

**LEAS 3200
LEGAL RESEARCH I
FALL 2012
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite: LEAS 1100

Instructor: Kendra A. Hollern

Phone: 229-259-5083

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 to 2:30 PM

Wednesdays 12:00 to 4:00 PM

By appointment only and office hours are available via online or face-to-face.

Office Location: Room 146 West Hall

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Class: Online via [GeorgiaVIEW](#) from **OCTOBER 15, 2012 TO DECEMBER 5, 2012 (8 WEEKS)**

Texts: Joann Banker Hames and Yvonne Ekern, Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing (4th Edition), Prentice Hall Pearson, ISBN: 978-0-13-5100944-1

TEXT IS REQUIRED

Course Description:

A study of legal research methods utilizing state and federal sources. Students will develop professional skills as they read and analyze appellate court opinions, legislation and pleadings.

Learning Objectives:

1. To prepare students to conduct legal research and apply it in a form and manner that will enable them to support the legal system.
 - a. Analysis of problems and recognition of legal issues.
 - b. Use of encyclopedias, treatises, restatements, statutes, regulations, digests, indexes, West's key number system, and computer assisted research methods.
 - c. Use of Cite check and/or Shepard's to update case law using both traditional and computer assisted methods).
 - d. Preparation of clear, concise, and well-organized legal memoranda and reports.
2. To comprehend and make informed decisions regarding the ethical dilemmas of their profession, in order to understand the cultural values they must serve in the performance of their responsibilities.
3. To understand the American legal system in the manner necessary to enable them to function within the system and support its mission of service to society.

Class Preparation:

In order to achieve the learning objectives for this course, students should understand and comprehend the assigned readings, PowerPoint slides provided as a study aid, participation in class discussions and other preparatory assignments. In order to get the most out of class

time, students are expected to have read the assigned material and to complete any specific assignments for the assigned week.

Student Protocol:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner while in this course. Disparaging and/or discriminatory and/or harassing/threatening comments will not be tolerated in the discussion board postings or any communications with fellow students or the instructor. Valdosta State University’s Non-Academic Conduct Code will control such behavior. See <http://www.valdosta.edu/judicial/ConductViolations.shtml>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall. The Access Office website and phone numbers are, www.valdosta.edu/access/ and are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Grading and Evaluation:

Student’s grades will be assessed based on the points below.

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|---|----------------|
| Discussion Board postings | 100 points max |
| Weekly Quizzes (8 total at 25 points each) | 200 points max |
| Weekly Assignments (14 total at 30 points each) | 420 points max |
| Final legal memorandum | 100 points max |
| Presentation of Final Project | 30 points max |

There are a total of 850 points in this course.

Course grade = your earned points/850 = percentage applied to letter grade table below:

Grading Scale

| | |
|---|---------------|
| A | 90-100% |
| B | 80-89% |
| C | 70-79% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 59% and below |

Assignments: All assignments are due on **Mondays by 5:00pm EST**. GeorgiaVIEW server controls time.

SafeAssign

By taking this course, students agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within GeorgiaVIEW.

For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see [SafeAssign for Students \(http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml\)](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml).

Instructions on how to submit using this tool for any written assignments will be given on GeorgiaVIEW with the appropriate assignments. The instructor reserves the right to use SafeAssign on discussion board postings if determined the work is not the student’s own.

Discussion Board Postings:

This is an online course, however, an educational program centered on classroom instruction is predicated on the concept of class attendance at scheduled class sessions. Faculty is required to keep attendance records for compliance with various federal regulations. Student absences can have a deleterious effect on the student's grades or the continuing eligibility for financial assistance.

In order to track attendance there will be weekly discussion board postings. Each week students will have instructions on the postings for the course in our class discussion board. The instructions may include a minimum number of postings expected for the week. Students are required to read all of the other student's postings as well. The postings will count for 100 points.

For the discussion board postings, each week's postings will be assessed on a four-point scale:

4 points: The posting(s) integrate multiple viewpoints and weaves both class readings and other participant's postings into their discussion of the subject.

3 points: The posting(s) builds upon the ideas of another participant or two, and digs deeper into the question(s) posed by the instructor.

2 points: A single posting that does not interact with or incorporate the ideas of other participants' comments OR posting(s) that do not elicit further discussion.

1 point: A simple "me too" comment that neither expands the conversation nor demonstrates any degree of reflection by the student.

0 points: No comment or completely inappropriate posting (in other words has nothing to do with the question asked).

Weekly Quizzes (See Course Assignments for due dates)

Each week a 25 point quiz will be administered for a total of 200 points throughout the semester. It is to be reflection of your own effort and is to be completed by the due date. Quizzes will be short answer type questions designed to allow students to show mastery of the week's materials. Proper citations are to be used in all quizzes.

Weekly Assignments (See Course Assignments for due dates)

Weeks 1-7 students will be required to complete two assignments based upon the assigned reading materials. Assignments are designed to be a real world application of the course materials. Each assignment will be worth a maximum of 30 points (so 60 points each week for a total of 420 points). These assignments are to be the students own effort and NOT a group type project. These assignments may be used to base the topic of the final legal memorandum.

Final legal memorandum (See Course Assignments for due dates)

A final legal memorandum is to be completed by each student. This is to be an individual assignment designed by each student and the instructor. It is designed to be a

cumulative illustration of everything the student has learned throughout the semester. It is worth 100 points with more information to follow.

Presentation of legal memorandum (See Course Assignments for due dates)

A presentation of the student's legal memorandum is required. The presentation must be in a Power Point and it is worth 30 points. The presentation should include materials about the different legal resources used in the completion of the memorandum. The instructor will open the presentation discussions during week 7. Students will post their presentation on the discussion board and will be the leader of the discussion. Fellow classmates are directed to submit any questions via the discussion board for the student to answer during your presentation week.

