

Introduction to Law Libraries and Legal Research
MILIS 7999: Legal Information Sources and Services
Syllabus – Fall 2009
Three Credit Hours

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Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop skills for the evaluation and use of legal materials. Such skills will allow students to address legal research questions from a diverse user base in any type of library.
- Students will learn how to conduct basic legal research using free and fee, print and electronic resources.
- Students will explore modern law librarianship: its institutions, best practices, and real-world examples.

Required Textbooks:

Roy Balleste (editor), *Law-Librarianship in the Twenty-First Century*, Scarecrow Press, 2007.

Robert C. Berring and Elizabeth A. Edinger, *Finding the Law*, 12th ed., Thomson-West, 2005.

Suggested Reading:

Nancy Johnson & Nancy A. Deel, "Researching Georgia Law," 14 *Georgia State Law Review* 545 (1998).

Attendance:

This is an online course except for the one face-to-face meeting 12 September. The face-to-face meeting will take place in Macon, GA with a morning session at 9 a.m. to noon at Macon State College in Jones Hall Room 396. The afternoon session will be 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Furman Smith Law Library of Mercer University School of Law.

CALI Lessons:

One tool the class will be using is lessons from the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction, or CALI. The lessons are on their website cali.org. You may use the authorization code 'FLORUVstu73' to create an account. As to take the lessons you will be quizzed on the content and a score assigned. Please send a screen shot or a copy of the grade report as proof of completing the lesson. Do not worry the CALI score is not your grade, but I would recommend retaking the lesson if you score is less than 70%.

Assignments and Grades:

Legal Research: Assignments through out the semester will test your abilities to conduct research. Five assignments each 5% of final grade for total of 25%.

Reaction papers in response to various topics covered in the class. Each week I will offer up a vague suggestion of a topic regarding something recently covered in the class. You can pick three of them to write up in a 1,000 words and turn in by the following Monday. Each paper worth 5% of final grade for total of 15%.

Final Essay Paper and Research Assignment will be a combined 50% of final grade. Essay will be a 2,000 word response to a question posed to the class related to the roles of law libraries and is worth 25%. The Final Research Assignment will seek to tie together the earlier assignments having you go through an entire research process from beginning to end. Worth 25% of final grade.

Participation is worth 10%.

1. Week of 17 August: *Introduction to Law Librarianship*

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING:

American Association of Law Libraries, AALL Guidelines for Graduate Programs in Law Librarianship (1988), at http://www.aallnet.org/about/graduate_guidelines.asp.

- , Opportunities for Law Librarians, at <http://www.aallnet.org/services/opportunities.asp>.

- , Competencies of Law Librarianship (2001), at <http://www.aallnet.org/prodev/competencies.asp>.

- , ALA-Accredited Graduate Programs in Library with Law Library Classes or Joint MLS/JD Classes, at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/tfedu/>.

Task Force to Enhance Law Librarianship Education, AALL, What are the Academic Qualifications for a Law Librarian? at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/tfedu/education.html>.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK:

If you have not done so already, sign on to the WebCT course and complete the “Getting to know you” questionnaire and contact information, under “Discussion”.

Register your LexisNexis and Westlaw passwords and sign on to the services at the law school websites where you registered them. Please report any registration or access problems to the instructor before the next class meeting.

2. Week of 24 August: *Introduction to Law Libraries*

Read Balleste Chs 1-3

3. Week of 31 August: *Introduction to Legal Research and Legal Sources*

Berring Chs 1 & 11

CALI Lesson: Legal Research 101: The Tools of the Trade

CALI Lesson: Georgia Legal Research – Primary Source Materials

4. Week of 7 September

In-person meeting in Macon

Topics:

1. Print Resources and Free Web Sites
2. Visit a Law Library

5. Week of 14 September: *Law Libraries Public Services*

Read Balleste Ch. 4

Intro to Lexis/West

6. Week of 21 September: *Law Libraries Technical Services*

Read Balleste Ch. 6

Intro to Lexis/West

7. Week of 28 September: *Collection Development & Secondary Sources*

Read: Balleste Ch. 5 & Berring Ch. 10

CALI Lesson: Introduction to Secondary Sources

West: Using Secondary Sources In Print,

<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lsssecdpr.pdf>

8. Week of 5 October: *Technology & Law Reviews*

Read Balleste Ch. 8

Finding Articles

Research Assignment 1

9. Week of 12 October: GovDocs & Statutes

Read Balleste Ch. 9 and Berring Ch. 5

Westlaw: How to Find Statutes,

<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lssstat06.pdf>

CALI Lesson: Introduction to State and Federal Statutes

Research Assignment 2

10. Week of 19 October

Fall Break: No Class

11. Week of 26 October: Types of Law Libraries

County/Court Libraries

Law Firm Libraries

Academic Law Libraries

12. Week of 2 November: Cases

Updating Cases

Read Berring Ch. 2, 3 & 4

What is a case: Wolf v. Pig <http://west.thomson.com/pdf/librarian/wolfpig.pdf>

Westlaw: How to Find Cases,
<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lscase06.pdf>

CALI Lesson: Updating/Validating Case Law Using the

Research Assignment 3

13. Week of 9 November: Administrative Law

Read Berring Ch. 8

Westlaw: How to Find Regulations,
<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lereg06.pdf>

Research Assignment 4

14. Week of 16 November

Ordinances

Westlaw: Westlaw Municipal Practitioner Research Guide

<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/wlres/munigd06.pdf>

Research Assignment 5

15. Week of 23 November

No Work Assigned! Enjoy the Holiday!

16. Week of 30 November

Final Paper and Research Assignment

VSU Policies:

Please become aware of and be guided by these VSU policies.

Access Office for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>

Academic Dishonesty, p. 269 of Graduate Catalog, 2008/09:
<http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/0809/grad/documents/grad266-296.pdf>

Student Code of Conduct, p. 56:
<http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook.shtml>

Equal Opportunity Statement: <http://www.valdosta.edu/eopma/>