

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**LEGAL RESEARCH & WRITING II**  
**LAW 2020**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 0.0**

**Date Revised: Spring  
00**

**Catalog Course Description:**

A study of the format and organization of legal memoranda and briefs, common writing problems, citation and computerized legal research.

**Entry Level Standards:**

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

**Prerequisites:**

LAW 1040

**Textbook(s) and Other Reference Materials Basic to the Course:**

Wydick, Richard C., *Plain English for Lawyers* (Carolina Press, 1998)  
Samborn, Hope Viner and Andrea B. Yelin, *Basic Legal Writing for Paralegals*  
(Little, Brown, 1997).  
*A Uniform System of Citation* (16th ed)

Other Materials:

Johnson, Berring, Woxland, *Winning Research Skills*, 4th Ed. (Westlaw, 1999)  
*Discovering Westlaw*, 7th Ed. (Westlaw, 1999)

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

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Introduction
2	Writing/English Fundamentals
3-4	Review of Legal System, Research Techniques; Resources and Cases; Research, Briefing, Punctuation; Finding Cases
5-6	Citation Exercises; Citation Test; Cases/Keycite
7	Intro to Legal Memo, Wording- Legal Memo 1 Assigned
8-9	Legal Problems in Memos, organization, synthesis. IRAC, Language Quirks
10	Review Outlining; Legislation, Draft Memo 1
11	Adm. Law, Memo 1 due

- 12 Citation Test 2, Persuasive Writing, Memo 2 Assigned
- 13 Citation Test 3
- 14-15 Outlines, Organization, Letter Writing; Westlaw Tests, Draft Memo 2
- 16 Memo 2 Due; Final Exam Period

## II. Course Objectives\*:

- A. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. I, III, V
- B. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of computerized legal research systems. I, III, V
- C. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of what constitutes primary authority in legal research. I, II, V
- D. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of what constitutes secondary authority in legal research. I, II, V
- E. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of how to find research tools, such as digests and citators. I, II, III, V
- F. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of the importance of clarity in legal writing. I, II, III, IV
- G. Develop a complete and thorough understanding of the organization of a legal memorandum. I, II, III, IV
- H. Draft an objective legal memorandum that identifies issues, states the facts, discusses the law, and reaches a conclusion. I, II, III, IV, V
- I. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of persuasive legal writing. I, II, III, IV

\*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the Business and Computer Technologies department.

## 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, 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 followership 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 course assignments such as team discussions, team case studies, experiential exercises, oral, written, PowerPoint, WordPerfect, Westlaw, Internet skills development, 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 clear legal writing 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
2. Write legal prose which is direct, concise, and clear. F, I
3. Recognize the passive voice and convert it to active voice. F, I
4. Prepare office correspondence. F
5. Prepare letters of representation for each client. A, B, D, E, G
6. Draft legal pleadings. A, F, I
7. Draft memoranda in support of motions. A, B, E, F, G, H, I
8. Research primary authority. B, C
9. Research secondary authority. B, D
10. Formulate a query for computerized legal research. B
11. Shepardize cases on Westlaw. B
12. Search databases on Westlaw. B
13. Maneuver between databases on Westlaw. B
14. Sign on and off Westlaw and use client identifiers. B
15. Save and print Westlaw research results. B

16. Prepare an office memorandum effectively communicating research of legal issues. B, C, D, E, F, G, H

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

## **V. Evaluation:**

### A. Testing Procedures: 20% of grade

1. Citation Test. All students must pass a basic citation test in order to pass the course. A passing grade on the citation test is 75%. The test will be given three times during the semester. Students who do not pass the citation test will receive an "F" for the course regardless of grades received on other assignments. The actual score received on the test will not be used to compute the final grade.

2. Westlaw Test. All students will be given an oral exam on Westlaw in a one-on-one appointment with the instructor. This exam will be conducted in front of the Westlaw terminal. The student will be expected to demonstrate that he understands the basic concepts of computerized legal research and basic competence in using Westlaw. This exam will be worth 20% points of the final grade.

### B. Laboratory Expectations:

Students should expect to study and work in the law library and on Westlaw 2-10 hours per week while researching the law for the memo/brief assignments. Students should expect to spend several hours using Westlaw to prepare for their individual presentations.

### C. Field Work: 80% of grade

There will be two Legal Memoranda assigned. Each will count 25% of the final grade. Class and Homework Assignments will count 30% of the final grade.

### D. Other Evaluation Methods:

1. All tests and papers will be graded for spelling and English usage in addition to content and format.
2. Students are evaluated on the basis of in-class projects requiring use of the stated skills. Class participation is important and will be considered in the final grade.
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.

**B. Academic Dishonesty:**

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated and will become an automatic zero on that paper or test. Repetition of cheating will result in an "F" for the final grade.

**C. Other Policies:**

Late papers will not be accepted. No make-up tests will be given unless the instructor has been notified and excused the student's absence.