

LEGAL RESEARCH I /LAW 1201/Sec. OL08/Tues. & Thurs. 10-11:15am on [Zoom!](#)

Professor Kerin E. Coughlin / Namm 622 / kcoughlin@citytech.cuny.edu

"Office" hours (also on [Zoom](#)): Tues. & Thurs. 11:15-12:30pm; other times by appointment

Important Links:

- [Zoom link](#) for all classes, office hours, and individual meetings (meeting ID 813 8087 4817—no password).
- [Course OpenLab site](#) for most course communications, including assignments and announcements.
- [Course Blackboard site](#) for quizzes, exams, and most materials.

Course description: A working knowledge of the law library is presented including practice in finding statutes, cases and administrative regulations. Students are taught validating and gain experience in using legal encyclopedias, digests and other sources. All these research skills are integrated within written assignments. Prerequisites: LAW 1101 and ENG 1101. Pre- or corequisite: LAW 1103. Three class hours; three credits.

Texts:

- The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (21st ed. 2020 or 20th ed. 2015), ISBN 9780578666150. We will begin using this Tuesday, March 23. Each student must have a copy, which you will use throughout your academic and professional career in law. About \$45 for a new paper copy from [the City Tech bookstore](#), the [publisher's website](#), or online sources like [Alibris.com](#). [Online access](#) available from the publisher for \$39/year.
- The Legal Research and Writing Handbook: A Basic Approach for Paralegals (8th ed. 2018) by Andrea B. Yelin & Hope Viner Samborn, ISBN 9781454896388, about \$200 new, older editions available for far less. Available for purchase at [the City Tech bookstore](#); older editions available online at sources like [Alibris.com](#).
- Access to a law dictionary and an English language ("regular") dictionary, print or online, to learn the meanings of unfamiliar terms. Online law dictionaries include [thelawdictionary.org](#), [dictionary.law.com](#), and [legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com](#). Online English language dictionaries include [dictionary.com](#), [merriam-webster.com](#), and [thefreedictionary.com](#).

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes include:	Assessments include:
understand the U.S. (federal) and N.Y. legal systems and structures	court tour; exams and quizzes
locate, read and understand federal and state cases and statutes	research exercises; case briefs
write effective case briefs	case briefing assignments
understand the difference between, and uses of, primary and secondary authorities	research exercises; exams & quizzes
analyze facts and issues in legal scenarios	case briefs; class discussion
understand and apply the uniform system of legal citation (<u>Bluebook</u>)	citation exercises; briefs; exams & quizzes
understand importance and methods of updating and validating law	reading; discussion; research exercises
understand and appreciate importance of ethics in research and writing	discussion & activities; exams & quizzes

City Tech General Education Student Learning Outcomes include:	Assessments include:
<u>Knowledge</u> : pursue disciplined, inquiry-based learning; acquire tools for lifelong learning	court tour; research exercises
<u>Skills</u> : communicate in diverse settings and groups, using written and oral means.	research exercises; case briefs; discussions and activities
<u>Integration</u> : Gather, interpret, evaluate, and apply information discerningly from various sources; understand and navigate systems.	court tour; research exercises; exams & quizzes
<u>Values, Ethics and Relationships</u> : Demonstrate intellectual honesty and personal responsibility; work with teams of diverse composition.	research exercises; discussions and activities

Course grades will be calculated as follows (each item explained below):

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Quizzes	20%
Homework, research exercises, case briefs, and other assignments	25%
Oral presentation	5%
Participation and professionalism	5%

Exams and quizzes: The midterm and final exams are cumulative, and quizzes will be announced and unannounced. They will be administered through Blackboard. There will be no make-up exams or quizzes without prior arrangement. In calculating course grades, I generally drop each student's lowest quiz grade; however, if you miss a quiz, that is your "lowest grade" that will be "dropped," and I will average all of your other quiz grades. See attached college policy, "Accessibility," regarding exams missed for medical reasons.

