



COURSE SYLLABUS: PLAW 3433 (S22-23)

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SECTION 1: COURSE INFORMATION

Format: Traditional / 16 weeks.

Course ID: PLAW 3433-01

Course Title: Legal Research and Writing

College: Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

Prerequisites: Junior Standing or permission of the instructor

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Michelle Gilmore, MLIS
Steelman Library
mmgilmore@seu.edu

Office Hours: Please email me to schedule a meeting.

Course Description

This course is designed to teach students how to identify and analyze legal problems. Students will engage in legal research using primary and secondary sources. Upon completion of the legal analysis of a problem, students will prepare a written form that adheres to the conventions of the legal profession.

Course Overview

This course assists students in developing foundational research skills and other practical tools equivalent to those needed to be successful as they enter law school or a legal profession.

Course Workload

Time spent on course assignments will vary by student depending on familiarity with course content, reading rate of speed, writing rate of speed, and other individual factors. Based on averages for most students, it is estimated that the course workload estimate for this course is 9 hours per week outside of class.

Course Materials

Required textbooks: Basic Legal Research Workbook, (5th) by Sloan, Schwinn and Edwards, Wolters Kluwer Publishing.

Course materials: All other required course materials will be provided.

Required and optional textbooks are accessed and ordered through [SEU's bookstore](#).

There is one copy of the textbook on Course Reserve in the Steelman Library.

Disclaimer: The resources utilized in this course provide information, thoughts and insights that

should encourage critical thinking on the part of the student. Please note as well that as an Assembly of God institution, Southeastern University does not necessarily endorse specific personal, religious, philosophical, or political positions found in these resources.

Course Topics

The purpose of this course is to introduce, reinforce, and measure learning on the following topics:

1. Westlaw Certification
2. Case Research
3. Creating a legal memorandum
4. Writing a case brief
5. Creating basic legal documents

Intended Learning Outcomes

As a result of reading, study, and assessments in this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and differentiate between primary and secondary sources in the legal field of research.
2. Demonstrate the correct formatting of legal document writing.
3. Illustrate understanding of legal memorandum writing through reading assessment of mock legal cases, contracts, and journals.
4. Write a legal memorandum demonstrating skills in syntax and organization.
5. Classify and draft common legal documents.
6. Compile legal research with other students and collectively present a defense for various case studies.

Late Work

Late work may be accepted, as long as the student attends class consistently and follows this procedure: 1) contacts me via email or in person after class to indicate that they want to turn in late work 2) we set up a virtual meeting to create a makeup schedule 3) the student submits the late work according to that schedule. The final assignment of the semester may not be accepted late.

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be awarded for participation in certain in-class activities.

SECTION 2: SOUTHEASTERN POLICIES

Academic Policies

View the link above to see Southeastern's Policies regarding SEU's Mission and Vision Statements, Title IX Statement, Student Services, Class Participation, Official Email, MyFIRE Use, Technical Difficulties, Technical Support, Disability Statement, Academic Honesty, Course Evaluation, Official Withdrawal, Grading Scale, and Netiquette.

Sexual & Gender-Based Misconduct

Southeastern University is committed to creating an environment for every student to thrive academically, spiritually, and socially. An aspect of creating this culture is providing avenues for students to discuss and report any activity that may compromise this commitment.

Under a federal law known as Title IX, "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972).

While students should feel comfortable approaching faculty with issues they may be struggling with or concerns they may be having, students should know that all faculty and staff are required to report certain information about Sexual Misconduct and certain crimes to University administration, in order to help keep the University community safe, and to connect students to all of the resources and reporting options that are available.

For example, if you inform faculty or staff (in private or during class discussions) of an incident of Sexual Misconduct, that individual will keep the information as private as possible, but is required to bring it to the attention of the institution's Title IX Office. If a student would like to talk to the Title IX office directly, they can do so by e-mail at smpowell@seu.edu, by phone at 863-667-5236, or in person at Pansler U210. For more information about Title IX reporting options as well as confidential resources at Southeastern, please go to: <http://www.seu.edu/titleix>.

