

SYLLABUS: ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH

Professor Eugenia Charles-Newton

Fall 2014

Monday @ 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**Classes conducted via Microsoft Lync
(LAST CLASS SESSION IN PERSON)**

Course Introduction-----

Advanced legal research is a course that is designed to prepare law students for researching in the context of legal practice. The organization of legal information will be reviewed along with the production of legal authority. Students will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills in using primary and secondary legal sources. Students will also gain the skills needed to be an effective and efficient legal researcher. In this course, students will learn to utilize specialized reporters, legislative and administrative materials, secondary sources and practice materials, and learn techniques to search in various legal and non-legal online databases.

The class will be conducted over a 6-week period in accordance with the American Bar Association standards. This course will be delivered online at the designated times outlined in the course catalog. This is similar to a traditional face-to-face class however, students will be required to participate via Microsoft Lync and on Westlaw TWEN. The instructor reserves the right to use other informational platforms and Internet sources that deliver information (i.e., tutorials and YouTube videos, just to name a few). In short, the course will require students to participate in synchronous learning. All students will be expected to have some understanding of how to use a computer, Microsoft Lync, Microsoft Word, email, the Internet, and SharePoint (just to name a few). The course is *not* self-paced; there will be due dates for all assignments. Students are required to read the syllabus carefully to gain an understanding of expectations for the course and are encouraged to reach out to the instructor or their classmates with questions or concerns.

The class will be a hands-on and experiential learning class that will experiment with a variety of online tools. Problems, exercises, presentations and a research memo will be used during the course to enhance knowledge of the legal research process. Presentations of sources will be recorded using Panapto, PowerPoint or Prezi. At the end of semester students will be required to physically attend class and participate in the twenty-five (25)-source station assignment.

Student who sign up for the course should know that numerous legal topics and sources will be explored and every student will be expected to identify the best and most authoritative, and cost effective research approach to complete assignments. All assignments will be due on their due date unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. A PDF copy of all course work will be uploaded through Westlaw TWEN and sent via email to the instructor, using the Texas Tech University email system.

Course Information-----

Office Location: TTU School of Law Library, Office # 271

Office Phone: (806) 834-6816

Email: eugenia.newton@ttu.edu

Other forms of communication: Skype (appointment only): NavajoFigNewton_TTU2013

Office Hours:

Monday: 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Wednesday: 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Thursday: 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Friday: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

**Preferred form of communication? Email first then office phone (leave a message).

If an EMERGENCY arises and you need to contact me, please call (806) 834-1911 and speak to my assistant who will relay your message to me. I will respond to all emergency messages within 3 hours of contact.

Course Objectives-----

1. This course is designed to enable students to formulate a rational and efficient research method.
2. This course is designed to teach students how to effectively evaluate legal information sources.
3. This course is designed to expand skills in using primary and secondary legal resources.
4. This course is designed to develop research skills for effective use of online electronic resources using Lexis Advance, WestlawNext, Bloomberg Law, and other Internet sources with the goal of preparing students to make informed decisions regarding when to use electronic resources vs. print resources.
5. This course is designed to introduce students to some of the many available non-legal information resources that are of increasing importance to the legal community.

Required Course Materials-----

Required Text:

Where the Law Is: An Introduction to Advanced Legal Research, Joanne D. S. Armstrong, Christopher A. Knott. West. ISBN 0314282335.

Recommended Text:

Basic Legal Research: Tools and Strategies, 3rd ed., Amy Sloan. Wolters Kluwer Law & Business/Aspen Publishers. ISBN 1454808470.

Online Tools:

Internet access, WestlawNext, Westlaw TWEN, Lexis Advance, Bloomberg Law, Microsoft Office, Adobe, GoogleDocs, YouTube, Panapto, and other materials reserved by the instructor. It is important that every student have daily access to a computer and high speed Internet.

Browsers:

It is recommended that students use Firefox for all TTU related systems and platforms. Students can determine which browser works best for the online tools they will be utilizing. It is important that students understand that browsers can sometime affect the layout and tools offered for online platforms. If there are any issues with getting programs to work, please try Firefox, IE, Chrome and Safari. If the issue continues, contact me as soon as possible.

Course Policies-----

Attendance:

If a student is absent from one (1) class, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. The American Bar Association requires a minimum of 700 minutes of instruction time for every 1-credit course.

Excused Absences for Emergency Circumstances:

Life happens so if an emergency does come up, you are responsible for contacting the professor via email AND leaving a message to inform me that you will be absent from class. A student is permitted to have ONLY one (1) excused/emergency absences.