Homework and other assignments: Students will complete a variety of homework and other assignments, some of which are listed in the Class Schedule that follows, and many others that will be announced during the semester. Details will be provided on each of them. Each written assignment should be submitted in the manner specified, such as by email to me, or by posting on our course OpenLab site. Except as noted, if an assignment is due on a day we meet for class, it is due before the class start time. If you submit an assignment late without advance permission, it may be penalized or rejected. Grammar and spelling always count—proofread everything! Retain copies of all graded work; if you believe there was a grading error or you appeal a grade, you will be required to support your claim with such evidence.

Oral presentation: Each student will give a 5-7 minute oral presentation based on one or more "Practice Pointers" or "Ethics Alerts" found in the Yelin & Samborn textbook. Details on this assignment will be provided later.

Participation and professionalism:

- *Participation.* "Participation" includes completing readings and assignments before class and discussing them intelligently during class; being present, attentive and engaged in all class discussions and activities; taking notes; listening and responding respectfully to other students and to me; and having all necessary materials. You will be expected participate voluntarily, and you will be called on during class to participate. All these "participation" factors will be considered in your grade. I strongly encourage each of you to turn on your cameras during each Zoom class session. You're all beautiful! ☺ And it's good for all of us: *You* will be more engaged in class, so you will learn more; *I* will know you are participating, so I can give you a better grade; and *your classmates* (and you, and I) will feel like part of a real "class," interacting with other human beings, not just faceless names in boxes! If you have a valid reason not to turn on your camera, let me know. Otherwise, please use it.
- *Professionalism.*¹ A unique demand on Legal Studies students involves managing the fluid boundary between being a student and a working professional. Every interaction with faculty, staff, employers, and alumni involves developing your personal brand, reputation, and professionalism. Therefore, the Law and Paralegal Studies Department expects students to act with the highest standards of integrity, good judgment, and professionalism at all times, and will consider the following in your final grades for all our courses:
 - being punctual, present, prepared and engaged
 - submitting professional-quality work (such as proofreading and neatness)
 - taking responsibility for your own learning and progress (such as seeking assistance from tutors and faculty)

¹ This section is adapted from City Tech's Dental Hygiene Department syllabi and the University of Ohio College of Business, "Student Professionalism Policies: Building Your Professional Reputation While Building Your Career," https://business.ohio.edu/media/530713/ocm-student-professionalism-policies_2016-2017.pdf.

- interacting appropriately with peers, instructors, college personnel, and outside visitors
- respecting diversity among all individuals
- honoring the confidentiality, privacy, and dignity of all persons
- collaborating/participating actively in team environments
- learning, including giving and receiving constructive feedback
- behaving in an ethical manner (including college/academic settings as well as outside/interpersonal settings).

When communicating via the Internet, please keep in mind the following "Netiquette" rules:

- Writing should be formal, using applicable professional/technical language.
- Writing should be clear and precise.
- Writing should avoid emoticons and "texting" or short-hand language/phrases.
- Writing should explain and justify your opinion.
- Writing should stay on topic; irrelevant tangents are confusing, so make sure every comment you post stays within the scope of the question/discussion topic.
- Writing which includes the intellectual property of others requires you to cite your sources, e.g. websites, books, blogs, journal articles, etc.

Extra credit: Students may earn extra points on the midterm and final exam grades by posting responses to legal news articles on our course OpenLab site. Details on this opportunity will be provided later.

Technology:

- All class sessions will be conducted by videoconference on Zoom, at [this link](#), meeting ID 813 8087 4817, no password needed. Please see "Participation and Professionalism" above on how you are expected to engage in class sessions. You can get [help with Zoom here](#).
- All students are required to join and learn to use our course OpenLab and Blackboard sites. Both sites will be used extensively to assign work and to provide materials and information, some of which may not be provided in class. You are responsible for all information provided through OpenLab and Blackboard. Check them frequently. You can get [help with OpenLab here](#) and [help with Blackboard here](#).
- Students are also expected to have basic competencies in (a) word processing, including Microsoft (MS) Word and Adobe (pdf); (b) City Tech email; and (c) the Internet. Per college policy, please use only your City Tech address to email me. Allow 24 hours for a response, and longer if you email me Friday through Sunday or when classes are not in session. The [Atrium Learning Center](#) can assist with email and other technical issues. CUNY provides MS Office 365 for Education (including MS Word, Powerpoint, Excel and other programs) to City Tech students; for more information, see [this link](#).

