Planning an Upper Level Writing Project

I. Pre-planning

1) Get permission forms.
2) Get specific professor's permission and signature.
3) Hand in to LEC for approval.
4) Meet with approved professor to discuss topic. Consider preliminary questions and then meet with professor again to narrow topic and plan a time table for semester meetings and draft submissions.

II. Pre-writing

1) Ask preliminary questions:
   (a) Will this project be topical research into a new area of law?
   (b) Will the project be a contrastive analysis to see how different states have dealt with a certain topic?
   (c) Will the project be an analysis of topic treatment nationally/locally?
   (d) Will this be a state-specific area of law? A federal law?
   (e) Will this be an analysis of a judicial opinion or development of a controversy in the law?
   (f) Will the project be a legislative note analyzing recently enacted legislation and commenting, criticizing, or suggesting improvement?
   (g) Will the project deal with case law in transition or in conflict?
   (h) Is the project one of legal history that might shed light on current shortcomings and why change now might be needed in the law?

2) Plan your legal research according to the theme of the topic you undertake. Make a research log to follow.

3) Set a time table, working backwards from the ULW project's due date, for completion stages. Enter the dates onto your calendar.

III. Writing

1) Format

Craft a big picture outline of how the project will flow. E.g.,

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Table of Authorities
- Background Information (Factual/methodological)
- Analysis: Main Arguments
  I Main Argument I
    Sub-arguments
    I(a), I(b), and I(c)
  II Main Argument II
    Sub arguments
    II(a), II(b)
- Conclusion/Recommendation

2) Make an appointment to meet with law librarians to discuss your research strategy. They will have many suggestions that can help you locate needed documents and can also help streamline your research time and energy.
3) With general familiarity about the topic, the easier way to begin is with the Introduction/Thesis Statement and/or the Background sections. It gets you over the "how can I begin this" phase. Once you have one section written, the rest tends to flow more easily.

IV. Citations

The ULW project is expected to be Law Review worthy. Citation format must be perfect and must conform to the 19th edition of the Blue Book. You must determine if your professor expects footnotes or endnotes. If you have had trouble in the past with citations, now is the time to get it right. Here are some suggestions:

- Make the Blue Book your friend. The index in the back is very helpful. Use it. If there's something you cannot follow, bring it to the law librarians, ARWC profs, or Dean's Fellows.

- Consider borrowing Linda Barris's "Understanding and Mastering the Blue Book." It's available in the Writing Center and is a handy Blue Book translation.

- How many citations are expected? Depending upon the nature of your project, 50-100 is typical.

V. Composition

The composition of an ULW project should be a) original b) comprehensive c) grammatically correct d) chronological or logical in format e) clear and readable and about 20-30 pages depending upon credit assignment. Project management time should be allocated to drafting, editing, submitting, revising, proofreading/updating research in tandem with professor oversight, librarian research assistance, and Writing Center help.

VI. Credit

To satisfy the ULW requirement, a project grade of 75 is considered satisfactory and worthy of credit.