**Advanced Legal Research**

**LAW 6798**

 **2-Credits**

**Fall 2020 Syllabus**

**Class Schedule:**

Thursdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Holland Hall 285D

**Professor Christopher Vallandingham**

Office: Holland Hall 184K.

Office Hours: Monday 4:00 pm-5:00 pm or by appointment.

E-mail: valland@law.ufl.edu

Telephone: (352) 273-0708

**Course website**: Accessible through Canvas.

**Textbook**: None

**Course Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to principles of researching the histories of statutes and regulations, researching rules of evidence and procedure, researching county and municipal ordinances, and basis strategies on finding non-legal information du.

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Track Florida and federal legislation through the legislative process;
2. Determine where Florida and federal legislation will be codified;
3. Compile legislative histories of Florida and federal legislation;
4. Trace the history of Florida and federal regulations;
5. Use secondary sources to locate relevant Florida and federal regulations;
6. Research county and municipal codes and ordinances;
7. Identify relevant laws on the dissemination of information;
8. Identify basic strategies on researching non-legal information.

**Course Schedule**

Below are the topics we will cover each week:

January 16, 2020 Florida Legislative Process/Florida Legislative History

January 23, 2020 Florida Administrative Register/Florida Administrative Code

January 30, 2020 Florida Administrative Tribunals

January 31, 2020 Federal Legislative Process/Federal Legislative History

February 13, 2020 Federal Register/Code of Federal Regulations

February 20, 2020 Federal Administrative Tribunals

February 27, 2020 Municipal Law 1: County

March 11, 2020 Municipal Law 2: City

March 19, 2020 Interpreting Rules of Procedure and Rules of Evidence

March 26, 2020 General Restrictions on Accessing Information

April 2, 2020 Discovery of Personal Information

April 9, 2020 Discovery of Technical/Scientific/Medical Information

April 16, 2020 Discovery of Corporate and Financial Information

**Class preparation**

Students should anticipate spending a minimum of 3 hours preparing for each class. Preparation includes completing reading and homework assignments. Details about how to prepare for each class are located on the course Canvas page.

**Grading**:

The Levin College of Law’s mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College’s website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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  |

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

Individual Assignments: 35%

Group projects: 20%

Final Exam: 40%

Participation: 5%

The law school grading policy is available at <http://www.law.ufl.edu/student-affairs/current-students/academic-policies#9>.

**Assignments**

1. **Homework Assignments**

There will be at least seven homework assignments during the semester. The point total for assignments will vary according to the difficulty of the assignment. Assignments must be uploaded to the course Canvas page by the due date. Unless you receive permission from the instructor no later than 24 hours prior to the due date, you may not turn in assignments after the due date and time. Failure to turn in an assignment by the due date will result in zero points for that assignment.

1. **Group Assignments**

There will be two group assignments during the semester. Each student will be assigned to a group and a group leader will be designated by the instructor. Further information about group assignments will be given in class. Assignments must be uploaded to the course Canvas page by the due date. Unless you receive permission from the instructor no later than 24 hours prior to the due date, you may not turn in assignments after the due date and time. Failure to turn in an assignment by the due date will result in zero points for that assignment.

**Final Exam**

The final exam is a timed, take-home exam, administered during the exam period. It will include short answer and essay questions that will test your ability to apply the skills you will have learned by the end of the spring semester. This exam will comprise 40% of the course grade.  The final exam will be graded anonymously using a curve.

**Participation**

The participation grade is determined by preparation for class, participation in class, and overall effort to complete the assignments, including contacting the instructor when you encounter difficulties with assignments. The participation grade is earned each week of the course.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade. If you miss two or more classes, your final grade may be lowered by one grade. You will not be allowed to take the final exam if you miss 3 or more classes. If you know that you will not be in class on a particular day, please notify me as far in advance as possible.

The attendance policy for this course is in accordance with the attendance policy stated on the UF Law School’s Academic Policies page at <https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/current-students/academic-policies>.

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

**Use of Laptops**

Students are required to bring laptops to each class to conduct legal research, access the course webpage, and take notes. All other uses are not permitted, including preparing for other classes, and using e-mail and social media websites.

**Use of cellphones and smartphones**

Except in response to emergency calls or texts, students may not use their cellphones during class. If you have an emergency and need to use your cellphone or smartphone, please excuse yourself from class when responding.

**Additional Information**:

**Disability Accommodation**: Students requesting accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (a function of the Dean of Students Office and the Division of Student Affairs). The DRC is located in 0020 Reid Hall. Students may reach the DRC at 392-8565 or accessuf@dso.ufl.edu.

**Academic Honesty and Code of Conduct:**

Students must adhere to the [UF Honor Code](https://www.law.ufl.edu/life-at-uf-law/office-of-student-affairs/additional-information/honor-code-and-committee/honor-code). Unless directed by the instructor for a specific assignment, students are not allowed to work together on assignments or share answers.