

PELLISSIPPI STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**LEGAL RESEARCH  
LAW 1060**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 0.0**

**Revised: Spring 2015**

**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

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

Putnam, William H. and Albright, Jennifer R., *Legal Research, Analysis and Writing*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Delmar/Cengage Learning, 2014): ISBN: 978-1-1335-9190-0

Barger, Colleen M., *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (Wolters Kluwer, 2014): ISBN: 9781454828754

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

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Introduction to Research (0.5 hr.); overview of textbooks (0.5 hr.); categories of research materials: primary authority, secondary sources, finding tools (1.0 hr.); factors to consider when selecting sources (0.5 hr.); Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw (0.5 hr.)
2	Research terms: formulating research issues for research situations (1.0 hr.); linking factual concepts with legal concepts (1.5 hrs.); dictionaries and legal thesaurus (0.5 hr.)
3	Primary Authority: Constitutions, Statutes, Administrative law, and Court Rules (1.0 hr.); Research of Federal Statutes (2.0 hrs.)
4	Research of State statutes (2.0 hrs.); Research of federal and state administrative regulations (1.0 hr.)
5	Primary Authority: Case law in federal courts (1.5 hrs.); Case law in state courts (1.5 hrs.)
6	Reporters, official and unofficial (1.0 hrs.); Digests (1.0 hr.); TAM (1.0 hr.)
7	Shepardizing and Keycite (3.0 hrs.)

- 8 Secondary Sources: using and citing to encyclopedias (2.0 hrs.); Legal periodicals, treatises (1.0 hr.)
- 9 A.L.R. annotations (1.0 hr.); Restatements (2.0 hrs.)
- 10 Computer-aided legal research: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, websites (3.0 hrs.)
- 11 The Research Plan: Organization, planning and communication results (3.0 hrs.)
- 12 The Research Project: Organization (1.5 hrs.); Research Project #1 (1.5 hrs.)
- 13 The Research Project: Planning (1.5 hrs.); Research Project #2 (1.5 hrs.)
- 14 The Research Project: Organizing Results (1.5 hrs.); Research Project #3 (1.5 hrs.)
- 15 The Research Project: Communication Results (1.5 hrs.); Research Project #4 (1.5 hrs.)

## **II. Course Goals\*:**

### **The course will:**

- A. Guide students to develop an awareness of the ethics used in performing legal research and communicating those research findings (I).
- B. Enhance the students' knowledge of what constitutes primary and secondary authority in legal research and their respective applications in legal analysis (II, III, IV)
- C. Expand student understanding of tools and resources used in the legal research process. (II, III, IV)
- D. Expand the students' ability to use online research tools. (II, V)

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

## **III. Expected Student Learning Outcomes\*:**

The student will be able to:

- 1. Use both print and electronic sources to locate applicable primary and secondary sources of law. (B,C,D)
- 2. Read, evaluate, and analyze source materials. (A,B,C,D)
- 3. Identify and locate resources to update and verify the reliability of legal authority. (A,B,C,D)
- 4. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. (B)
- 5. Describe the role of legislative materials within the context of the civil law system. (C,D)
- 6. Distinguish between state and federal law, criminal and civil law, and substantive and procedural law. (B,C,D)
- 7. Read, interpret, and use uniformly accepted legal abbreviations and citations. (B,C,D)

\* Capital letters after Expected Student Learning Outcomes reference the course goals listed above.

#### **IV. Evaluation:**

##### A. Testing Procedures:

Students are evaluated primarily on the basis of tests. The instructor will provide full details the first week of class via a syllabus supplement.

##### B. Laboratory Expectations:

N/A

##### 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 supplementary syllabus.
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

#### **V. Policies:**

##### A. Attendance Policy:

Pellissippi State expects students to attend all scheduled instructional activities. As a minimum, students in all courses (excluding distance learning courses) must be present for at least 75 percent of their scheduled class and laboratory meetings in order to receive credit for the course. Individual departments/programs/disciplines, with the approval of the vice president of Academic Affairs, may have requirements that are more stringent. In very specific circumstances, an appeal of the policy may be addressed to the head of the department in which the course was taken. If further action is warranted, the appeal may be addressed to the vice president of Academic Affairs.

##### B. Academic Dishonesty:

Academic misconduct committed either directly or indirectly by an individual or group is subject to disciplinary action. Prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following practices:

- Cheating, including but not limited to unauthorized assistance from material, people,

or devices when taking a test, quiz, or examination; writing papers or reports; solving problems; or completing academic assignments.

- Plagiarism, including but not limited to paraphrasing, summarizing, or directly quoting published or unpublished work of another person, including online or computerized services, without proper documentation of the original source.
- Purchasing or otherwise obtaining prewritten essays, research papers, or materials prepared by another person or agency that sells term papers or other academic materials to be presented as one's own work.
- Taking an exam for another student.
- Providing others with information and/or answers regarding exams, quizzes, homework or other classroom assignments unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Any of the above occurring within the Web or distance learning environment.

Please see the Pellissippi State Policies and Procedures Manual, Policy 04:02:00 Academic/Classroom Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions for the complete policy.

C. Accommodations for disabilities:

Students that need accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information to share, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated should inform the instructor immediately, privately after class or in her or his office. Students must present a current accommodation plan from a staff member in Disability Services (DS) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Disability Services may be contacted by sending email to [disabilityservices@pstcc.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@pstcc.edu), or by visiting Alexander 130. More information is available at <http://www.pstcc.edu/sswd/>.

D. Other Policies:

**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.