

## Course Outline

**COURSE:** LAWS 2908 C - Legal Studies Methods and Theories

**TERM:** Fall 2008/09

**PREREQUISITES:** LAWS 1000 and Honours standing

**CLASS:** Day & Time: Wednesday 8:35 – 11:25  
Room: 4332 ME (Mackenzie Engineering)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Michelle L. DeVidi  
**(CONTRACT)**

**CONTACT:** Office: Room 206 Library  
Office Hrs: Fridays 1:00 - 3:00 and by appointment  
Telephone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 2922  
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"Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible, but no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first test requiring accommodations. Please note the deadline for submitting completed forms to the Paul Menton Centre is November 7, 2008 for December examinations and March 6, 2009 for April examinations. For further information, please see: [http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/accom\\_policy.html](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/accom_policy.html)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course will be to introduce you to a variety of information sources available to legal researchers. It will allow you to develop the following:

- Legal research skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Writing skills (legal citation)

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Kerr, Margaret , Kurtz, JoAnn & Blatt, Arlene. *Legal Research: Step by Step*, 2d ed. (Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, 2006).

McGill Law Journal, Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation, 6th ed. (Scarborough, Ontario: Carswell, 2006) [McGill Guide].

***Additional readings are available on Course Reserve in the Library.***

**EVALUATION****(All components must be completed in order to get a passing grade)****Assignments:**

Students will develop their own research topic which they will refine (in consultation with the instructor) for their final paper. The course is set up so that students will be able to complete the necessary tasks in order to write a solid research paper. Students will develop a condensed research proposal, prepare an annotated bibliography, and create a detailed research methodology - all in preparation for their final term paper.

Class participation in labs is critical to achieving success in this course! Lab time will allow students to develop their research skills to find materials on their own topics. Please note the participation mark for this course is worth 10%.

The final research paper will synthesize and analyze the relevant journal articles, case law, statutes, regulations and government documents that the student has collected during the semester. Papers will be twelve pages in length, plus bibliography.

**Grading Scheme:**

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
<b>Short Assignments</b>	
Research Proposal	20
Annotated Bibliography	20
Detailed Research Methodology	20
Final Paper	30
Class Participation	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade per day (i.e. A to A-), unless appropriate documentation is received (i.e. doctor's note).

**SCHEDULE**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Course Schedule:</u>
I. <b>Sept. 10</b>	Introduction to course and overview
II. <b>Sept. 17</b>	From Topics to Questions - Developing your area of interest - Narrowing your focus - Creating a research question - From research questions to specific problems - Research strategy and timeline preparation. Introduction to Legal Literature <b>Read:</b> <i>The Craft of Research</i> . Ch. 3 & 4 on Reserve in the Library <i>Legal Research: Step by Step</i> . Ch. 1

- III. Sept. 24 **(Class & Lab in Library room 102)**  
Finding & Analyzing Cases: Westlaw eCarswell, Quicklaw & CanLII  
**Read:** *Legal Research: Step by Step*. Ch. 4 & 11  
**Topic sign up at the end of class today!**
- IV. Oct. 1 Refining your research question  
- Drafting your arguments  
- Supporting your claims with evidence  
Introduction to Social Science and Humanities Literature  
**Read:** *The Craft of Research*. Ch. 7 on Reserve in the Library  
**Topics must be approved by the instructor today!**
- VI. Oct. 8 Finding Government Documents  
**Read:** *The Legislative Process Library Guide:*  
[http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/law\\_legislation.html](http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/law_legislation.html)  
**Research Proposal Assignment Due 20%**
- VII. Oct. 15 **(Class & Lab in Library room 102)**  
Introduction to Legislation  
**Read:** *Legal Research: Step by Step* Ch. 2 & 3  
Finding Bills & Statutes Library Guide:  
[http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/findbills\\_statutes.html](http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/findbills_statutes.html)
- VIII. Oct. 22 Citation Lab / Annotation Workshop  
- Students are to bring their research materials to class  
**Read:** *Uniform Legal Citation:*  
[http://www.library.carleton.ca/howdol/uniform\\_legal\\_style.pdf](http://www.library.carleton.ca/howdol/uniform_legal_style.pdf)
- IX. Oct. 29 Synthesizing and Analyzing Information  
Group Exercise – In groups of five, students will discuss their topics and how they plan to shape their papers.  
**Review:** *The Craft of Research*. Ch. 7 on Reserve in the Library  
**Annotated Bibliography Due 20%**
- X. Nov. 5 Ongoing Research  
- Conducting additional research as necessary  
- Revising and re-working sections  
Working in pairs, students will address their progress in preparing their final papers.  
Questions regarding content, context, purpose, audience, organization, support and design will be addressed in this team exercise.
- XI. Nov. 12 Preparing the draft – Writing Workshop  
- Organization  
- Addressing Potential Bias  
- Arguments & Evidence  
- Conclusions  
Group Exercise – Presenting your ideas  
**Detailed Research Methodology Due 20%**
- XII. Nov. 19 Scheduled student meetings with the professor will be held during class time to review your detailed research methodology before the final submission.
- XIII. Nov. 26 Wrap up & Course evaluation.  
**Final Paper Due in class 30%**