

Pellissippi State Community College
Master Syllabus

**LEGAL RESEARCH
LAW 1060**

Class Hours: 3.0
Laboratory Hours: 0.0
Credit Hours: 3.0
Revised: July 01/07/2010

Instructor:
Office:
Phone:
E-mail:

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

Textbooks and Other Supplies:

1. Putnam., William H., *Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing*, 2nd Edition (Delmar/Cengage Learning, 2010)
2. Dickerson, Darby, *ALWD Citation Manual, A Professional System of Citation*, 3rd Ed. (Aspen, 2006)
3. *Using Westlaw.com: Westlaw Research Guide*, Current Ed. (Westlaw) - to be provided by instructor

I. WEEK/UNIT/TOPIC BASIS:

Week	Unit	Topic
1	Chapter 1-2	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 (.5 hour)
2		Research terms: formulating research issues for research situation (1 hour); linking factual concepts with legal concepts (1.5 hours); dictionaries (.5 hour)
3-4	Chapter 3	Primary Authority: Constitutions, Statutes, Administrative Law, and Court Rules (1.0 hours); Research of Federal statutes (2.0 hours); Research of State statutes (2 hours); Research of federal and state administrative regulations (1.0 hour)

5-6	Chapter 4	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 (1 hour); Updating cases with Shepard's (1 hour);
7-8	Chapters 5 & 6	Using Shepard's (1 hour) and Westlaw KeyCite (1.0 hour); Secondary Sources: using and citing to encyclopedias, treatises, legal periodicals (2 hours); A.L.R. annotations, restatements (2.0 hours)
9		The Research Plan: Organization, planning and communicating results (3.0 hours)
10	Westlaw	Computer-aided legal research: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, Lois Law, websites (3.0 hours)
11-12	Chapter 7	The Research Project: Organization, Planning, print Research and internet research (2 hours); Research Project #1(4 hours)
13		The Research Project: Project #2 (3 hours)
14		The Research Project: Project #3(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 how to 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

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES:

The student 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, 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. *Transitional Strategy*

IV. EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

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

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 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. (*Pellissippi State Online Catalog*)

B. Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. A student guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, is immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that 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 Online Catalog*)

C. 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 Online Catalog*)

D. Accommodation for Disabilities:

Students who 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 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 Goins134 or 126 or by phone: 694-6751 (Voice/TTY) or 539-7153. More information is available at www.pstcc.edu/departments/swd/.

E. Late Work:

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