15-minute-rule:

Instructor and student are to follow the 15-minute-rule. If the instructor or student is more than 15-minutes late, it counts as an absence with no excuse.

Instructional Activities-----

Coursework:

All coursework should be submitted by the due date listed below under the section labeled "Course Schedule." Late assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted *unless* prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

Grade Distribution:

ASSIGNMENT	Points
Class Participation	10
Research Exercise	75
Following the Research Exercise	30
Analysis Problem	25
Multi-Media Presentation	100
Stations Assignment	160
	TOTAL 400 Points

****GRADING SCALE IS ON A CURVE AS MANDATED BY TTU SCHOOL OF LAW.**

Class Participation:

Class participation is required. The class involves significant discussion, hands-on participation, reading the assigned chapters and supplements; speaking up in class and/or asking questions that engage classmates; voluntarily share answers or findings when asked; and answering questions in class or via the discussion board on Westlaw TWEN.

You will be required to post a minimum of 3 posts to the Westlaw's TWEN discussion board. You will also be expected to post a response to 3 of your classmates' posts on TWEN. The posts cannot be simply agree or disagree. Critical thinking is expected and arguments must be well developed.

Research Exercises:

Research exercises will consist of questions based on readings or previous lectures. There will be a total of four (4) research exercises, which are designed to help you apply an understanding of research to practical problems that will be presented. Each exercise will present a legal scenario that focuses on one area of law and will require you to find a minimum of three (3) online sources that will help answer the legal issue presented. You can use WestlawNext, Lexis Advance, Bloomberg Law or any other legal database presented in class. The purpose of the assignment is to tell me whether a legal cause of action exists, how you came to that conclusion, and where you found your answer. It may be a good idea to log, step-by-step, how you found your answer. Specifically, I want to know which source you used and how you used the source to find your answer.

Print papers—Please use Blue Book citation for each answer. The assignment is not designed to be easy and will take time to answer so students should set out enough time to complete the assignments. Please follow the traditional IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion) method.

Due dates are listed below under “Fall 2014 Class Schedule.” Each assignment must be typed and converted to PDF and sent via email to my TTU email address. In addition, the PDF document should be uploaded to Westlaw TWEN.

Following the Research Exercise:

You will choose one (1) research path written by your classmate. Research exercises can be found on the Westlaw TWEN page. Using a vlog diary, you will record yourself repeating the steps your classmate detailed on their assignment to find the source that answered their research exercise. Upon completion you will explain to me in your vlog diary whether the steps and sources that were used, were correct. You will also make one recommendation to another source that your classmate could have consulted to find the answer. Recording the vlog may require some assistance from a friend or family member.

To learn more about vlogs, go to <http://www.wikihow.com/Be-a-Vlogger>. This site explains in simple details what a vlog is and how to create a vlog. You may find yourself recording and re-recording your vlog but remember, sometimes the best vlogs are those that are natural.

Know that your vlog should be less than 7 minutes long. The vlog diary should be uploaded to TTU's Panapto site . You are allowed to upload only once so make sure you choose the correct vlog to upload. When upload is complete, log off Panapto and email me the link to your vlog.

Remember, your goal is to verify that the source and steps used to find the answers, are correct. In essence, you will choose one (1) research exercise and "check it" for your classmate.

Analysis Problems:

In every law firm, new associates are presented with potential clients who may have multiple legal issues. The research exercise (above) focused on one area of law and you were told what area of law was affected. You then searched in three sources for that area of law, to find your answers.

The Analysis Problem takes you a step further and presents multiple legal issues across several areas of law. *Guess what? I don't tell you which area of law.* Your job is to issue-spot and identify all the legal issues involved in the scenario, then determine whether there is a cause of action for each issue based on the research you conducted. Because many lawyers consult each other for assistance, you will be allowed to work in groups of four (if you wish) to complete the assignment. However, each person will be expected to submit a separate report that details the issue they were responsible for, and provide an answer to the issue, and where the information was found (what source did you use).

You will have two weeks to complete the assignment. All reports must be submitted in a block-style letter that is addressed to me. All "attorneys" involved in the research memo must sign off on the completed document. You may want to research how to use Adobe PDF's function of signing and sealing signed documents. Also provide a quick summary of who did what, the way communication form was used, and what issues you ran into in completing the assignment.

Students wanting to form a group to complete the project can use Google Docs, PB Wiki, or Moodle to create a space to edit the document. You do not have to work in a group but I highly recommend that you do. If you work alone, please choose one of the three sites listed and upload your document on that site.