If you are struggling with an issue that is traumatic, unusually stressful, or results in disruptive behavior, faculty and staff will likely inform the Care Team. If students would like to reach out directly to the Care Team for assistance, they can do so at the Campus Counseling Center (<http://myseu.seu.edu/services/counseling-health-wellness-services/seu-care-team/>) located in Health Services in Smith Hall, by phone at 863-667-5205, or by e-mail at care@seu.edu.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

ADA SUPPORT SERVICES – 863-667-5283

COUNSELING SERVICES – 863-667-5205

STUDENT CONDUCT OFFICE – 863-667-5486

SAFETY & SECURITY OFFICE – 863-667-5190

SECTION 3: COURSE SCHEDULE

The **Course Schedule** provides a listing of your work in this course. The assessments are listed by week and include the due dates and point values.

Note: Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. EST on the due date, unless otherwise noted.

AIM, LEARN, AND APPLY DESCRIPTIONS

Aim



When you see the Aim icon, you will be introduced to topics and ideas that will be covered throughout this module. The AIM will also provide you with a glimpse into your learning objectives and an introduction to this module.

Learn



When you see the Learn icon, all of your reading assignments will be listed and may include additional resources that your instructor is providing to help you complete the activities and assessments for the module.

Apply



When you see the Apply Icon, it will be time to demonstrate your learning for the module. The items here are those in which you'll be graded and may include discussions, activities, assignments, quizzes, exams, and projects.

WEEK 1: Ending January 13th



AIM

- Distinguish among different types of authority.
- Locate Constitutional provisions, statutes, and cases.
- Identify the formats of constitutional provisions, statutes, and cases.



LEARN

- Read: Course Syllabus



APPLY

- Begin Westlaw Certification
-



WEEK 2: Ending January 20th

MLK DAY - NO CLASS 1/16



AIM

- Distinguish among different types of authority.
- Locate Constitutional provisions, statutes, and cases in print from their citations.
- Identify the formats of constitutional provisions, statutes, and cases.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 1



APPLY

- Complete and post to MyFire Westlaw Certification Certificate
 - Complete and post to MyFire Exercise 1.2 - Due Friday
-



WEEK 3: Ending January 27th



AIM

- After completing this exercise, you should be able to generate search terms from a set of facts surrounding a legal question.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 1



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 2.1 to MyFire - Due Friday



WEEK 4: Ending February 3rd



AIM

- Use Westlaw, Lexis, and subscription databases to locate secondary sources using table of contents and word searches.
- Navigate through a secondary source retrieved online to locate information within the source.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 3



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 3.1 to MyFire - Due Friday
- **Case Research due Friday 2/3** - Post to MyFire



WEEK 5: Ending February 10th

SEU CONFERENCE - NO CLASS 2/6 & 2/8



AIM

- After completing this exercise, you should be able to research cases online using word searches.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 4



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 4.1 to MyFire - Due Friday



WEEK 6: Ending February 17th



AIM

- Check case citations online using KeyCite in Westlaw, Shepard's in Lexis, and BCite in Bloomberg Law.

- Interpret citator entries.
- Understand the differences among Shepard's in Lexis, KeyCite in Westlaw, and BCite in Bloomberg Law.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 5



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 5.1 to MyFire - Due Friday



WEEK 7: Ending February 24th
PRESIDENTS' DAY - NO CLASS 2/20



AIM

- Locate statutes by using an online index, browsing a table of contents, and executing a word search.
- Update statutory research and locate research references using online statutory citators.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 6



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 6.1 to MyFire - Due Friday
- **Case Briefs due Friday 2/24** - Post to MyFire



WEEK 8: Ending March 3rd



AIM

- Locate documents in the legislative history of a specific federal statute by statutory annotation in Westlaw.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 7



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 7.1 to MyFire - Due Friday



WEEK 9: Ending March 10th

 **AIM**

- Locate and interpret regulations in the *Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.)*.
- Locate and interpret regulatory history in the *Federal Register*.

 **LEARN**

- Read: Chapter 8

 **APPLY**

- Complete and post Exercise 8.1 to MyFire - Due Friday.



WEEK 10: Ending March 17th

SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS 3/13, 3/15, & 3/17



WEEK 11: Ending March 24th

 **AIM**

- Explain how differences in database coverage affect search results Explain how to limit and refine search results
- Demonstrate appropriate use of Boolean search techniques in Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg Law.

