

**Course Outline**

**COURSE:** LAWS 5001 X – Legal Method and Social Inquiry

**TERM:** Winter 2009

**CLASS:** Day & Time: Thursday 11:35 am - 2:25 pm

Room: 431 TB (Tory Bldg)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Clinton Timothy Curle

**CONTACT:** Office: Loeb D582  
Office Hrs: Monday 11:30-12:30, Thursday 10:30-11:30  
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"Students with documented disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities include physical, mental, and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, as well as other conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC at 613-520-6608, early each term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by March 6, 2009 for April exams." Also available at [http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/faculty/acom\\_statement.html](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/faculty/acom_statement.html). For Religious and Pregnancy accommodations, please contact Equity Services, 613-520-2600 x. 5622 or their website: [www.carleton.ca/equity](http://www.carleton.ca/equity)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a required course in the M.A. in Legal Studies. We will examine issues associated with methodological and theoretical considerations, research design, and academic writing. The course will be conducted as a seminar; engaged student participation is expected. The purpose of this course is to equip and inspire you to write an excellent MA thesis. Think of it as thesis boot camp. The practical focus of the course will be on the production of a thesis proposal. NOTE: You should identify your thesis supervisor early in the semester and keep them informed as your proposal takes shape.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

There are two mandatory texts for this course. Other supplementary readings may be assigned at my discretion.

1. Madson, David. *Successful Dissertations and Theses: A Guide to Graduate Student Research from Proposal to Completion*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992).
2. Walliman, Nicholas. *Your Research Project*, 2nd. ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2005).

**EVALUATION**

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

1. **Research Question, due Jan. 22 (verbal), Jan. 29 (written) - 20%**  
Include some discussion of your area of interest, a particular problem that draws your attention, possible research questions (what don't you know that you want to find out), proposed scope of research and why you think it's relevant or important to explore this area. You will present this verbally on Jan. 25 to a small cohort group within the class to get peer input, and then submit a revised written copy on the following week. Length: 4-6 pages.

2. **Literature Review, due Feb. 26 - 20%**  
Summarize the work that has already been done in your area of interest, and reflect on how your proposed research will relate to this body of work. Length: 4-6 pages.
3. **Research Plan, due March 19 - 20%**  
Set forth "the theory (ies) that will be considered and the method(s) that will be employed in selecting, organizing and analyzing the material that will make up the main body of the thesis" (from the Graduate Handbook).
4. **Final Research Proposal (due April 7, 4 pm, dept. of law office) - 20%**  
Draw together the work you have done in the semester into a coherent whole. This will give you a good basis from which to begin work on the thesis proper. Please provide a copy of this to your instructor, with whom you can continue to develop it. Generally follow Madsen and the guidelines provided in Class and the Graduate Handbook. Length: 14-16 pages.
5. **Participation - 20%**  
I expect you to not only attend class, but also to participate in an enthusiastic and informed manner in our class discussions. The assigned readings must be thoughtfully read prior to each class. The participation grade is based on attendance as well as on the quantity and quality of discussion contributions.

## **SCHEDULE**

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|----------------|--|
| <b>Jan. 8</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>  |
| <b>Jan. 15</b> | <b>What is research? Range of legal questions, range of methods, and forming a research question</b><br>- Masden 3 (numbers indicate chapters)<br>- Walliman 1, 3  |
| <b>Jan. 22</b> | <b>Discussion of Research Questions; doing a literature review</b><br>- ( <i>verbal research questions due</i> )<br>- Walliman 2   |
| <b>Jan 29</b>  | <b>The MA thesis</b><br>- ( <i>written research questions due</i> )<br>- Madsen 1 & 2<br>- Carleton Graduate Studies: Thesis Requirements & Guidelines for Preparation<br><a href="http://www.gs.carleton.ca/current_students/thesis/index.html">http://www.gs.carleton.ca/current_students/thesis/index.html</a><br>- MA Leg. St. thesis of your choice |
| <b>Feb. 5</b>  | <b>The Research Proposal - what and why</b><br>- Madsen 4<br>- Walliman 9  |
| <b>Feb. 12</b> | <b>Research Plan: theory</b><br>-Walliman 5  |
| <b>Feb. 19</b> | <b>Reading Week</b>  |
| <b>Feb. 26</b> | <b>Research Plan: method</b><br>- ( <i>literature review due</i> )<br>- Walliman 7   |
| <b>March 5</b> | <b>Research and Organization Techniques</b><br>- Walliman 6<br>- Madsen 5, 6   |

**March 12 Academic Argumentation**

- Walliman 4
- Madsen 8

**March 19 The Art and Science of Good Writing**

- *(Research Plan due)*
- Madsen 7
- student-picked examples of good or bad academic writing

**March 26 Research Ethics & Honesty**

- Walliman 8

**April 2 Course Conclusion**

**April 7 *(Research Proposal due)***