

Course Outline

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| COURSE: | LAWS 3907 D – Legal Research Methods |
| PREREQUISITES: | LAWS 1000 and Honours Standing |
| TERM: | Fall 2007 |
| CLASS: Day & Time: | Mondays 11:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. |
| Room: | 447 Tory Building |
| INSTRUCTOR: | Christine Langill |
| CONTACT: Office: | C476 Loeb |
| Office Hrs: | TBA |
| Email: | christine_langill@carleton.ca |

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations in this course are required to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first class or ITV test. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary accommodation arrangement. Please note the deadline for submitting completed forms to the PMC for formally scheduled exam accommodations is November 9, 2007 for December examinations and March 14, 2008, for April examinations. With regard to accommodations for religious obligations and pregnancy, please see <http://www.carleton.ca/law/accommodations.htm>.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Using traditional and electronic sources, this course will examine basic legal research methods, skills and principles used in the design and execution of research projects. Students will apply these research skills through a series of four short assignments, in-class and lab participation, and a group presentation. Also, for the final research paper plus bibliography, students will have the opportunity to apply, synthesize and analyze their research results obtained during the short assignments.

REQUIRED TEXT:

McGill Law Journal, *Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation*, 6th ed. (Toronto: Carswell, 2006).

Note: Other readings will include articles placed on reserve in the library or as provided on WebCT. It is expected that students will be checking WebCT on a regular basis for course updates and assignments.

TEXT THAT IS RECOMMENDED, BUT NOT REQUIRED:

Tjaden, Ted. *Legal Research and Writing*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2004).

EVALUATION SCHEME:**I. Participation: 10%**

As this course is conducted as a seminar, your participation is a key component of the course and your final mark. You are expected to contribute to in-class discussions and to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings. Your participation mark is based on your attendance in classes and labs; and, your contribution to class discussions and in-class group work.

II. Short Assignments: Total Value of 40% - as described below:**a. *Research Proposal* 10%**

The Research Proposal is your first short assignment for this course. In this assignment you will be required to provide a brief summary of your selected legal research question for your individual paper that is due towards the end of the course. Research topics must relate to legal issues in a social science context (suggested subject areas will be provided in class). Your proposal must include a reference to four (4) secondary sources that directly relate to your research topic. The secondary sources are to be properly cited with an annotated bibliography. **All topics must first be approved by the instructor.**

b. *Selected Secondary Sources* 10%

This is a short assignment that will allow you to expand on your research of secondary sources in your legal research, to include further selected secondary sources, such as journal articles.

c. *Cases* 10%

In this assignment you will be assessed on your ability to research and find cases that are relevant to your research question and to prepare a case brief.

d. *Statutes, Regulations and Related Materials* 10%

This assignment will allow you to identify and cite relevant statutes, regulations and other government documents and to discuss how they relate to your research topic.

III. Group Presentation: 20%

Working in small groups, you will be provided with a research question for the group. Each group will provide a brief presentation of their findings and response to the assigned question. The group presentation will provide you with the opportunity to discuss research topics and different research approaches.

IV. Individual Paper: 30%

This component will allow you to synthesize and analyze your legal research results that you have collected during the course to prepare your final research paper, on an individual basis, on your selected research question. Papers are to be between 8 to 10 pages in length, plus bibliography. Further details regarding the research paper and the format will be provided in class.

TOTAL: 100%

All of the course components must be completed in order to obtain a final grade.

FORMAT OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments must be typewritten, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, with standard 1-inch margins. Assignments **must** include a cover page with the course code and section, your name and student number and the instructor's name. Any assignments submitted via e-mail will not be accepted as all assignments are to be submitted in class. All citations are required to be in accordance with the citation style set out in the *Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation, 6th ed.* **Further details for assignments will be provided in class.**

BACKUP COPIES:

Students must keep a hardcopy of all written work submitted for marking in the class. This hardcopy should be maintained for at least 3 months following the end of the course in case there is any discrepancy in final grades.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Late assignments will be marked down by one-half letter grade (*e.g.* B to B-) for each day the assignment is late, unless approved supporting documentation is provided (*i.e.* a medical note). Assignments submitted late must still be handed in within 6 days of the due date, failing which they will receive a grade of F.