

Introduction to Law Libraries and Legal Research
MILIS 7999: Legal Information Sources and Services
Syllabus – Fall 2011
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.

Attendance:

This is an online course except for the one face-to-face meeting 10 September. The face-to-face meeting will take place in Macon, GA with a morning session at Macon State College. 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%.

Final Grade Scale

A = always satisfactory, often excellent

B = mostly satisfactory, occasionally excellent

C = sometimes satisfactory, often needs revisions

D = rarely satisfactory, often perfunctory, late or missing

F = lacking even an attempt to learn or do, dishonesty, plagiarism

Academic Honesty

Valdosta State University expects that graduate students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources. Specific regulations related to student conduct and behavior are contained in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics.

Equal Opportunity Statement

VSU is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent Executive Orders as well as Title IX, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Accommodations Statement

Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Access Office for Students with Disabilities (Access Office) serves students who have documented disabilities, have met the Valdosta State University (VSU) admission criteria, and are otherwise qualified. Students requesting accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229/245-2498 (V/VP) and 229/219-1348 (TTY).

Student Agreement

Per the VSU Vice President for Academic Affairs: By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. See SafeAssign at VSU: [SafeAssign for Students](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml) (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml>).

Student Conduct

Student behavior, which includes all communications to class members and the instructor as well as postings to the discussion board in BlazeVIEW, is to be respectful and professional. Guidelines are specified in the VSU Student Code of Ethics. http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/documents/SAF_Student_Handbook2009-050809.pdf

1. Week of 15 August: *Introduction to Law Librarianship*

Read :

About Law Librarianship

<http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Careers/lawlibrarycareers>

Update to Choosing Law Librarianship: Thoughts for People Contemplating a Career Move (2008) at <http://www.llrx.com/features/lawlibrarianship.htm>

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 22 August: *Introduction to Law Libraries*

Read Balleste Chapters 1-3

3. Week of 30 August: *Introduction to Legal Research and Legal Sources*

Read: Johnson, Nancy P.; Adams, Nancy J.; and Adelman, Elizabeth G. (2005) "Researching Georgia Law (2006 Edition)," *Georgia State University Law Review*: Vol. 22: Iss. 2, Article 2. Available at: <http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/gsulr/vol22/iss2/2>

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

CALI Lesson: Georgia Legal Research – Primary Source Materials

4. Week of 5 September

In-person meeting in Macon on 10 September

Topics:

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

5. Week of 12 September: *Law Libraries Public Services*

Read Balleste Ch. 4

Intro to Lexis/West

6. Week of 19 September: *Law Libraries Technical Services*

Read Balleste Ch. 6

Intro to Lexis/West

7. Week of 26 September: *Collection Development & Secondary Sources*

Read: Balleste Ch. 5

CALI Lesson: Introduction to Secondary Sources

West: Using Secondary Sources In Print,

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

8. Week of 3 October: *Technology & Law Reviews*

Read Balleste Ch. 8

Finding Articles

Getting Started on Heinonline: Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHM1QMrAeeo>

How to find an article on Heinonline

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rw2nc4VbpUs>

Heinonline: Law Journal Library: Quick Reference Guide at

http://heinonline.org/HeinDocs/LawJournal_QuickRefGuide.pdf

Research Assignment 1

9. Week of 10 October: Government Documents & Statutes

Read Balleste Ch. 9

Westlaw: How to Find Statutes,

<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lstat06.pdf>

CALI Lesson: Introduction to State and Federal Statutes

Research Assignment 2

10. Week of 17 October: Type of Law Libraries

County/Court Libraries

Law Firm Libraries

11. Week of 24 October: Types of Law Libraries

Subscription Law Libraries

Academic Law Libraries

12. Week of 31 October November: Cases and Updating Cases

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 7 November: Administrative Law

Westlaw: How to Find Regulations,

<http://west.thomson.com/documentation/westlaw/wlawdoc/lawstu/lereg06.pdf>

Research Assignment 4

14. Week of 14 November: Ordinances

Municode

Westlaw: Westlaw Municipal Practitioner Research Guide

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

Research Assignment 5

15. Week of 21 November

No Work Assigned! Enjoy the Holiday!

16. Week of 28 November

Final Paper and Research Assignment