See the Addendum for additional college and department policies.

Note regarding these challenging times: We are all living in circumstances that are even more stressful than our usually-very-stressful lives. The ongoing pandemic, racial injustice, and economic insecurity are just a few challenges facing our city and nation, plus each of us has our own unique stressors. I do not want this course to be an additional source of stress for you. Of course, you should work as hard as you can, and you should take your learning seriously. However, if you find yourself facing difficulties in or outside school that may affect your academic performance, or if I might be able to help you in any way at all, please contact me as soon as possible. We will figure out how best to proceed, and I will help you any way I can. We will get through this! As long as we work together and communicate. ☺

CLASS SCHEDULE ON NEXT PAGE.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Below is a general outline of topics, assignments, and deadlines. It is subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on assignments, please see our course OpenLab site, under the "Assignments" tab. Chapters ("ch.") are from The Legal Research and Writing Handbook: A Basic Approach for Paralegals (8th ed. 2018) by Andrea B. Yelin & Hope Viner Samborn ("Y&S"). Assignments are due in the classes for which they are listed. For example, when you join our class session on Thursday, February 4, you should have (a) joined our course OpenLab site, (b) sent me an email from your City Tech address with the specified information; and (c) read Y&S ch. 1 part A and ch. 2 parts B and C. Additional assignments will be given in class and on OpenLab; check it frequently.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments due</u>
1	Tu Feb 2	Course introduction!	
2	Th Feb 4	Types of legal authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join course OpenLab site (OL) • Send me an email with contact info & meeting times as requested on OL & BB. • Read ch. 1 pt A & ch. 2 pts B&C.
3	Tu Feb 9	<i>NO CLASS MEETING</i> —individual meetings this week!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post "Who I Am" on OL!
4	Th Feb 11	Determining governing law: the U.S. (federal) legal system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 1 pt B, ch. 2 pt A (pp. 19-21). • Review court charts & maps.
5	Tu Feb 16	Determining governing law <i>cont'd</i> : the N.Y. court system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read C&W excerpt and "NYS Courts: An Introductory Guide." • Review court charts & maps.
6	Th Feb 18	Court systems <i>cont'd</i> : "tour" of local courts!	
7	Tu Feb 23	Quiz #1; introduction to court decisions: the case reporting system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for quiz #1. • Read ch. 3.
8	Th Feb 25	Court decisions <i>cont'd</i> : reading cases—case anatomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read material TBA.
9	Tu Mar 2	Court decisions <i>cont'd</i> : understanding cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read cases TBA.
10	Th Mar 4	Introduction to case briefing: purpose and anatomy of a case brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 18 pts. A & B.
11	Tu Mar 9	Quiz #2; case briefing exercise (no class meeting).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for quiz #2. • Briefing exercise TBA.
12	Th Mar 11	Case briefing <i>cont'd</i> : how to brief a case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 18 pt. C <i>including</i> Ills. 18-2 and 18-3 (<u>King v. Miller</u> case and brief).
13	Tu Mar 16	Review for midterm exam; case briefing <i>cont'd</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for midterm exam, bring questions!
14	Th Mar 18	MIDTERM EXAM!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for midterm exam!
15	Tu Mar 23	Citing cases: intro to <i>The Bluebook</i> and legal citation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have <i>Bluebook</i> by today!! ("BB") • Read <i>BB</i> Intro.
16	Th Mar 25	Case citation <i>cont'd</i> : how to cite a case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>BB</i> R10 & R10.1 (Cases), R10.3.2 (Reporters),
	Sa Mar 27- Su Apr 4	<i>SPRING BREAK!!</i> ☺	
17	Tu Apr 6	Case citation <i>cont'd</i> : citing federal cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring <i>BB</i>! • Read <i>BB</i> T1.1 (Federal Judicial and Legislative Materials) & T1.3 (States & Dist. of Col.), section on NY.
18	Th Apr 8	Case citation <i>cont'd</i> : citing NYS cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring <i>BB</i>, Read T1.3 (States & Dist. of Col.), section on NY.

