

Course Outline

COURSE:	LAWS 3907 A – Legal Research Methods
PREREQUISITES:	LAWS 1000 and Honours standing
TERM:	First Term - Summer 2008
CLASS: Day & Time:	Mondays and Wednesday 6:05 – 8:55 pm
Room:	Paterson Hall 201
INSTRUCTOR: (Contract)	Michelle DeVidi
CONTACT: Office:	206 Library
Office Hrs:	Mondays 2:30 – 4:30
Telephone:	250-2600 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 June 13, 2008 for first term summer courses and July 25, 2008 for second term summer courses. For further information, please see: http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/accom_policy.html

COURSE OVERVIEW:

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)

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 revise their original research proposal - 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:

	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>% OF FINAL GRADE</u>	<u>DUE</u>
Short Assignments:			
	Research Proposal	10	May 28
	Annotated Bibliography	20	June 9
	Revised Research Outline	25	June 16
	Final Paper	35	June 23
	Class Participation	10	
TOTAL		100%	

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).

ALL COMPONENTS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO GET A PASSING GRADE.

REQUIRED TEXT:

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

Additional readings are available on Course Reserve in the Library.

SCHEDULE:

	<u>Week</u>	<u>Course Schedule:</u>
I.	May 12	Introduction to course and overview
II.	May 14	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. Read: <i>The Craft of Research</i> . Ch. 3 & 4 on Reserve in the Library
III.	May 19	(Statutory Holiday - No Class)
IV.	May 21	(Class & Lab in Library room 102) Finding Journal Articles & Case Comments Read: <i>Legal Research: Step by Step</i> . Ch. 1 Topic sign up at the end of class today!
V.	May 26	(Class & Lab in Library room 102) Finding & Analyzing Cases: Westlaw eCarswell, Quicklaw & CanLII Read: <i>Legal Research: Step by Step</i> . Ch. 4 & 11 Topics must be approved by the instructor today!

- VI. May 28 **(Class & Lab in Library room 402)**
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
Research Proposal Assignment Due 10%
- VII. June 2 **(Class & Lab in Library room 102)**
Finding Government Documents
Read: *The Legislative Process Library Guide:*
http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/law_legislation.html
- VIII. June 4 **(Class & Lab in Library room 102)**
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
- IX. June 9 **Synthesizing and Analyzing Information**
Group Exercise – In groups of five, students will discuss their topics and how they plan to shape their papers.
Read: *The Craft of Research:* Ch. 7 on Reserve in the Library
Annotated Bibliography Due 20%
- X. June 11 **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. June 16 **Preparing the draft – Writing Workshop**
- Organization
- Addressing Potential Bias
- Arguments & Evidence
- Conclusions
Group Exercise – Presenting your ideas
Revised Research Proposal Due 25%
- XII. June 18 **The Polished Piece**
- Directions for Future Research
- Addressing the Gaps
- Solid Conclusions
Pairs Exercise – Reviewing the draft
- XIII. June 23 **Course evaluation.**
Final Paper Due in class 35%