Communications and Grading

Students can expect the instructor to respond to emails/postings/messages within 24 hours of receipt Monday through Friday. On the weekends, Saturday through Sunday, responses within 48 hours of receipt. The instructor will post announcements regarding unavailability when away at conferences and will respond within 48 hours.

Grades will be posted within 72 hours of the due date. If there is a delay in grading an announcement will be posted.

Late Work

Working in the legal field involves meeting and abiding by deadlines. Therefore, all materials are due as stated on the Course Assignments by **Mondays at 5:00pm EST**, the GeorgiaVIEW server controls. Late work will not be accepted after the deadline. If students are having technical difficulties, visit <http://help8.view.usg.edu/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8075>. Students should plan ahead and submit assignments or take exams early to avoid technical issues at the last minute. If students continue experiencing difficulties submitting work via GeorgiaVIEW, contact the professor prior to the assignment due date and time.

Academic Honor Code:

Section I of the Student Code of Conduct, located in the Student Handbook, reads, "To avoid confusion concerning alleged incidents of academic dishonesty, under the normal process, a violation of Appendix A Section I of the Student Code of Conduct is handled academically, i.e. between the student and the professor. The most severe action that may be administered by a professor is a grade of 'F' in that particular course. This is an academic response and not a disciplinary recommendation.

Valdosta State University policy is that a violation of Section I may and should be handled by the professor, the student, and possibly the department head or dean concerned with the offense. However, the most severe sanction that may be administered through this process is to give a grade of "F" in a course.

If a stronger sanction is desired, or if an agreement cannot be reached between the above parties concerning the incident, the matter may be referred to the Dean of Students Office. In such cases where a student may continue to violate Section I after having been warned or sanctioned by one or more professors he or she may then be referred to the Dean of Students Office where official charges may be drawn up and the student subjected to the established

The following are typical academic dishonesty violations, but they are not to be considered all-inclusive:

1. No student shall receive or give or attempt to receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in any academic course.
2. No student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including but not limited to tests, examinations, laboratory equipment, and roll books.
3. No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person material which can be shown to contain questions or answers to any examinations scheduled to be given at any subsequent date in any course of study offered by the University, without authorization from the University.
4. Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated in the paper they must be appropriately acknowledged.”

For a full copy of the Academic Honor Code see

<http://www.valdosta.edu/judicial/AcademicStudentConductCode.shtml>.

Further class policy includes: all work in this course must be the student’s own individual effort. Students are not allowed to recycle work from another course and cannot have another student (or person, or website) do any of the student’s assignments, assessments, and interactions (discussions). If students are having problems with an assignment it is best to ask the instructor for help and not another student. These are all violations of the Academic Honor Code and the policies of this course.

First violation, the student will receive a zero for the assignment and a report of Academic Dishonesty filed with the Student Conduct Office (SCO). Upon the second violation, the student will receive an ‘F’ in the course and a second report filed with the SCO. Other sanctions may be issued by the SCO.

Incompletes

A final grade of incomplete will not be given to a student simply to accommodate an inability to complete the required work in a timely manner during the semester. An incomplete will be given only under certain circumstances that are discussed and arranged in advance with the instructor or for circumstances that are beyond the student’s control (e.g., incapacitating medical condition, injury beyond student’s control). See the university policy on incompletes. <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/RequestforIncomplete.shtml>

Final comments

This course is very labor intensive, particularly since it is in an eight week format. It is important to keep up with the reading and online assignments and ask questions when the material is unclear. If there are questions please do not hesitate to ask and arrange a time to

Speak with the instructor. Let the professor know in advance of any difficulties that may influence the student's performance in this course.

| COURSE ASSIGNMENTS | | |
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| Subject to Change at Instructor's Discretion and with notice either in BlazeVIEW or by e-mail | | |
| Week/Date | Topic | Assignment |
| Week One October 15-22, 2012 | Course Syllabus Introduction The Starting Point | Introduction Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Introduction Discussion Board Chapter 1 and 2 Assignments, Quiz One due by 5:00 pm EST on October 22, 2012. |
| Week Two October 22-29, 2012 | Finding...case law How to brief a case | Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Discussion Board Chapter 3 and 4 Assignments and Quiz Two due by 5:00 pm EST on October 29, 2012 |
| Week Three October 29-Nov. 5, 2012 | Constitutions, Statutes... Statutory and Const. Analysis | Chapter 5 Chapter 6 Discussion Board Chapter 5 and 6 Assignments and Quiz Three Due by 5:00 pm EST on November 5, 2012 |
| Week Four Nov. 5-12, 2012 | Secondary sources Digests | Chapter 7 Chapter 8 Discussion Board Chapter 7 and 8 Assignments and Quiz Four due by 5:00 pm EST on November 12, 2012 |
| Week Five Nov. 12-19, 2012 | Validating your research Computer Assisted Research | Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 11 Discussion Board Chapter 9 and 10/11 Assignments and Quiz Five due by 5:00 pm EST on November 19, 2012 |
| Week Six Nov. 19-26, 2012 | Basic Legal Writing How to create research strategies | Chapter 12 Discussion Board Chapter 12 Assignments and Quiz Six due by 5:00 pm EST on November 26, 2012 |

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| Week Seven Nov. 26-Dec. 3, 2012 | Memorandum of Law | Chapter 13 Discussion Board Chapter 13 Assignments and Quiz Seven due by 5:00 pm EST on December 3, 2012 |
| Week Eight Dec. 3-5, 2012 NOTE: Not a full week! | Presentations of papers | Discussion Board Quiz Eight Due by 5:00 pm EST on December 5, 2012 |
| Final Legal Memorandum Due by 5:00pm EST on December 6, 2012 | | |