

Course Syllabus

Department : Legal Assistant

Course Title : Legal Research & Writing

Section Name : LGLA_1301_WB

Start Date : 08/27/2012

End Date : 12/07/2012

Modality : ONLINE

Credits : 3 hours

Instructor Information

Name : Kayla Zeigenbein

OC Email : kzeigenbein@odessa.edu

OC Phone # : (432) 335-6485

Office Hours for Fall 2012

Monday - 10:00 - 12:00; 5:00 – 6:00

Tuesday -8:30 - 11:00

Wednesday - 10:00 - 12:00

Thursday – 8:30 - 11:00

Friday by appointment only

Monitored and open labs available daily. Help from the instructor is available at your request. Appointments can be set up or you may contact instructor during office hours. Tutoring is available through the LRC.

Course Description

This course presents the fundamentals of legal research and writing. Topics include standard and electronic legal research, and legal writing techniques including case and fact analysis and citation format.

Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

ICOs

(1, 2, 3, 6)

Course Objectives

- 1.1 Describe the historical origins of the civil litigation and the research process.
- 1.2* Identify key legal terms.
- 1.3* List the computer hardware used in the law office setting and explain its function.
- 1.4* Identify major components of the litigation process and explain.
- 1.5 Define the role of the paralegal in Legal Research and Writing.
- 1.6* List and explain the key documents in the civil litigation process.
- 1.10 Draft legal documents and memoranda.
- 1.11 List the techniques for conducting Legal Research and Writing.
- 1.12 List and explain the I.R.A.C method in writing.
- 1.13* Identify and use research tools to locate law.
- 1.14 Discuss overview of the Legal Research and Writing process.

*INDICATES INTEGRATED, CORE CURRICULUM SKILLS
(Math, Reading, Communication, Technological Literacy and/or Critical Thinking)

Required Materials

Legal Research and Writing for Paralegals, Tepper/Bevans, McGraw-Hill 2009.

Course Requirements (Lectures, Assignments and Assessments)

Dates	Assignment	Description
Chapter will open at midnight on first date listed and close at 11:55 pm on the 2 nd date listed.		
8/27 – 9/2	Student Information Sheet – Complete and submit	
9/3 – 9/9	Chapter 1 – Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	The American Legal System: navigating through the Process
9/10 – 9/16	Chapter 2 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	The Sources of the Law: What's in a Law Library
9/17 – 9/23	Chapter 3 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	Case Law and Reporters: Finding Judges' Opinions
9/24 - 9/30	Chapter 4 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	Understanding and Briefing of Case Decisions
10/1 – 10/7	Chapter 5 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	Researching Constitutions, Statutes, and Administrative Rules and Regulations
10/8 – 10/14	Chapter 6 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	Legal Research Finding Tools: The Traditions and New Trends
10/15 – 10/21	Chapter 7 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	Updating the Law: Shepard's Citations and KeyCite
10/22 – 10/28	Chapter 8 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice	Online Search Techniques: Learning the Methods

	test and discussion board question	
10/29 – 11/4	Chapter 11 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	Introduction to Legal Writing
11/5 – 11/11	Chapter 12 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	The Mechanics of Construction
11/12 - 11/18	Chapter 13 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	Effective and Persuasive Legal Writing
11/19 - 11/25	Chapter 14 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	Citations in Legal Writing
11/26 – 12/2	Chapter 15 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test, multiple choice test and discussion board question	The Basics of Legal Correspondence
12/3 – 12/9	Chapter 16 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	The Internal Office Memorandum
12/3 – 12/9	Chapter 18 - Complete review questions, vocabulary quiz, true/false test and multiple choice test	The Memorandum of Law to the Trial Court
12/10 – 12/11	FINAL EXAM	COMPREHENSIVE

Grading Policy

Each week, I will provide grades or scores and comments on assignments within 6 days of when they were submitted.

Grading Scales	Grading Percentages
A = 5130 - 5700	Assignments - 20%
B = 4560 - 5129	Vocabulary Quizzes - 10%
C = 3990 - 4559	Discussion Board - 10%
D = 3420 - 3989	Tests - 40%
F = below 3419 points	Final Exam - 10%

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY:

NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED OR MAKE UP TESTS GIVEN.

