

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**LEGAL RESEARCH  
LAW 1060**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 0.0**

**Date Revised: Fall 04**

NOTE: This course is not designed for transfer credit.

**Catalog Course Description:**

A study of necessary materials for legal research, codes, reporter systems, digests, practice manuals and Westlaw. Methods of legal citation are studied.

**Entry Level Standards:**

College-level competencies in logic, reading, and English are required.

**Prerequisites:**

LAW 1000; ENGL 1010

**Textbook(s) and Other Course Materials:**

Kunz, Christina L., Deborah A. Schmedemann, Matthew P. Downs, and Ann L. Bateson, *The Process of Legal Research*, 5d. (Aspen, 2000)

Dickerson, Darby, *ALWD Citation Manual, A Professional System of Citation* (Aspen, 2000)

Delaney, Stephanie, *Electronic Legal Research* (West, 2002)

*Discovering Westlaw*, Current Ed. (Westlaw)

**I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Introduction to Research (.5 hours); overview of textbooks (.5 hours) Categories of research materials: primary authority, secondary sources, finding tools (1 hour); factors to consider in choosing among sources (.5 hour) Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, Loislaw (.5 hour)
2	Categories of research materials: primary authority, secondary sources, finding tools (1.5 hours); factors to consider in choosing among sources (1 hour) Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, Loislaw (.5 hour)
3-4	Secondary Sources: using and citing to encyclopedias, treatises, legal periodicals (3 hours); A.L.R. annotations, restatements (3 hours)
5-6	Primary Authority: case law in federal courts (1.5 hours); case law in state courts (1.5 hours); reporters, official and unofficial (1 hour); digests (.5 hour); shepardizing (1 hour); citation (.5 hour)
7-8	Primary Authority: statutes (1.5 hours); constitutions (1 hour); legislative history (3 hours); citation (.5 hour)
8-9	Primary Authority: statutes (1.5 hours); constitutions (1 hour); legislative history (3 hours); citation (.5 hour)
9-10	Administrative materials (1 hour): regulations in codes (2 hours); registers (1 hour);

- researching regulations (2 hours)
- 11 Researching and citing rules of procedure (1.5 hours); researching and citing rules of legal ethics (1.5 hours)
- 12 Electronic Legal Research (3 hours)
- 13 Electronic Legal Research (3 hours)
- 14 Electronic Legal Research (3 hours)
- 15 Final Examination

## II. Course Objectives\*:

- A. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. I, III, V
- B. Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution and structure of the Anglo-American “common law” and “civil law” systems. I, II, IV
- C. Demonstrate a basic understanding of Westlaw and computerized legal research systems. I, III, V
- D. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of use law library materials necessary for basic legal research. I, II, III, IV, V
- E. Demonstrate an understanding of uniformly accepted formats, styles, and citation methods employed in legal profession. I, II, III, IV, V
- F. Continue developing a basic legal vocabulary. II, IV

\*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the Paralegal Studies program.

## III. Instructional Processes\*:

Students will:

1. Practice elements of the work ethic such as professionalism, preparedness, punctuality, honesty, cooperation, dependability, contribution, effectiveness, good manners, etc. *Personal Development Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Transitional Strategy*
2. Refine their writing skills and expand their legal vocabularies through completion of weekly guided writing exercises that allows them to communicate more effectively with lawyers, legal professionals, and clients. *Communication Outcome, Transitional Strategy*
3. Carry out course assignments such as team discussions, team case studies, experiential exercises, oral, written, PowerPoint, WordPerfect, Westlaw, Internet skills development, etc. that help develop a respect for diversity. *Communication Outcome, Personal Development Outcome, Information Literacy Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
4. Take part in course assignments such as team discussions, team case studies, experiential exercises, oral, written, PowerPoint, WordPerfect, Westlaw, Internet skills development, etc. that help develop teamwork, leadership, and followship skills. *Communication Outcome, Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Information Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
5. Perform research assignments and communicate the results of those assignments, requiring use of libraries, WordPerfect, Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, Internet etc. that help develop critical thinking, problem solving, goal setting, and planning skills. *Communication Outcome,*

*Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Information Literacy Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

6. Listen to guest speakers from the legal community to learn the demands for legal research skills in the law office. *Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Transitional Strategy*

\*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference Pellissippi State's goals for strengthening general education knowledge and skills, connecting coursework to experiences beyond the classroom, and encouraging students to take active and responsible roles in the educational process.

#### **IV. Expectations for Student Performance\*:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and avoid acts that constitute unethical behavior. A,B,C,D,E
2. Recognize what constitutes secondary authority in legal research. B, E, F
3. Identify how to find research tools, such as digests and citators. B,C,D,E,F
4. Identify and follow accepted rules or law library etiquette. A,D
5. Describe the role of legislative materials within the context of the "civil law" system. B,F
6. Distinguish between state/federal law, criminal/civil law, and substantive/procedural law. B,F
7. Identify and demonstrate working familiarity with standard legal publications. B,C,D,F
8. Read, interpret, and use uniformly accepted legal abbreviations and citations. C,D,E,F
9. Narrow the research focus by identifying and defining legal issues. A,B,F
10. Research a concise, accurate case brief. A,B,C,D,E,F
11. Formulate a query for computerized legal research. C,D,E
12. Shepardize cases on Westlaw. C
13. Search databases on Westlaw. C
14. Maneuver between databases on Westlaw. C
15. Sign on and off Westlaw and use client identifiers. C
16. Save and print Westlaw research results. C
17. Conduct several Westlaw searches. B,C

\*Letters after performance expectations reference the course objectives listed above.

#### **V. Evaluation:**

##### **A. Testing Procedures:**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of tests and assignments, which will be fully explained by the instructor's supplementary syllabus the first week of class.

##### **B. Laboratory Expectations:**

Students should expect to study and work in the U. T. Law Library 2-10 hours per week while researching the law.

C. Field Work:

N/A

D. Other Evaluation Methods:

1. Class participation, group work, and homework will also comprise the final grade for the course. The instructor will provide full details the first week of class via a syllabus supplement.
2. All tests and papers will be graded for spelling and English usage in addition to content and format.
3. Any student encountering academic difficulty during the term is strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss options and solutions.

E. Grading Scale:

A	93-100
B+	88- 92
B	83- 87
C+	78- 82
C	73- 77
D	65- 72
F	64 and below

**VI. Policies:**

A. Attendance Policy:

Pellissippi State Technical Community College expects students to attend all scheduled instructional activities. As a minimum, students in all courses must be present for at least 75 percent of their scheduled class and laboratory meetings in order to receive credit for the course. [NOTE: No differentiation is noted for excused/unexcused absences. These will be treated as an absence.] (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, page 83)

B. Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular Pellissippi State procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero for the exercise or examination or to assign an F in the course. (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, pages 62-63)

C. Other Policies:

Late papers will not be accepted nor will make-up tests be given without specific approval of the instructor.

Computer Usage Guidelines:

College-owned or –operated computing resources are provided for use by students of Pellissippi State. All students are responsible for the usage of Pellissippi State’s computing resources in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner. (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, pages 67-70)

Accommodations for disabilities:

If you need accommodation because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform the instructor immediately. Privately after class or in the instructor's office.

To request accommodations students must register with Services for Students with Disabilities: Goins 127 or 131, Phone: (865) 539-7153 or (865) 694-6751 Voice/TDD.