19	Tu Apr 13	Case citation <i>cont'd</i> : practice, plus some specifics (abbreviations, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read BB T6, T7, T10 & T12.
20	Th Apr 15	Validating cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 5.
21	Tu Apr 20	Constitutions; quiz #3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 7 pt. A. • Study for quiz #3!
22	Th Apr 22	Court decisions revisited: how courts apply constitutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read case TBA—brief due Fri. Apr. 23.
23	Tu Apr 27	<i>NO CLASS—individual meetings on case briefs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief of class 22 case due Fr Apr 23.
24	Th Apr 29	Intro to statutes: U.S. Code; Consolidated Laws of NY; reading and understanding statutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 7 pt. B pp. 167-181 • Review US Code and NY Consolidated Laws online (links on OL).
25	Tu May 4	Statutes <i>cont'd</i> : how courts apply them in cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and brief case TBA, due M May 3.
26	Th May 6	Peer-review case briefs; how to cite statutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>BB</i> R12 & 12.1. • Bring <i>BB</i>!
27	Tu May 11	Administrative law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 9.
28	Th May 13	Secondary sources; Quiz #4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 6.
	<i>Mo May 17</i>	<i>Last day to withdraw from any class with "W" grade.</i>	
29	Tu May 18	Review for final exam; course wrap-up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for final exam. • Bring <i>BB</i>!
30	Th May 20	FINAL EXAM!!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for final exam! • Bring <i>BB</i>!

HAPPY SUMMER! ☺

Addendum: College and Department Policies

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for understanding and following CUNY's and New York City College of Technology's policies on academic integrity.

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog: http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/docs/academic_integrity_policy.pdf.

Everyone is expected to do his/her own work and carefully cite the work of others. Plagiarism is taking another's work and using it as your own. This class will hold a ZERO tolerance policy for plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism may result in failing a test, assignment and /or the course. Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

Accessibility: Reasonable Accommodations

City Tech is committed to supporting the educational goals of enrolled students with disabilities in the areas of enrollment, academic advisement, tutoring, assistive technologies and testing accommodations. If you have or think you may have a disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments as provided under applicable federal, state and city laws. You may also request services for temporary conditions or medical issues under certain circumstances. If you have questions about your eligibility or would like to seek accommodation services or academic adjustments, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility (CSA) at 300 Jay Street room L-237, 718 260 5143, or <http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/accessibility/>.

Students who miss a scheduled presentation or exam due to illness or medically related emergencies will be referred to the CSA. The CSA will review any documentation requested and give the student a letter to share with the relevant instructor if accommodations need to be made.

NYCCT LAW & PARALEGAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Attendance

It is the conviction of the Law & Paralegal Studies Department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also late arrivals, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time may affect any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and assignments you missed from a classmate.

Bluebook (Citation)

The Department of Law and Paralegal Studies acknowledges the variety of citation styles, however, it is the department's policy that all citations are done in the format of The Uniform System of Citation (also known as The Bluebook).

Repeating Courses

Entrance into paralegal studies courses requires CUNY proficiency in reading and writing. All students admitted without such proficiencies will be required to complete necessary remediation and to obtain proficiency before progressing into paralegal studies courses. A minimum grade of "C" in each course with the prefix LAW is required for progression within the paralegal studies major. Students may repeat a LAW course once (1) if they have received a "D" or "F" grade.