**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Incoming Students

**FROM:**  Professor Sarah Duggin

**DATE:**  July 21, 2021

**RE:**  Reading for August 18th Orientation Class on Briefing Cases

Congratulations, and welcome to the Columbus School of Law! We are all excited to have you as members of our law school family. I have heard wonderful things about you, and I can’t wait to meet you!

Please read the attached materials for our orientation class on briefing cases:

* *How To Read a Legal Opinion* (Kerr)
* *Stambovky v. Ackley*
* *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*

The Kerr article should help you understand the basics of reading judicial opinions. The decisions – *Stambovsky v. Ackley* and *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* – are actual cases, but they are very different. I hope you will find *Stambovsky* fun to read. *Barnette* addresses a much weightier subject – the First Amendment’s guarantee of freedom of speech. I hope it will prompt you to think about our Constitution and the importance of the freedoms it promises all Americans. Whatever kind of law you practice, it is essential for lawyers to understand the Constitution.

There are lots of different elements involved in briefing a case, and we’ll talk about those elements in our class. First and foremost, though, legal cases are about stories – stories that matter a great deal to individuals, to organizations, and to our nation. To prepare for our discussion, your most important tasks are to do your best to (1) understand the stories underlying the *Stambovsky* and *Barnette* cases, and (2) identify how the courts applied relevant legal principles to respond to those stories.

Welcome to law school!