

PELLISSIPPI STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

**LEGAL RESEARCH
LAW 1060**

Class Hours: 3.0
Credit Hours: 3.0
Laboratory Hours: 0.0
Revised: 12/03/2010

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

Textbook(s) and Other Course Materials:

1. Putnam, William H., *Legal Research, Analysis and Writing*, 2nd Edition (Thompson/Delmar, 2010); ISBN: 978-1-4283-0442-0
2. Dickerson, Darby, *ALWD Citation Manual, A Professional System of Citation*, 4th Edition (Aspen, 2010); ISBN: 978-0-7355-8930-8

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

Week Topic

- 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 (.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 Primary Authority: Constitutions, Statutes, Administrative Law, and Court Rules (1.0 hours); Research of Federal statutes (2.0 hours)
- 4 Research of State statutes (2 hours); Research of federal and state administrative regulations (1.0 hour)
- 5 Primary Authority: Case law in federal courts (1.5 hours); Case law in state courts (1.5 hours)
- 6 Reporters, official and unofficial (1 hour); Digests (1 hour); Shepardizing (1 hour)
- 7 Shepardizing (1.5 hours); Secondary Sources: using and citing to encyclopedias, (1.5 hours)
- 8 Legal periodicals, treatises, A.L.R. annotations, restatements (3 hours)

Week	Topic
9	The Research Plan: Organization, planning and communicating results (3.0 hours)
10	Computer-aided legal research: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, websites (3.0 hours)
11	The Research Project: Organization, Planning, print Research and internet research (2 hours); Research Project #1(1 hour)
12	The Research Project: Communicating results (1 hour); Research Project #1(2hours)
13	The Research Project: Project #2 (3 hours)
14	The Research Project: Project #3 (3 hours)
15	Final Exam Period

II. Course Goals*:

- A. The course shall guide students to develop an awareness of the ethics used in performing legal research and communicating those research findings. (I)
- B. The course will guide students with practice elements of the work ethic such as professionalism, preparedness, punctuality, honesty, cooperation, dependability, contribution, effectiveness, and good manners. (I, II, IV)
- C. The course will enhance the student's knowledge of what constitutes primary and secondary authority in legal research and their respective applications in legal analysis. (II, III, IV)
- D. The course shall expand student understanding of tools and resources used in the legal research process. (II, III, IV)
- E. The course shall expand the student's ability to utilize on-line research tools such as Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw. (II, V)

*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the (*Paralegal Studies*)program (Career Program Goals and General Education Goals are listed

http://www.pstcc.edu/departments/curriculum_and_instruction/syllabi/)

III. Expected Student Learning Outcomes*:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. (B)
2. Students will be able to recognize what constitutes primary authority in legal research. (C,D)
3. Students will be able to recognize what constitutes secondary authority in legal research. (C,D,E)
4. Students will be able to identify how to find research tools, such as digests and citators. (B,C,D,E)
5. Students will be able to identify and follow accepted rules or law library etiquette. (A,B)
6. Students will be able to describe the role of legislative materials within the context of the civil law system. (C,D)
7. Students will be able to distinguish between state/federal law, criminal/civil law, and substantive/procedural law. (B,C,D)
8. Students will be able to identify and demonstrate working familiarity with standard legal publications. (B,C,D,E)

9. Students will be able to read, interpret, and use uniformly accepted legal abbreviations and citations. (B,C,D,E)
10. Students will be able to narrow the research focus by identifying and defining legal issues. (A,B,C,D, E)
11. Students will be able to formulate a query for computerized legal research. (B,C,D,E)
12. Students will be able to shepardize cases on Lexis-Nexis and Keycite cases on Westlaw. (B,C,D,E)
13. Students will be able to perform a research task utilizing Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw. (B,C,D,E)

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

IV. Evaluation:

- A. Testing Procedures: 10% of grade
Students shall have weekly tests over the research materials and methods studied.
- B. Laboratory Expectations: N/A
- C. Field Work: N/A
- D. Other Evaluation Methods:
 1. Weekly Research assignments: 70% of grade
Students shall be assigned weekly research assignments beginning with the exploration of information resources available and progressing to complex research topic assignments.
 2. Students shall prepare a research resources notebook. 20% of grade
- 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 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. Accommodations 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 Goins 127, 132, 134, 135, 131 or by phone: 539-7153 or TTY 694-6429. More information is available at www.pstcc.edu/departments/swd/.

D. Other Policies:

1. **Supplementary Syllabus.**

Legal writing, analysis, and citation exercises will be assigned, and will be fully explained by the Instructor's supplementary syllabus. All work shall be expected to be typed unless otherwise instructed.

2. **Late Work:**

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

3. **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*)