Special Needs

Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have any special needs or issues pertaining to your access to and participation in this or any other class at Odessa College, please feel free to contact me to discuss your concerns. You may also call the Office of Disability services at 432-335-6861 to request assistance and accommodations.

Learning Resource Center (Library)

The Library, known as the [Learning Resources Center](#), provides research assistance via the [LRC's catalog \(print books, videos, e-books\)](#) and [databases \(journal and magazine articles\)](#). [Research guides](#) covering specific subject areas, [tutorials](#), and the ["Ask a Librarian "](#) service provide additional help.

Student E-mail

Please access your [Odessa College Student E-mail](#), by following the link to either set up or update your account: <http://www.odessa.edu/gmail/>. **All correspondence will be submitted using your Odessa College email.**

Student Portal

Please access your [Odessa College Student E-mail](#), by following the link to either set up or update your account: <http://www.odessa.edu/gmail/>. **All correspondence will be submitted using your Odessa College email.**

Technical Support

For Blackboard username and password help and for help accessing your online course availability and student email account contact the Student Success Center at 432-335-6878 or online at https://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/helpdesk_form.htm.

Important School Policies

For information regarding student support services, academic dishonesty, disciplinary actions, special accommodations, or student's and instructors' right to academic freedom can be found in the [Odessa College Student Handbook](#).

Expectations for Engagement – Online Learning

To help make the web-based learning experience fulfilling and rewarding, the following Expectations for Engagement provide the parameters for reasonable engagement between students and instructors for the online learning environment. Students and instructors are welcome to exceed these requirements.

Reasonable Expectations of Engagement for Instructors

1. As an instructor, I understand the importance of clear, timely communication with my students. In order to maintain sufficient communication, I will
 - provided my contact information at the beginning of the syllabus;
 - respond to all messages within 24 hours if received Monday through Thursday and within 48 hours if received Friday through Sunday; and,
 - notify students of any extended times that I will be unavailable and provide them with alternative contact information (for me or for my supervisor) in case of emergencies during the time I'm unavailable.
2. As an instructor, I understand that my students will work to the best of their abilities to fulfill the course requirements. In order to help them in this area, I will
 - provide clear information about grading policies and assignment requirements in the course syllabus, and
 - communicate any changes to assignments and/or to the course calendar to students as quickly as possible.
3. As an instructor, I understand that I need to provide regular, timely feedback to students about their performance in the course. To keep students informed about their progress, I will
 - post grades for discussion postings within one week of the discussion thread closing.
 - provide grades for major assignments within 2 weeks of the due date or at least 3 days before the next major assignment is due, whichever comes first.

Reasonable Expectations of Engagement for Students

1. As a student, I understand that I am responsible for keeping up with the course. To help with this, I will
 - line up alternative computer and internet access in case my primary computer crashes or my internet services is unavailable;

- recognize that the college provides free wi-fi and computer labs during regular campus hours to help me with accessing my course; and,
 - understand that my instructor does not have to accept my technical issues as a legitimate reason for late or missing work if my equipment or service is unreliable.
2. As a student, I understand that it is my responsibility to communicate quickly with the instructor any issue or emergency that will impact my involvement with or performance in the class. This includes, but is not limited to
- getting “kicked off” of the system during tests or quizzes;
 - having trouble submitting assignments; and
 - dealing with a traumatic personal event.
3. As a student, I understand that it is my responsibility to understand course material and requirements and to keep up with the course calendar. While my instructor is available for help and clarification, I will
- seek out help from my instructor and/or from tutors;
 - ask questions if I don’t understand; and,
 - access my course several times during the week to keep up with assignments and announcements.

Disclaimer

***Students are responsible for checking for changes frequently as this syllabus may be updated often, as needed. If you have any complaints about this course and do not feel comfortable discussing the issues with me, please contact my Department Chair, Nancy Stewart at 432-335-6486 or at nstewart@odessa.edu.**