



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION
School of Information

LIS5417 – Introduction to Legal Resources (3 credits)

SECTION(S)

TERM 20XX, COURSE MEETING DAY/TIME, COURSE MEETING LOCATION

MODE OF INSTRUCTION: ONLINE

Students all meet with instructor for class weekly, synchronously, using a multi-media conferencing system such as Collaborate, at a specific class time indicated in the University's course schedule for each semester. Additional asynchronous interactions (e.g., discussion forums) among students and with instructor may also be required to complete the course.

Instructor: J. Marks

Email:

Office:

Phone:

Course Location/Website:

Office Hours (in office, online or via phone):

Teaching Assistant:

Email:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students are introduced to legal resources and their use for legal research. Upon completion of this course, the student will understand how legal information is organized and structured, and be able to retrieve laws and regulations from many sources. This course is designed to enable a student to function effectively as an information management professional in any type of legal setting, including a law library.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Locate pertinent materials of both a law and law-related nature, and recognize their importance and relevance to the issue at hand;
2. Summarize the relationships among branches and levels of governance in terms of both the substance and procedural aspects of law;
3. Develop a thorough understanding of the processes by which law is created and applied to a given problem or situation;
4. Demonstrate some knowledge of the legal professions and the public to appropriately address the legal information needs of the population being served;
5. Develop a working vocabulary of legal terminology, and a facility with legal citation and abbreviations;

6. Develop knowledge of the literature of the law in its various formats; and
7. Facilitate the use and dissemination of information in ways that are both ethical and legal, and in keeping with generally accepted professional standards and practices.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Stephen Elias & Susan Levinkind, *Legal Research: How to Find & Understand the Law*. 17th edition.
[This or a similar text will be required.]

Additional reading materials will be assigned and will be available online.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

The course will be a mix of lectures, Weekly Discussions, and Research Problem Sets to measure comprehension. Class meetings will generally begin with a lecture, after which we will move to weekly in-class group discussions.

Weekly Group Discussions: Groups will respond to discussion prompts provided by the instructor. Prompts will include discussion questions about the readings, lectures, pre- and post-review of course materials, and/or in-class examination of additional resources relevant to each week's topic. Groups will prepare and submit summaries of their in-class discussions and will continue their discussions asynchronously using online discussions.

Individual Response Short Paper: In addition to the group discussions, students will be required to turn in one specialized short paper on a research topic of their choosing, in order to give students an opportunity to explore a specialized research topic.

Research Problem Sets: After completion of major units of work, students will be individually assigned research problem sets to measure comprehension and mastery of legal research skills. Each problem set will be comprised of 15-20 directed questions requiring knowledge of each particular units' material.

GRADE CALCULATION:

Weekly Discussions	30%
Individual Response Paper	10%
Problem Set 1 – Case Law	20%
Problem Set 2 – Statutory Law	20%
Problem Set 3 – Modern Digital Legal Research	20%
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE:

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A 93 – 100	A- 89 – 92
B+ 85 – 88	B 81 – 84
B- 77 – 80	C+ 73 – 76
C 69 – 72	C- 65 – 68
D+ 61 – 64	D 57 – 60
D- 53 – 56	F 0 – 52

COURSE OUTLINE:

1. Introduction
2. Overview of Law
3. Overview of Legal Research
4. Case Reporters
5. Understanding Case Law
6. Finding Case Law
7. Confirming Case Law
8. Legislative Information and Statutory Law
9. Statutory Law Continued
10. Regulations
11. Secondary Legal Resources
12. Secondary Legal Resources Continued
13. Legal Research Online: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, and the Internet
14. Legal Research Online: Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, and the Internet Continued
15. Summarizing and Reporting Legal Research

SCHOOL POLICIES:

Copyright Statement

Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with, and for the duration of, the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Technology, Education, And Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act (refer to the 3/7/2001 TEACH Act at www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/).

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the University that its employees and students neither commit nor condone sexual harassment in any form. http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/graduate/information/university_notices/

iSchool Hardware and Software Requirements

A list of all hardware and software requirements for students participating in the School of Information (iSchool) courses can be found at the following location:

<http://ischool.cci.fsu.edu/academics/online/requirements/>

Student Eligibility for an Incomplete Grade

Incomplete ("I") grades will not be assigned, except in the case of exceptional unforeseen circumstances that occur within the last three weeks of the semester and your work has otherwise been satisfactory.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

University Attendance Policy:

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse.

Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Academic Honor Policy:

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>)

Americans With Disabilities Act:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center

874 Traditions Way

108 Student Services Building

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167

(850) 644-9566 (voice)

(850) 644-8504 (TDD)

sdrc@admin.fsu.edu

<https://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc/>

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.