

2016 Legal Writing: Precision and Persuasion
May 13, 2016 • Cityplace Conference Center • Dallas, TX

Friday Morning, May 13, 2016

8:00 am	Registration Opens Includes continental breakfast.
8:25 am	Welcoming Remarks
8:30 am 0.50 hr	Pleasing the Court Judges have opinions about legal writing too. Hear the best advice collected from a variety of judicial sources about what judges do and don't like in legal writing. Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX
9:00 am 0.50 hr	Beyond Commas Legal writing is professional writing. Legal writers should master not only basic writing mechanics but also advanced skills. Learn the fine points of grammar that will add credibility and precision to everything you write. In addition, get to know the most reliable sources to consult when you need to answer a question that goes beyond commas—and when you need advice on commas, too. Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX
9:30 am 0.50 hr	Point/Counterpoint Enjoy an enthusiastic and informative debate on three writing topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Practical</i>: How detailed should your pleading be—general or specific?• <i>Persnickety</i>: Can we and should we avoid the default male pronoun (he, him, his) in legal writing? Are we sexist if we don't? And can we use the singular they?• <i>Passionate</i>: Legal citations for practitioner documents—in footnotes or in text? Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX
10:00 am	Break
10:15 am 0.50 hr	Looks Matter Learn to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• layout a legal document so it welcomes readers—even those who read it on a screen;• use Microsoft Word to enhance outlining and document navigation;• generate a Table of Contents in 5 seconds; and• make Microsoft Word's grammar checker useful instead of laughable. Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX

10:45 am 0.50 hr	<p>Too Much, Too Little, or Just Right</p> <p>You found some relevant cases and you plan to rely on them, so shouldn't you tell the reader about them? Or not, since no one wants to read a series of lengthy case summaries? Learn techniques for presenting legal authority concisely and efficiently, including selective use and placement of explanatory parentheticals.</p> <p>Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
11:15 am 0.50 hr ethics	<p>Name That Penalty (Part I)</p> <p>Guess the consequences for lawyers who misquote, exceed the page limit, attack the judge, and just plain write poorly in this entertaining and informative multiple-choice quiz.</p> <p>Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
11:45 am	<p>Pick Up Lunch</p> <p>Included in registration.</p>

Friday Afternoon, May 13, 2016

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

12:05 pm 0.50 hr	<p>Why Good Writing Matters: A View from the Bench</p> <p>Good legal writing helps the court understand what you're asking for, and why you're asking for it. Hear straight from the bench about what happens when papers are well written, and what can happen when they are not.</p> <p>Hon. H. DeWayne "Cooter" Hale, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Texas - Dallas, TX</p>
12:35 pm	<p>Break</p>
12:50 pm 0.75 hr	<p>Organization: Giving the Reader a Roadmap</p> <p>Sensibly ordering your writing is important, but not as important as ensuring that your reader knows the order you've chosen. Convey that order by using up-front conclusions and summaries, headings (both topical and explanatory), bullets, transitions, and connectors.</p> <p>Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
1:35 pm 0.75 hr	<p>Persuading with Style</p> <p>In legal writing, exaggeration, hyperbole, and sarcasm don't persuade, and neither do <i>bold italics</i>, ALL-CAPS, or exclamation marks!!! Legal writers have more effective tools. Learn sentence- and word-level writing techniques ranging from punctuation to classical rhetoric that legal writers can easily add to their tools for persuasive writing.</p> <p>Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
2:20 pm	<p>Break</p>

2:30 pm 0.50 hr	<p>You've Got Questions</p> <p>Attendees anonymously submit a question related to writing, and the presenters answer them.</p> <p>Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
3:00 pm 0.50 hr	<p>Lawyers are Editors</p> <p>Bad writing becomes good and good writing becomes great only through editing. Get advice for improving your editing techniques, creating and using an effective editing checklist, implementing a thorough editing process, and editing in a time crunch.</p> <p>Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
3:30 pm 0.50 hr ethics	<p>Name that Penalty (Part II)</p> <p>More consequences for lawyers who fail to cite, omit binding law, blather on for pages, and just plain write poorly in this entertaining and informative multiple-choice quiz.</p> <p>Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
4:00 pm	<p>Adjourn</p>