Advanced Legal Research
Law 731 (49941) Fall 2018

Professor: Casey D. Duncan
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Office Hours: Mon.-Fri., 8-5 or via email for an appointment.
Class Location and Time: Room 273, Wed. 3:30-5:20pm

Course Overview & Objectives

Overview

This course reinforces and expands upon the topics and themes introduced in the first-year legal research course. Federal, state, and local resources, in a variety of formats, will be covered as appropriate to each topic.

Class time will be a mix of lecture, guided demonstration, and exercises providing students an opportunity to practice research skills. Course work will focus on exercises and assignments, exercises, and online quizzes. Course assessment is explained in further detail below but, in general, will call upon students to apply techniques and resources discussed in class and in assigned readings.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the organization and arrangement of legal information in various formats;
- Develop effective search strategies, including constructing effective keyword searches and utilizing research tools and finding aids as appropriate;
- Develop and utilize a legal research plan and research log;
- Analyze, evaluate, and properly apply primary and secondary legal information sources, selecting those most appropriate for any given legal research problem;
- Effectively locate and verify the validity of primary legal information sources, including cases, statutes, and regulations;
- Understand the growing role of legal analytics in legal research and the practice of law;
- Find pertinent information related to public U.S. companies;
- Locate and verify the validity of U.S. treaties and international agreements; and
- Effectively summarize relevant legal information to a given set of facts and be able to explain and evaluate the process and sources utilized to support that summary.
Text and Materials

The core text for the course is: J.D.S. ARMSTRONG, ET AL., WHERE THE LAW IS: AN INTRODUCTION TO ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH 5TH (2018) (“ARMSTRONG”).

Additional readings and materials will be made available on the course webpage, which is available via Lexis Classroom. Instructions for accessing Lexis Classroom and the course web page are included as an addendum to this syllabus.

Ownership or access to a laptop, tablet, or other device capable of accessing web-based legal research databases (e.g., Westlaw, Lexis), as well as the course page is strongly encouraged for each in-class meeting.

Assignments may include components requiring access to Westlaw, Lexis, or Bloomberg Law. In order to demonstrate proficiency, students are responsible to ensure that they have working passwords for all three services.

Course Expectations

Overview

The course grade will be based on a number of assignments, exercises, and quizzes distributed throughout the semester. Students will be expected to demonstrate an ability to locate materials in both physical and electronic formats.

Students are advised that this is a graded course subject to the “School of Law Distribution of Grades” guidelines as outlined in the Grading policy. Further details about applicable course, School of Law, and UA policies may be found at the end of this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes</td>
<td>100 pts total</td>
<td>10% total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Quiz #1 (Statutes)</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11:59pm, Sun. Oct. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Quiz #2 (Regulations)</td>
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<td>11:59pm, Sun. Oct. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Quiz #3 (Cases)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11:59pm, Sun. Nov. 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Quiz #5 (U.S. Treaties)</td>
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<td>2%</td>
<td>11:59pm, Mon. Nov. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Assignments</td>
<td>150 pts total</td>
<td>15% total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA #1: “Research Plan”</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11:59pm Sun., Aug. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA #2: “Source Evaluation”</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11:59pm Sun., Sept. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA #3: “Research Log”</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11:59pm Sun., Sept. 23</td>
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<td>Research Assignments</td>
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<td>70% total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assignment #1</td>
<td>300 pts</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11:59pm Wed., Oct. 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assignment #2</td>
<td>400 pts</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>11:59pm Mon., Nov. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; In-class Exercises</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
<td>5% total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Online Quizzes (10%)

A total of 5 quizzes will unlock over the course of the semester, each one corresponding to one of the seven thematic Modules used to arrange the course. **Quizzes are designed to take approximately one hour to complete.**

Short Assignments (15%) (3 Assignments, 5% each)

During the first several weeks of the semester there will be several “Short Assignments” designed to introduce students to specific legal research processes. The Short Assignments provide an opportunity for students to practice and receive feedback for tasks that will be incorporated into the two Research Assignments comprising the bulk of the course grade.

Research Assignment #1 (30%)

The first Research Assignment will call upon the student to apply skills and resources covered in the first several modules. The final assignment work product will include a Research Plan, a Research Log, and a brief writing assignment requiring students to discuss the legal sources and research methods used.

Research Assignment #2 (40%)

Research Assignment #2 will be similar to the first but will expand to cover resources from additional course modules in addition to those covered in the first Research Assignment. The final work product will include a Research Plan, a Research Log, and an intermediate writing assignment calling upon students to discuss the legal sources and research methods used.

Participation & Class Exercises (5%)

Throughout the semester there will be a number of exercises distributed which will give students the opportunity for “hands-on” practice, typically during scheduled class meetings. While these exercises are not themselves graded, completion of, and participation in, discussions related to the exercises will provide the primary means of assessment for participation.

Course Schedule

This course is divided into seven thematic “Modules.” Below you will find a general schedule of course topics, readings, assignments, and due dates falling under each Module. A more detailed calendar of events is available via the course page.

