LEGAL RESEARCH
LAW 1060

Class Hours: 3.0  Credit Hours: 3.0
Laboratory Hours: 0.0  Revised: Spring 08

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:
Dickerson, Darby, ALWD Citation Manual, A Professional System of Citation 3rd Ed. (Aspen, 2006)

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Research; overview of textbooks, Categories of research materials: primary authority, secondary sources, finding tools; factors to consider in choosing among sources; Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research terms: formulating research issues for research situation; linking factual concepts with legal concepts; dictionaries</td>
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<td>3-4</td>
<td>Primary Authority: Constitutions, Statutes, Administrative Law, and Court Rules; Research of Federal statutes; Research of State statutes; Research of federal and state administrative regulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Primary Authority: case law in federal courts; case law in state courts; reporters, official and unofficial; digests; shepardizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Shepardizing; Secondary Sources: using and citing to encyclopedias, treatises, legal periodicals; A.L.R. annotations, restatements</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Research Plan: Organization, planning and communicating results</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Computer-aided legal research: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, websites</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>The Research Project: Organization, Planning, print Research and Internet research;</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Research Project #1

13 The Research Project: Project # 2

14 The Research Project: Project #3

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 the use of 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. Active Learning Strategy, 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, Active Learning Strategy, Transitional Outcome

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, 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, 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,
6. Listen to guest speakers from the legal community to learn the demands for legal research skills in the law office. *Transitional Strategy*

*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference TBR’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:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>64 and below</td>
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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.]

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.

C. Accommodations for disabilities:

If you need accommodations 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. Please see the instructor privately after class or in his/her office. Students must present a current accommodation plan from a staff member in Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Services for Students with Disabilities may be contacted by going to Goins 127
or 131 or by phone: 694-6751(Voice/TTY) or 539-7153.

D. 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.