

EMPIRE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF LAW

SYLLABUS

- Course Number:** C511A
- Course Name:** Advanced Legal Research
- Professor:** Gary Hoenig, JD, PhD
(707) 545-0900
- Abstract:** In depth Study and Application of Advanced Legal Research Techniques, including computer based systems, to practical legal issues.
- Contract:** Times and course sessions may change as the class proceeds. If a student misses a class, the student is responsible for determining whether there has been a change from this syllabus.
- When:** Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., beginning September 01, 2009. Class meets for 3 hour sessions with study weeks at regular intervals.
- Units:** 2 Units. There are 10 class sessions, each being 3 hours. Session 10 is the final project.
- Course Material:** Access to both a Lexis-Nexis and a WestLaw on-line research account is required and is available through the Law School. Course materials consist of readings from the assigned text, tutorials and on-line user's manuals as provided by the various legal database publishers. Other recommended reading materials will be given as appropriate for further clarification of the use of the resources.
- Required Text:** "Fundamentals of Legal Research", 9th Edition, R.M. Mersky and D.J. Dunn, Foundation Press, 2002. ISBN 9781599412184
- Grading:** Pass/Fail
- To obtain a passing grade, students must:
1. Timely complete and submit all Legal Research Assignments as assigned in class.
 2. Complete Research Database Tutorials including Lexis, Westlaw.
 3. Participate in Class. Students are expected to demonstrate improvement of their research skill proficiency through active participation in class discussions and research projects.

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4. Timely submit the Final Research Project and receive a passing grade as defined by the Empire College School of Law School 2008-2009 Catalog.

The grade consists of:

Class Participation	20%
Research Assignments (incl. Mid-Term)	30%
Final Research Project	50%

The Final Research Project consists of five legal research questions, to be researched and documented in Legal Memo format, or a Legal Path Finder. The Final Research Project must be submitted no later than the scheduled final exam period for the class.

Goals:

Traditional legal research methods and materials have been augmented and, in most situations, improved upon by electronic research tools. Legal research and access to legal materials are now readily accessible in electronic form. Further, the ability to effectively legal research is one of the skills that every competent practitioner must possess. Each student passing this course should have a working knowledge of the fundamental tools of legal research and the process of devising and implementing a coherent and effective research strategy.

Methodology:

The purposes of the class meetings are to introduce various advanced legal research tools, demonstrate the efficient application of legal research to practical examples, explore primary and secondary legal resources, engage students in the research process, develop efficient and effective research skills, share research strategies, and explore legal research materials in various areas of law. When available, guest speakers will present research strategies in specialized areas of law. Assistance will be provided to students during the designated class times.

Plan:

Assignments will be given as the course proceeds. If you miss a class you MUST make arrangements to receive any assignments given and turn in any assignments due or you may jeopardize credit for that assignment.

Week 1 9/1

Introduction to Advanced Legal Research. Overview of Legal Materials. Mandatory and Persuasive Legal Authorities. Bring Lexis and Westlaw Username and Password. Activate your Lexis and Westlaw accounts before class. Review the on-line Lexis and Westlaw tutorials before class. Reading: Text pp 1-20.

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Week 2	9/10	Boolean Math. Developing Search Strategies. Constructing an effective Boolean search syntax. Legal Citation. Reading: Thamus, Text pp 538-560; 574-594.
Week 3	9/15	Boolean vs Natural/Freestyle Language searching. Federal and California Case Research. Reading: Text pp 21-67, 68-80, 133-148, Reply to Thamus.
Week 4	9/22	Federal and California Legislation. Reading: Text pp 81-115, 149-180. How Laws are Made.
Week 5	9/29	Updating and Citators. Text pp 312-349.
Week 6	10/6	Federal and California Legislative History. Reading: Text pp 181-239.
Week 7	10/13	Administrative Law, Rules, Regulations, CFRs, CCRs, Agency Decisions. Reading: Text pp. 258-294.
Week 8	10/20	Secondary Materials. Reading: TBA.
Week 9	10/27	Mid-Term, Assignments, Project. Class Does Not Meet This Week
Week 10	11/3	Mid-Term, Assignments, Project. Class Does Not Meet This Week
Week 11	11/10	Mid-Term, Assignments, Project. Class Does Not Meet This Week
Week 12	11/17	Review. Using the Internet for Legal research. Reading: Text pp. 560-573.
Week 13	11/24	Final Project. Class Does Not Meet This Week.
Week 14	12/1	Final Project. Class Does Not Meet This Week.
Week 15		Final Project due. Final project must be submitted to the Front Office before the end of the assigned final exam period for this class. Make certain that you use only your Student ID on the final project.