**Advanced Legal Research (Florida)**

**LAW 6930**

**Spring 2021 Syllabus**

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| **Instructor**  Christopher Vallandingham  184K Holland Hall  valland@law.ufl.edu  (352) 273-0708 | **Class Schedule**  Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.  285D Holland Hall  **Virtual Office Hours**  Monday, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  Thursday, 2:30 pm– 3:30 pm |

**Course Canvas Page**

All course materials are accessible on the Canvas page for this course.

**Textbook**

There is no required textbook for this course. All required reading will be posted on the course Canvas page.

**Course Objectives**

The aim of this course is to improve the ability of students to conduct research on topics relevant to the practice of law in Florida. Topics covered in this course include legislative history, statutory research, procedural rules, administrative law, local government law, and litigation documents.

For more details about course objectives, look at the Annex to this syllabus.

**Course Schedule**

This course is a spring semester course. We will meet for 7 classes in total. The course is worth one-credit hour.

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

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| Final Exam | 50% |
| Homework Assignments | 40% |
| Participation | 10% |

Per law school policy, this class will be graded on a curve. Points received for assignments during the semester represent raw scores only. Information on current College of Law grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at: <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current%20students/academic-policies> and below:

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| **Letter Grade** | **Point Equivalent** |
| A (Excellent) | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.67 |
| B+ | 3.33 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.67 |
| C+ | 2.33 |
| C (Satisfactory) | 2.0 |
| C- | 1.67 |
| D+ | 1.33 |
| D (Poor) | 1.0 |
| D- | 0.67 |
| E (Failure) | 0.0 |

**Class Preparation**

ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. It is anticipated that you will spend at least two hours out of class each week on reading, reviewing course materials, and completing out-of-class assignments.

**Homework Assignments**

Homework assignments will be posted on the course Canvas page (under the “Assignments” tab) after class. A due date for each assignment will be established for each assignment**.** Each assignment will have a grading rubric describing how points will be assigned for that assignment.Unless prior permission has been received from the instructor, a late assignment will be assessed a 10% penalty per day the assignment is late. Without permission from the instructor, no assignment may be turned in more than 48 hours after the due date.

Students must work individually on homework assignments unless the instructions for the assignment indicate otherwise.

**Final Exam**

The final exam is a take-home exam that consists of multiple-choice questions, questions requiring short answers, and at least one question requiring a response in essay form.

The final exam will be accessible on the course Canvas page at 5 pm on March 5, 2021 (tentative) and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 14, 2021 (tentative). You must turn in your exam on the course Canvas page no later than 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 14, 2021 (tentative).

Once you access the exam on the course Canvas page, there is no time limit on how you long you make take to complete the exam other than the due date established for the exam.

**Participation**

The participation grade is determined by attendance, preparation for class, participation in class, and overall effort to complete the weekly assignments, including contacting the instructor when encountering difficulties with the assignment.

Lack of preparedness for class, lack of participation during small group discussions/projects, and unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation grade.

**Etiquette: In Person Students**

You are required to follow UF Law safety protocols at all times in the classroom, including wearing a mask at all times and maintaining physical distance. Place your name tent card where it will be visible. Do not log in to the Zoom feed for the classroom; only remote students should be using the Zoom feed.

You need to stay in the classroom during the entire scheduled time. If you have an emergency, please exit quietly and carefully. Eating and drinking will not be permitted in the classroom because masks must be worn at all times.

When class ends, the professor will exit first, followed by each row and maintaining physical distance. You will not be able to approach the podium to ask questions. You will need to attend virtual office hours or email to ask questions.

**Etiquette: Remote Students**

You need to ensure your Zoom name matches your preferred name and your last name must also show. If you are attending class remotely, you are expected to turn on video of yourself until after attendance is taken and when responding to or asking questions. You must your video on during class. You are expected to keep your microphone on mute unless you have been called on to ask or answer a question.

Do not use the chat function to ask questions directed to me during class.

If you have a technical problem during the class, please contact UF IT (https://www.law.ufl.edu/technology-services).

**Attendance**

You are required to attend in your chosen modality—i.e., in person or online—unless you have permission to attend remotely (see below). You are expected to be prepared to complete in-class exercises. Attendance will be taken each day.

**You must seek permission to attend remotely and have your attendance count if you selected the in-person option.** Permission will be granted if you are experiencing any type of illness, even if the symptoms are mild or you just feel like you might be coming down with something. **You should not attend in person if you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed on UF’s COVID-19 website or have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 as provided on UF’s website** (<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect/covid-19-exposure-and-symptoms-who-do-i-call-if/>). If you are dealing with a personal situation of high difficulty and prolonged duration, please seek assistance from Student Affairs as soon as possible.

Missing 3 or more classes without prior notice will result in referral to Student Affairs. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with University policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

**Class Recordings**

Students may not take, circulate, or post photos or videos of classroom discussions, whether they are in-person, hybrid, or completely online. Students failing to follow this rule will be referred to the College of Law Honor Code Council and the University’s Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

**University of Florida Policies**

**University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities should register first with the Office of the Dean of Students (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Office of the Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Because accommodations are not retroactive, students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible in the semester for which they are seeking accommodation.

The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/forms-applications/exam-delays-accommodations-form).

**University Policy on Academic Misconduct**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilities academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

**University Policy on Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.  Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.  Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

**Getting Help**

For technical difficulties with E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

* [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu)
* (352) 392-HELP
* <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> (See “Message Us” at the top)

Other resources are available at <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/> for counseling and wellness, disability resources, student complaints, and library help desk support.

**Annex: Course Objectives include:**

Week One: Legislative History

1. Trace a bill introduced in the Florida legislature through the legislative process.
2. Trace a statutory section back to the introduction of the bill in the Florida legislature that resulted in the passage of a session law and codification in the Florida Statutes.
3. Determine the legislative intent of a bill introduced in the Florida Legislature and the legislative intent of a statute codified in the Florida Statutes.
4. Identify archival sources of Florida legislative history.

Week Two: Administrative Law

1. Trace a regulation proposed by a Florida Executive Branch agency.
2. Trace a section of the Florida Administrative Code back to the introduction of a proposed regulation.
3. Identify the procedures in place that govern the passage of regulations by a Florida Executive Branch agency.
4. Identify the legal grounds for challenging the validity of regulations promulgated by a Florida Executive Branch agency.

Week Three: Administrative Tribunals and Other Administrative Rulings

1. Locate a decision or ruling promulgated by the Executive Branch of the Florida state government.
2. Locate the rules and policies which guide decisions of the Executive Branch of the Florida state government.
3. Identify the options for appealing decisions of Florida administrative tribunals.

Week Four: Local Government Law

1. Trace the history of a municipal and county ordinances.
2. Identify various ways of accessing information regarding the governance of municipalities and counties.

Week Five: Procedural Rules

1. Identify state-wide and local procedural rules that apply to Florida state courts.
2. Identify procedural rules that apply to actions before executive branch agencies in the Florida state government.
3. Identify procedural rules that apply to actions before local government entities.

Week Six: Litigation Documents and other Legal Documents

1. Identify litigation documents filed in Florida state courts on a specific topic.
2. Identify options on accessing the full-text of documents filed in Florida state courts.
3. Locate examples of contracts, motions, interrogatories, zoning variances, and other legal documents.

Week Seven: Discovery of Information

1. Identify types of information that are protected by Florida law.
2. Identify various ways of accessing personal, corporate, medical, financial, and technical information.