

Course Outcomes Guide (COG)

Directions: Please complete this form to document your progress toward improving student learning. For each item, indicate your progress and your anticipated next steps. Thank you!

Course Title: PLS 103 – Legal Writing (SP/17)

Date: 5/16/17

Instructor: Andrew B. Kramer

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject
- 2) Be able to communicate in writing the application of legal principles to factual scenarios
- 3) Develop basic writing skills for a variety of legal documents and audiences
- 4) Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior

Assessment (How do or will students demonstrate achievement of each outcome?)

- Outcome No. 1: evidenced by student's Civil Complaint submission & Answer to that of a classmate.
- Outcome No. 2: evidenced by student's Final Office Memorandum
- Outcome No. 3: evidenced by 1) Summary to Client; 2) Letter to Counsel; 3) Letter to Legislative Audience
- Outcome No. 4: Not formally assessed as and adequate rubric was not identified at time syllabus created

Validation (What methods have you used or will you use to validate your assessment?)

- All Outcomes: students must achieve no less than 80% of the total points available in these questions.

Results (What do your assessment data show? If you have not yet assessed student achievement of your learning outcomes, when is assessment planned?)

- Outcome No. 1: 89% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 2: 80% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 3: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 4: See above

Follow-up (How have you used or how will you use the data to improve student learning?)

Having just completed my first academic year at HCC, and replacing a long-standing, high-ranking professor of Paralegal Studies, it is only now that I am able to have some perspective on the SLOs in the PLS program.

My concerns are as follows:

- 1) The SLOs for all introductory PLS courses (PLS 101, PLS 102 and PLS 103) seem to be similar and not course/material specific.
- 2) In PLS 103, while more relevant than those in PLS 101 & 102, the SLOs are overly generalized formulations and, therefore, difficult to measure and assess, e.g “demonstrate professional and ethical behavior”. In PLS 103, student mastery of SLO No. 1 (Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject) cannot adequately be measured in a course in which there are no traditional subject matter “terms and facts”, as this is a competency-based course in writing skills.

My recommendations are:

- 1) Revise the PLS 103 SLOs to a smaller number of more relevant and applicable goals for student performance in a writing class. That would suggest the elimination of current SLO No. 1 and the retention of SLOs Nos. 2 & 3
- 2) For the purposes of PLS 103, eliminate SLO No. 4 (Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior), as it is not susceptible to measurement in those terms. However, retain this as a course objective in the context of ensuring that the student’s written products are drafted professionally using the proper tone, diction, terminology and courtesy as dictated by the audience.

Budget Justification (What resources are necessary to improve student learning?)