

Legal Research – Spring 2021

Section 7122 01

Wednesdays: 11:20 – 12:35

Location: Microsoft Teams

Instructor: Cynthia Lewis
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Office hours: Mondays: 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. EST
Fridays: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. EST
And by appointment. Please contact my Executive Assistant,
Stephanie Chiarella, to schedule appointments
schiarella@vermontlaw.edu

Description: This course is designed to introduce students to legal research tools and research strategies relevant for law school as well as for legal practice. Topics covered include the use of primary and secondary sources; statutory/case law/administrative research; effective use of Lexis, Westlaw, Bloomberg Law and other electronic databases; the role of the Internet in legal research; a brief introduction to practice related research and nontraditional approaches to finding legal information. Emphasis will be placed on appropriate and effective research strategies and evaluation of sources.

Required Text: Rather than have a required text, we will be consulting research guides on the web. In addition, you will need a copy of:

The Bluebook : a uniform system of citation, 21st edition. Cambridge, Mass: Published and distributed by the Harvard Law Review Association, 2020

Grading and Attendance: Legal Research is a one credit, graded course. In order to do well, students are expected not only to attend class but also to actively participate in class. Research is a skill, and like all skills, practice is the key to success. There will be regular written assignments during the course. Assignments are to be submitted on time as indicated in the syllabus. Grades are based on the class professionalism (25%) and the final project (75%). Unexcused absence from two classes results in a written warning and unexcused absence from a third class results in a grade of F/Wd.

Class Teams Protocol:

- Cameras on during class
- Use the Raise your Hand option to be called on
- Mute microphones unless speaking
- We will use Break Out Rooms for small group discussion

Class Website:

<http://lawschool.westlaw.com>

-select TWEN

-select Legal Research – Spring 2021 – Lewis

LexisAdvance | Westlaw | Bloomberg Law Training: You will receive virtual Lexis and Westlaw training from company representatives during the first 2 weeks of classes. Bloomberg Law offers online training – details forthcoming. Teams links for the trainings will be available shortly.

Westlaw training: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 – 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST

Lexis training: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 - 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST

BloombergLaw: Online - TBD

These sessions will be recorded. However, you should attend the Teams session if your schedule permits.

Class Schedule:

Legal Research meets once a week. All readings, assignments and handouts will be organized by class and posted on TWEN. Part of being a good attorney is staying organized. Our class gets underway quickly.

Jan. 13

Class 1: Legal Authority and Research Strategies

Upon completion of this class, you will begin to be able to:
Understand the ethical importance of legal research competency.
Identify the difference between primary and secondary authority.
Identify the difference between mandatory/binding and persuasive authority.
Learn to identify the connection between the various types of legal authority.
Analyze scenarios in order to identify relevant legal issues.
Develop efficient and effective search queries.
Craft a research strategy.

Jan. 20

**Class 2: Secondary Sources - Part I
Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and Treatises**

Upon completion of this class, you will be able to:
Identify and use legal dictionaries to define legal terms of art.
Identify and navigate legal encyclopedias and utilize entries to concisely explain legal issues.

Locate treatises in print and online formats, and navigate them successfully to find critical, analytical, explanatory and practical information

Jan. 27

**Class 3: Secondary Sources – Part II
Periodicals, ALR and Restatements
*Secondary Source Workshop***

Upon completion of this class, you will be able to:
Identify and use legal periodicals, particularly scholarly law reviews, using library databases and Lexis Advance, Westlaw, and Bloomberg Law.
Identify and access relevant American Law Report annotations/articles, and effectively use the information from the annotations.
Locate and effectively use Restatements, which pull together common law principles in a number of subject areas.

Feb. 3

Class 4: State and Federal Codes, Statutes, & Legislative Process

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Effectively use the sources for federal and state session laws and codes.
Locate and identify relevant federal and state statutes.
Understand the research value of annotated federal and state codes which often include references to related case law, regulations, and secondary sources.

Feb. 10

Class 5: Case Law

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Recognize federal and state courts and identify associated reporters and special reporters.
Use a variety of legal research resources and strategies to locate relevant case law.
Understand the power of the “one good case” method.

Feb. 17

Class 6: Updating Case Law Research/Citators

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Use a citator and understand how to interpret the results of a citator search to determine if authority is still good law and to discover additional research resources such as secondary sources, statutes, regulations, and additional cases.

Know when, why, and how to use citators.
Analyze citator results effectively.

Feb. 24

Class 7: Administrative and Municipal Legal Research

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Understand the processes and resources for researching regulations.
Locate and identify relevant federal regulations.
Understand the Federal Register: what it is and how to use it.
Understand the Code of Federal Regulations: what it is and how to use it.

Mar. 3

Spring Break Week – Rest and Rejuvenate

Mar.10

Class 8: Litigation and Practice Resources

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Identify and locate practice oriented resources such as court rules, jury instructions, and forms.
Locate court dockets and associated court filings.

Mar. 17

Class 9: Free and Effective Online Searching & Legal Research Workshop

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
Identify and evaluate free online legal research resources.
Compare free resources to fee based legal research options.
Recognize the value added content that is not available in free research resources as well as appreciate what is available for free.

Mar. 24

Class 10: Review

Upon successful completion of this class, you will be able to:
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Understand the benefits of the research tools, methods, and strategies taught throughout this course.
Know when to stop researching.

Final Assignment must be uploaded to TWEN no later than Monday, April 5, at 4:00 p.m. EST