*Please note that this syllabus and all scheduled class meetings and assignments are subject to change during the semester.* Deviations from this schedule will be announced in class and via the “Announcements” feature of the Lexis Classroom course page.
Module 1: The Skills of Legal Research
Class Dates: Aug. 15 – Aug. 22
Text: Skills: Armstrong, Chapters 1, 15
Additional Readings: Reading Supplements

Module 2: Secondary Sources
Class Dates: Aug. 29 – Sept. 5
Text: Secondary Sources: Armstrong 4, 6, 7, & 9
Additional Readings: Reading Supplements

Module 3: Primary Law I: Statutory Law
Class Dates: Sept. 12 – Sept. 19
Text: Armstrong, Chapters 2 & 3, & 14
Additional Readings: Reading Supplement; Handouts

Module 4: Primary Law II: Administrative & Regulatory Law
Class Dates: Sept. 26 – Oct. 3
Text: Armstrong, Chapters 8 & 11
Additional Readings: Reading Supplement; Handouts

Module 5: Primary Law III: Case Law & Legal Analytics
Text: Armstrong, Chapters 5 & 10
Additional Readings: Reading Supplement; Handouts

Module 6: Business and Securities Research
Class Dates: Oct. 31 – Nov. 7
Text: None
Additional Readings: Reading Supplement; Handouts

Module 7: Comparative, Foreign, & International Law
Class Dates: Nov. 14
Text: Armstrong, Chapters 12 & 13
Additional Readings: Reading Supplement; Handouts
Policies

Attendance Policy

The School of Law Class Attendance policy applies. Students may miss class only for good cause and may not miss more than three class hours per semester credit hour. As applied to Advanced Legal Research, students may miss no more than three of the two-hour class meetings.

Academic Conduct

Be advised that the University of Alabama School of Law Honor Code applies at all times: www.law.ua.edu/students/honorcouncil/.

All University of Alabama School of Law students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The Law School expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any help, attempt to help, or conspiracy to help another student.

The University of Alabama has also established the Code of Student Conduct which prescribes and defines other forms of misconduct for all students: http://policies.ua.edu/conduct.html.

Disability Policy

The Law School is committed to meeting the needs of students with physical, learning, and other disabilities, and provides appropriate accommodations and services tailored to each person’s specific requirements. The Law School and the University’s Office of Disability Services (ODS) work together to help individuals with disabilities achieve and maintain individual autonomy.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Associate Dean Grace Lee, at 348-7190 or glee@law.ua.edu so that the individual’s needs for support services can be evaluated and accommodated in a timely manner. Students may also wish to review ODS information for current students at the ODS website: http://ods.ua.edu/students/.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The University of Alabama is committed to providing an inclusive environment that is free from harassment or discrimination based on race, genetic information, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, age, ability, size, or veteran status. The University of Alabama prohibits any verbal or physical conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any individual or group, including physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation, harassment, sexual misconduct, coercion, and/or other communication or conduct that creates a hostile living or learning environment. Harassment or other illegal discrimination against individuals or groups not only is a violation of University Policy and subject to disciplinary action, but also is inconsistent with the values and ideals of the University.
Getting Started with Lexis Classroom

1. Point your browser to http:\\www.Lexisnexis.com\lawschool and log into LexisNexis as normal. (You should have already created credentials for Lexis access prior to accessing the web courses. There is a flyer in your orientation packet that contains instructions for creating these credentials.)

2. Once you are at the law school landing screen, you should see a menu for Lexis Classroom, like the one below. Click on the “My Courses” link to go to your enrolled courses, and to add a course, click on the “Add Course” link.
3. To add a class, find the instructor’s name. All active courses by that instructor will be listed. Click on the course you would like to add. Some instructors may place a password on their course. Your instructor should provide you with the password if they have set one.

4. The “My Courses” link will take you to your dashboard. From here, you can access any courses you have enrolled in.
Using Lexis Classroom for this class

About Lexis Classroom and the course page

Most class assignments, handouts, and materials will be made available via the course page in Lexis Classroom. Lexis Classroom is an instance of Canvas, a commercial course management program. You can find generic, student focused FAQs and Help documents from Canvas here: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 (Links to an external site.)

Syllabus & Calendar

The Syllabus page will include both online and downloadable versions of the Syllabus, as well as a schedule of all class meetings and assignment due dates.

There is also a Calendar view that will show you all class meetings and assignment due dates as well. This view also includes the option to add the course calendar feed to your calendar of choice. Instructions for using the Calendar Feed are here: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10691-4212717348 (Links to an external site.)

Clicking on a calendar event, either on the syllabus or on the calendar, will open that event and provide additional details, such as reading assignments or links to other content.

Modules & Pages

Class content pages are grouped under "Modules." There are seven thematic modules corresponding with the topics we will cover, as outlined on the Syllabus. Modules will unlock as the course progresses. Normally, the Module will unlock on the of the final class meeting for the preceding Module.

Under each Module will be a page entitled "Module # Resources." I will add links to reading supplements, handouts, slide decks, and other content to these pages.

Assignments

Assignments and quizzes are also scheduled to unlock as the course progresses. Each assignment will include instructions for completing the assignment, as well as links to necessary course files (e.g. the Research Log) for that assignment.

Completed assignments are to be submitted via Lexis Classroom. Instructions for submitting assignments are available on the course page. The instructions will also be linked from within each assignment.

Quizzes are completely online. You will receive your quiz grade upon completion. Please note that I will monitor quiz grades for problems and will manually adjust grades as necessary.