When the assignment is completed (you have all put your answers together), please send me a link to the completed document via TTU email.

The length of the blocked letter (completed document) should be less than 10-pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-space. Both print and online sources can be used for this assignment. Remember, use Blue Book citation when referencing sources.

Multimedia Presentation:

Each student will be assigned a legal source they will be presenting on. You will create a 5-7 minute tutorial using Panapto to teach us about the source. In essence, you will become the expert for that legal source. You should highlight features of the source, talk about why the source is important AND tell us how to use it. You have the option of using PowerPoint or Prezi to create the presentation but you will need to use Panopto to add your voice to the presentation AND put the presentation together. This presentation will be uploaded to Panapto and shared with your classmates a week before the “Station Assignment” is assigned. Your classmates will be depending on you to complete your tutorial since everyone will be using the tutorials for the “Stations Assignment.”

You can be as creative as you wish. Here are three examples of legal tutorials:

1. Secondary Sources: How to find them on West, Lexis, and Bloomberg Law, found at, <http://ed.ted.com/on/mXDKb7OV>.
2. Basic types of secondary sources, found at <http://ed.ted.com/on/W3lxvdOv>.
3. Publication of federal statutory law, found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWTh1HUsh-M>.

Stations Assignment:

This assignment will take place the last class of the semester (September 8, 2014) and everyone is expected to be in the designated area at the designated time. There will be 25 stations set out that will consist of both print and online materials (from various databases). You will be given a 26 page packet with the source name at the top of each page that you will be required to answer questions about.

Your job is to read the legal scenario in front of you and find the answer to the issue using the sources presented in front of you. Each student will have an average of six-minutes to use each source. You are expected to know how to use the source to answer the issue. Remember, you will all have been exposed to all the sources by this date so there is no excuse not to know how to use the source.

All assignments will be collected at the end of class. There will be no talking while the assignment is in progress.

If you are absent, you will lose 40% of your grade. There is no way to make up this grade. If an emergency comes up, you will need to contact the professor right away and make arrangements to complete a 15-20 page research paper.

Before the first day of class:

Please sign up for Westlaw TWEN, Google Docs, Moodle and have Academic Technology download Panapto to your computer. Also, go to Westlaw TWEN and in the discussion tab, introduce yourself to the entire class.

FALL 204 CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE & TOPIC	READINGS	SUBMIT COURSE WORK VIA...
WEEK of August 4, 2014 Introduction to Legal Research; Court Systems; Citators; Shephard's	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 1-2 Watch tutorial and be prepared to answer questions.	--Research exercise DUE by 11:45 on August 7, 2014 via Google Docs.
WEEK of August 11, 2014 Secondary Sources and Practice Materials	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 3-4 Watch tutorial and be prepared to answer questions.	--Research exercise DUE by 11:45 on September 4, 2014 via Google Docs.
WEEK of August 18, 2014 The Legislative Process: Constitutions and Statutes	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 4-6 Watch tutorial and be prepared to answer questions.	--Research exercise DUE by 11:45 on August 21, 2014 via Google Docs.
WEEK of August 25, 2014 The Court: Case Law	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 7 Supplemental Readings: Assessing the Influence of Computer-Assisted Legal Research: A Study of California Supreme court Opinions, 97 Law Libr. J. 285 (2005) [avail on Westlaw, Lexis or HeinOnline]	--Analysis assignment due on Westlaw TWEN. --Analysis Problem due by 11:50 PM on August 30, 2014.
WEEK of September 1, 2014 Administrative Legal Materials	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 8 Supplemental Readings: TBA	--Multimedia Presentation should be recorded on Panapto and then uploaded to YouTube. Presentation DUE on September 6, 2014 by 11:59 PM.
WEEK of September 8, 2014 Legislative History	Armstrong & Knott, Ch. 9 Supplemental Readings: The U.S. Supreme Court and the Use of Legislative Histories: A Statistical Analysis [avail on JSTOR]	--Research exercise DUE by 11:45 on September 10, 2014 via Google Docs. --Pathfinder should be uploaded to website by 11:59 PM.

Additional Information-----

Academic Honesty:

This course takes the issue of academic honesty very seriously. Any student caught violating the Law School's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy may be brought before the honor council.

The Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy includes cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and other types of dishonest activities. *Plagiarism is defined broadly as taking ideas, concepts, or actual words of another person and passing them off as your own work.* The School of Law will not condone cut-and-paste plagiarism, which involves downloading phrases from websites or other Internet sources and not making appropriate references.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course.