is to be lived for God's glory, and even the most mundane activities are to be conducted according to the general principles of God's Word." John Thompson, The Sufficiency of Scripture: By What Standard?, Family Shepherd Online, (accessed April 25th, 2021, at 8:35 PM), <https://familyshepherd.wordpress.com/the-sufficiency-of-scripture-by-what-standard/> **OR** John Thompson, *The Sufficiency of Scripture: By What Standard?*, Family Shepherd Online,

(accessed April 25th, 2021, at 8:35 PM), <https://familyshepherd.wordpress.com/the-sufficiency-of-scripture-by-what-standard/>.

Again, note the formatting options. Students may underline **OR** italicize titles but never both. Also note that all Internet sources should be of a scholarly nature. For example, Wikipedia is not recognized as a scholarly, academic source. Short citation formatting rules apply. For example: Id. This is your best option because page numbers may not be available. If an Internet article provides page number then cite to the specific page number.

Bible Citation

For Bible in-text citations, apply the following format: "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men." *Titus* 3:1-2 (New International Version). Short citation formatting rules apply here, too.

Legal Resource Citation Sampling

<u>Federal Statute:</u> Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9601-9675. 1 U.S.C. § 1.	
<u>State Statute:</u> Wash. Rev. Code § 28B.20.020 (2014). Cal. Penal Code § 181 (West 2011).	<u>Procedural Rules:</u> Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). Fed. R. Evid. 401.
<u>Legislative Material:</u> H.R. Rep. No. 99-253, pt. 1, at 54 (1985).	<u>Administrative Materials:</u> 46 C.F.R. § 166.01 (2009).

Additional support and resources can found at the Liberty University Online Writing Center by clicking here: [LUO Online Writing Center](#)