

WRTG 3430

THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAW

Spring 2021 IVC

WRTG 3430 is about the specialized, sometimes arcane, always powerful language in which Anglo-American law is written and through which it is enacted. Though we will focus on US Law, we will do so within the broader context of English Common Law, learning. We will learn about the Anglo-Saxon and Latin roots of legal English. We will also consider the role written language plays in transmitting law from generation to generation in the form of statutes, precedents, and case law, and we will consider the role of spoken language in incourt interactions. To delve into the finer points of these topics, we will learn about legal argumentation, read about legal realism v. legal positivism, and consider questions of linguistic ambiguity. Readings will consist of pleadings, briefs, statute, code, judicial opinions, and trial transcripts.



Students must take WRTG 2010 or equivalent prior to taking this course.



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