

LGLA 1303.271

Legal Research

Course Syllabus

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CLASS TIME: Monday/Wednesday; 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
CLASSROOM: LBC121

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents standard and/or computer assisted legal research techniques in a law library emphasizing the paralegal's role.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students successfully completing this course will understand the fundamental principles, purposes and process of effective legal research; know how to locate legal research resources; formulate legal research strategies; and locate and utilize legal authorities to address legal issues. Emphasis will be placed on thinking critically about primary and secondary legal research, isolating the legal issue presented, and finding the best resource to answer the question presented. Students will use print and electronic research methods. Students will be given an introduction to the IRAC method of case analysis.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: *The Bluebook – A Uniform System of Citation (20th ed.)*; Harvard Law Review Association. Access to an online or print legal dictionary is highly recommended. Several free online legal dictionaries are available, including:

<http://thelawdictionary.org/> *Black's Law Dictionary Free Online Legal Dictionary 2nd Ed.*
www.law.cornell.edu/wex Sponsored by Cornell's Wex Legal Institute
www.nolo.com/dictionary Sponsored by Nolo

Each student should have a flash drive on which to preserve legal research assignments. A separate binder for retaining graded legal research assignments is highly recommended.

GRADING: Research assignments (as determined by instructor) will count 80% of the final grade. Announced and unannounced quizzes (number to be determined by instructor) will count 20% of the final grade. No makeup quizzes will be given; however, students who notify the instructor of an anticipated absence may make arrangements to take a quiz *in advance, unless it is an unannounced quiz*. Misspelling of party names or misspelling the term "statute" will result in an *automatic 5 point deduction* from any assignment *for each instance of the misspelling*. Grade equivalents: 90 to 100% = A; 80 to 89% = B; 70 to 79% = C; 60 to 69% = D; Below 60% = F.

ASSIGNMENTS: Late class assignments will not be accepted without prior approval (before the due date). Assignments will not be accepted by e-mail, fax, or carrier pigeon unless

otherwise stated. All assignments must be typed unless otherwise instructed. Assignments will be due at the beginning of the class on the date assigned. Students must maintain academic integrity in all assignments – “copying and pasting” from other sources (e.g. the Internet, other students, etc.) is plagiarism and will be grounds for dismissal from the course.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT LEGAL RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT ANSWERS: The law is ever-changing. It is entirely possible a student’s answer is correct but the instructor is unaware (however unlikely) of the change in the law (since the assignment was prepared). If a student’s answer is marked incorrect but the student believes the student’s answer is correct, the student may provide credible proof (e.g. a photocopy of the page from the source containing the answer), for full answer credit.

A WORD ABOUT LIBRARY RESEARCH: During the semester we will be using local law libraries for research. Please observe all library rules. Use care when handling law books – some are over 100 years old! Reshelve all books in their proper location before leaving the library. Do not mark, highlight, or dogear library books. Treat the librarian and library books with respect.

EXTRA CREDIT: Students may take advantage of “extra credit” opportunities throughout the semester. Extra credit points earned by a student (one point per activity) will be added to the student’s final grade point average for the class. Grade point averages will be calculated to the 100th of a point and will not be rounded up.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. Students are expected to arrive at class in a timely manner. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class period. Late arrivals must sit in the designated seat for late arrivals in order not to disrupt the class. Late arrivals may be counted as absent for that class.

A student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive. Excessive absences means more than two (2) absences for any reason.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the student’s responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have “Never Attended” by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of “X” or “F” as determined by the instructor.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: Paralegals are legal professionals, and as such, must maintain a professional attitude and demeanor. Spirited discussion is encouraged, but respect for the opinion of others is required. All students are expected to be prepared for every class. Disruptive or unprofessional behavior in class is grounds for a student to be removed from the classroom and dropped from the course without notice. Students are referred to the SPC Student Guide for more information about the policies and procedures concerning student conduct which are incorporated herein by reference. Student personal conduct must also comply with all Lubbock Center guidelines.

CELL PHONES: Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom. The professor reserves the right to answer any cell phone (on speaker) that rings during class time. "Texting" (text messaging) during class is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in the student being removed from the classroom and dropped from the course. Use of cell phones for class purposes may be permitted with instructor approval.

COMPUTERS: Laptop computers may be used during class for class-related purposes only and provided computer speakers are muted. Wireless internet access is provided at SPC for education-related purposes only. Paralegal Studies students also have access to computers available in the Learning Center. All student work must be saved on a removable storage device, e.g. a flash drive, and not on an SPC computer.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS: In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

ADA STATEMENT: Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at the Lubbock Center, the Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

SCANS Competencies: C1, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14 C15, C18, C19;
Foundation Skills: F1, F2, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F11, F12, F13, F14.

Explanations of the codes are posted in the classroom.