 **LEARN**

- Read: Chapter 9

 **APPLY**

- Complete and post Exercise 9.1 to MyFire - Due Friday



WEEK 12: Ending March 31st

 **AIM**

- Develop and execute a comprehensive research plan to locate authority on a legal issue.



LEARN

- Read: Chapter 10



APPLY

- Complete and post Exercise 10.1 to MyFire - Due Friday
-



WEEK 13: Ending April 7th
GRACE WEEK (1/3)
GOOD FRIDAY - NO CLASS 4/7



AIM

- Use the information learned during the semester to complete final assignments.



LEARN

- Refer to previous chapters covered to help complete final assignments.



APPLY

- Complete and post Memorandum First Draft to MyFire - Due Friday
-



WEEK 14: Ending April 14th
GRACE WEEK (2/3)



AIM

- Use the information learned during the semester to complete final assignments.



LEARN

- Refer to previous chapters covered to help complete final assignments.



APPLY

- Complete: Opinion Letter and post to MyFire - Due Friday
 - Complete: Demand Letter and post to MyFire - Due Friday
-



WEEK 15: Ending April 21st
GRACE WEEK (3/3)
PROFESSOR'S BIRTHDAY – NO CLASS 4/21



AIM

- Use the information learned during the semester to complete final assignments.



LEARN

- Refer to previous chapters covered to help complete final assignments.



APPLY

- Hand in Memorandum Final Draft - Due Friday



WEEK 16: April 24-27th (Finals Week)

NO CLASS

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENTS

Weekly Exercises

Description

Weekly exercises from the textbook are used to reinforce knowledge and use of the Westlaw database.

100 Total Possible Points

Due weekly; 10 points each

Memorandum of Law

Description

A memorandum of law is a document that is used in many law firms and other organizations. Throughout this course there will be assignments that layer the various pieces of the document. The pieces include case research, case briefs and drafting the actual document.

300 Total Possible Points

Case research 50 points

Case briefs 100 points

Memorandum draft 50 points

Memorandum final draft 100 points

Demand Letter and Opinion Letter

Description

Attorneys and other legal professionals at times may need to draft letters to clients or opposing parties and counsel. These are business style letters with a legal flair.

100 Total Possible Points

50 points each

Westlaw Certification

Description

After completing various online tasks students will receive a certification in the use of Westlaw.

50 Total Possible Points

Attendance and Class Engagement

Description

Attending class and otherwise being engaged in the task at hand, including:

- Manic Monday and Freaky Friday activities
- Research Lab attendance Wednesdays 1x per month

50 Total Possible Points

Appendix A

Selected Bibliography and Web Resources

In a course that involves any type of research component, the student should use sources from scholarly or peer reviewed journals. In a law course, in addition to journals, actual case law from the Lexis-Nexis database is also appropriate. Students may use the sources below or peer reviewed journal articles contained in the databases on the Steelman Library website.

Missner, M (1980). *Ethics of the business system*. Sherman Oaks, CA: Alfred Publishing Co.

Blanchard, K., Vincent Peale, N. (1988). *The power of ethical management*. New York: W. Morrow.

Braybrooke, D. (1983). *Ethics in the world of business*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld.

Clark, J.W. (1966). *Religion and the moral standards of American businessmen*. Cincinnati: South-western Pub. Co.

Dayton, E.R. (1992). *Succeeding in business without losing your faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

Ferrell, O.C., Gardiner, G. (1991). *In pursuit of ethics: tough choices in the world of work*. Springfield, IL: Smith Collins.

Mitchell, J.E. (1962). *The Christian in business*. Westwood, NJ: F.H. Revell Co.

Watson, C.E. (1991). *Managing with integrity: insights from America's CEOs*. New York: Praeger.

Reeves-Ellington, R.H., Anderson, A. (1997). *Business, commerce, and social responsibility: beyond agenda*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Dienhard, J.W., Curnutt, J. (1998). *Business ethics: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Hill, A. (1997). *Just business: Christian ethics for the marketplace*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.