Legal Research – Section C
Spring 2016 Syllabus

Please Note: The schedule below, including assignments, is tentative and subject to change.

Instructor: Avery Le
Holland Hall, Room 175C (in library)
(352) 273-0712
averyle@law.ufl.edu

Class Schedule:
Wednesday, 2:00-2:50pm
HOL 270

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm or by appointment

Course website:
Accessible through UF e-Learning: https://elearning2.courses.ufl.edu/portal

Textbook:
MARK K. OSBECK, IMPECCABLE RESEARCH: A CONCISE GUIDE TO MASTERING LEGAL RESEARCH SKILLS (WEST, 2010).

Other readings assigned will be available for download via the course website.

Course Schedule:
Legal Research is a two-semester course consisting of 14 classes in total. The first 7 classes will be taught in the Fall of 2015 and the remaining 7 classes will be taught in the Spring of 2016.

Course Objective:
The objective of this course is to introduce students to the basic principles of legal research. Students will learn how to formulate a research plan; identify and consult secondary sources such as legal encyclopedias; interpret legal citations; locate and update relevant primary legal materials; and assess research progress to determine next-steps.

Grading:
The components of the final grade for the course are listed below:

Attendance/Participation: 5%
Assignments: 35%
"Midterm": 20%
Final Exam: 40%

Assignments:
Assignments will be posted on the course website (in the “Assignments” tab) after class. The due date for each assignment is 1:00 pm. on Tuesday, before class. Assignments submitted after the due date will receive feedback, but not any credit (recorded as an automatic zero). Students must work individually on assignments, unless otherwise indicated. I will not take any questions (in person or via e-mail) about assignments after Friday at 5pm.

Please save your homework assignments as Microsoft Word documents and label the file accordingly: LastName_Assignment#_Semester.doc (ex. Smith_Assignment#1_Fall.doc)

Participation:
Participation points are determined by attendance, preparation for class, and participation in class.

Attendance will be taken each class. Missing 3 classes without prior notice will result in referral to Student Affairs.
**Final Exam**
The final exam is an essay exam that will test your ability to synthesize the research skills you learned and apply them to a hypothetical situation. It will be administered at the end of the Spring 2016 semester and graded anonymously on a curve.

**Core Competencies Assessment**
The core competencies assessment is a pass/fail measurement of skills that all students must possess to successfully complete the course. It will be administered at the end of the Spring 2016 semester. The results of this assessment will not be incorporated into your final grade. But, you must successfully pass this assessment to take the final exam and receive credit for the course. The core competencies assessment tests the following nine (9) core competencies:

1. Demonstrate the ability to interpret contemporary legal citations (the ability to identify a citation and its jurisdiction).
2. Given a legal citation to contemporary U.S. statutes and case law, demonstrate the ability to find the full text of the case or statute.
3. Given a statute, demonstrate the ability to use annotated statutes to find cases interpreting the statute.
4. Given a case, demonstrate the ability to determine whether a holding in a specific case is still good law.
5. Given a legal topic, demonstrate the ability to identify secondary sources that would prove valuable in researching that topic.
6. Using the Topic & Key Number and Headnote systems, demonstrate the ability to search for a case in a specific jurisdiction.
7. Demonstrate the ability to create a research plan.
8. Demonstrate the ability to find dockets, briefs, complaints, etc.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of legal information finding tools and methods (e.g., terms and connectors searching, natural language searching, indexes, annotations, and legal classification systems such as headnotes), and the ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

**Disability Accommodation:**
The University of Florida is committed to providing equal educational access to students with disabilities. As you are developing and/or updating your syllabi for the spring semester, please take a moment to review the university’s “Policy on Course Syllabi” which specifies the inclusion of the following recommended statement related to accommodations for students with disabilities:

> “Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.”

A disability syllabus statement serves to open the lines of communication between an instructor and a student by making the student feel included when approaching an instructor regarding accommodation needs and/or disability-related concerns.

Additional resources for faculty can be found on the Disability Resource Center’s Instructor Resources webpage (https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/faculty/resources-for-instructors). Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or via e-mail at accessuf@dso.ufl.edu if you have any questions.
**Academic Honesty and Code of Conduct:**
Students must adhere to the [UF Honor Code](#) and the [UF Conduct Code](#).

**Spring 2016, (*subject to change with advance notice by Professor Le*)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Dates</th>
<th>Core Competency Exam:</th>
<th>Final Exam:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 23 (Tentative)</td>
<td>March 11-13 (Tentative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Schedule</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Wednesday, Jan. 6</td>
<td>• Midterm Exam due at beginning of class</td>
<td><strong>Before Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Course Website, Syllabus, Course Expectations, and Semester Format</td>
<td>• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Federal vs. State Issues” folder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Step 1: Formulate a Research Plan: Federal vs. State Issues</td>
<td><strong>In-Class Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal vs. State Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Wednesday, Jan. 13</td>
<td>• Review In-Class Activity from Week 1</td>
<td><strong>Before Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Step 2: Consult Secondary Sources: Treatises &amp; Other Secondary Sources</td>
<td>• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Consult Secondary Sources: Treatises &amp; Other Secondary Sources” folder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Read Osbeck p.109-119.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Wednesday, Jan. 20</td>
<td>• Steps 3 &amp; 4: Find, Expand, &amp; Update Primary Sources: Statutes</td>
<td><strong>Before Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Primary Sources: Federal Statutes” folder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Read Osbeck p. 125-130; 134-137.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>In-Class Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Sources: Statutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Sources Assignment Federal Statutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 4 For Wednesday, Jan. 27 | • Steps 3 & 4: Find, Expand, & Update Primary Sources: Regulations | **Before Class**
• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Primary Sources: Federal Regulations” folder.
• Read Osbeck p. 37-39; 130-134.  
**In-Class Activity**
Primary Sources: Regulations
**Assignment**
Hand Out Practice Exam (Due Feb. 17) |
| Guest Speakers Friday, Jan. 29 | More information will be given in class. |
| Week 5 For Wednesday, Feb. 3 | • Steps 3 & 4: Find, Expand, & Update Primary Sources: (Cases) | **Before Class**
• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Primary Sources: Federal Case Law” folder.
• Read Osbeck p. 137-138.  
**In-Class Activity**
Primary Sources: Cases
**Assignment**
Primary Sources: Cases (Part 1) |
| Week 6 For Wednesday, Feb. 10 | • Steps 3 & 4: Find, Expand, & Update Primary Sources: (Cases)(continued)  
• Step 5: Analyze & Organize Your Research | **Before Class**
• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Primary Sources: Federal Case Law” folder.
• Read Osbeck p. 137-138.  
**Assignment**
Primary Sources: Cases (Part 2) |
| Week 7 For Wednesday, Feb. 17 | • Dockets, Pleadings, Court Rules, Summer Research Tips  
• Evaluations  
• Practice Exam Due | **Before Class**
• Read the PowerPoints and any additional videos/readings located in the “Resources” tab of the course website under the “Dockets” folder  
• Read Osbeck p. 66-82. |
| Review Session *Friday, Feb. 20 | • Review for Core Competency Exam  
• Review for Practice Exam and Grading Rubric | This is an optional review session and you are not required to attend. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date subject to change</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>