

LGLA 1303
Legal Research
Course Syllabus

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CLASS TIME: Tuesday/Thursday; 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
CLASSROOM: LBC123

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents standard and 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.

TEXTBOOK: There is no required textbook for this course. During this course, references will be made to *The Bluebook – A Uniform System of Citation (20th ed.)*; Harvard Law Review Association; therefore, it is recommended for this course. Access to an online or a print legal dictionary is highly recommended. Several free online legal dictionaries are available, including:

GRADING: There will be no exams in this course. Research assignments (as determined by instructor) will count 100% of the final grade. Announced and unannounced quizzes (number to be determined by instructor) will be counted as assignments. No makeup quizzes will be given. 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.

A note about the “final” research assignment. Each student's final research assignment will be weighted to count as multiple assignments, and each final research assignment will be unique.

ASSIGNMENTS: Late class assignments will not be accepted. Assignments will not be accepted by e-mail 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 unless a different due date deadline is given. 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 no grade on the plagiarized assignment and/or 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 "correct" 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 older than the professor! Re-shelve all books in their proper locations before leaving the library. Do not mark, highlight, underline, or dog-ear library books. Treat the librarian and library books with respect.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes in person in order to be successful in a course. Students are not allowed to attend this class virtually. Students are expected to arrive at class in a timely manner. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class period. 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.

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 instructor, 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 and all applicable laws.

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 and electronic tablets may be used during class for class-related purposes only and provided 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 LBC109, as well as on other SPC campuses. All student work must be saved on a removable storage device, e.g. a flash drive, and not on an SPC computer.

Student-Owned Computer Equipment: Students may choose to use their own computer equipment to complete the assigned coursework. SPC provides Microsoft Office to students for installation and use on their personal computers. It is the sole responsibility of the student to ensure his / her computer system meets the minimum requirements for all required or suggested software. It is also the sole responsibility of the student to insure his / her computer system is in working order, free of malware, and sufficient to complete assigned coursework. The instructor is not responsible for the student’s computer maintenance and cannot troubleshoot or repair issues on student-owned computers. If the student needs computer assistance, he/she can contact the SPC student helpdesk.

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.

For Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please refer to Syllabus Statements (southplainscollege.edu).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The following is the tentative schedule for this course. Changes will be made as needed as we progress throughout the semester. Tests and assignments will be scheduled as we progress through the material. Make sure you frequently check Blackboard, announcements, and emails for the due dates of tests and assignments.

Week	Topic to be discussed:
1	Introduction to the course; Syllabus
2	What is law?
3	7 step research process
4	Bluebook citations
5	Secondary sources

6	How to research statutes
7	How to research cases
8	How to research cases, continued
9	West's Reporter System
10	How to research constitutions
11	Online research
12	Online research, continued
13	Shepardizing
14	Ethical considerations in legal research
15	Research project
16	Research project