

LEGAL RESEARCH I

Law 1201 / Fall 2019 / Section D717 / Room N-1004 / Mondays & Wednesdays 10am-11:15am
 Professor Kerin E. Coughlin / Namm 622 / kcoughlin@citytech.cuny.edu
 Office hours: Wednesdays 11:15am-12pm; Thursdays 11:15am-1pm; other times by appointment

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 (20th ed. 2015). Each student is required to have a copy in class. Available for purchase online or at the college bookstore.
- The Legal Research and Writing Handbook: A Basic Approach for Paralegals (7th ed. 2015) by Andrea B. Yelin & Hope Viner Samborn. Borrow at college library reserve desk (**KF240.Y45 2015**) for two hours (one copy available for three weeks reserve) or buy online or at the college bookstore.
- Access to a law dictionary and an English language ("regular") dictionary, print or online, to learn the meanings of unfamiliar terms. You may borrow a hard copy law dictionary from the college library for several weeks at a time (renewable); call numbers are KF156.G53 1996; KF156.B53 2006; and KF156.G53 2016. Online law dictionaries include thelawdictionary.org, dictionary.law.com, and legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com. Online English language dictionaries include dictionary.reference.com, merriam-webster.com/dictionary.htm, and thefreedictionary.com.

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes include:	Assessments include:
understand the United States (federal) and New York legal systems and structures	walking tour of courts; exams and quizzes
locate, read and understand federal and state court decisions and statutes	research exercises; case briefs; visits to City Tech, NY Sup.Ct. & Brooklyn Law Sch. libraries
draft case briefs	case briefs
understand the difference between primary and secondary authority, and how to use secondary to find primary	research exercises; exams and quizzes
analyze facts and issues in legal research	case briefs; class discussion and activities
understand and apply the uniform system of legal citation (<u>The Bluebook</u>)	citation exercises; case briefs; exams and quizzes
understand the importance and methods of updating and validating cases and statutes	research exercises
understand and appreciate the importance of ethics in legal research and writing	class discussions and activities; exams and quizzes

City Tech General Education Student Learning Outcomes include:	Assessments include:
<u>Knowledge:</u> pursue disciplined, inquiry-based learning; acquire tools for lifelong learning	visits to City Tech, NY Sup.Ct. & Brooklyn Law School Libraries
<u>Skills:</u> communicate in diverse settings and groups, using written and oral means.	group 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; visits to law libraries; research exercises; exams & quizzes
<u>Values, Ethics and Relationships</u> : Demonstrate intellectual honesty and personal responsibility; work with teams, including those of diverse composition.	research exercises (alone and in groups); discussions and activities

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Quizzes	20%
Homework, research exercises, case briefs, and other assignments	30%
Participation and professionalism	5%

Exams and quizzes: The midterm and final exams are cumulative. Quizzes will be announced and unannounced. 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 counts as your "lowest grade" and I will average all your other quiz grades. See college policy on "Accessibility," in the Addendum, regarding exams missed for medical reasons.

Homework and other assignments: Except as noted, all written assignments shall be typed and double-spaced, submitted on paper at the start of the class when they are due. I will let you know if an assignment may (or must) be submitted in another way such as OpenLab or by email or in my mailbox in the department office. Otherwise, I will not accept assignments by email or in my department office mailbox or elsewhere without advance permission. Late assignments will be penalized or rejected.

Participation and professionalism:

Participation. This is a participatory class. In-class participation is critical, expected, and will be reflected in your grade. You will be called upon frequently to participate. Participation includes completing readings and assignments before class; being prepared to discuss them intelligently in class; being present, attentive and engaged in all class discussions and activities; taking handwritten notes on class work; listening and responding respectfully to other students' points of view; responding to my questions; and having all necessary materials with you (including pen and paper). Your grade for participation will include all of these factors; lack of preparation or participation will negatively affect your grade.

*Professionalism.*¹ A unique demand on Legal Studies students is 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 (e.g., proofreading, neatness)
- taking responsibility for your own learning and progress (e.g., seeking assistance from tutors or faculty)

¹ Adapted from City Tech Dental Hygiene Department syllabi and University of Ohio College of Business, "Student Professionalism Policies: Building Your Professional Reputation While Building Your Career" (particularly the introductory paragraph), 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 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, 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.

Other general policies: Retain copies of graded work; if you believe there was an error, or if you appeal a grade, you will be required to support your claim with documentary evidence. Grammar and spelling always count—proofread everything! Per college policy, please email me only from your City Tech account. Allow 24 hours for a response, and longer if you email me Friday through Sunday or when classes are not in session. The college Welcome Center (Atrium 1st floor) can assist you with email and other technical issues.

OpenLab: All students are required to join, and learn to use, our course OpenLab site. We will use it extensively to assign and submit work and to distribute materials and information, some of which may not be provided in class. You are responsible for all information provided through OpenLab.

Technology: Students are expected to have basic competency in: (a) word processing, including Microsoft Word, Adobe (pdf), and printing of documents; (b) use of City Tech email (see "Other general policies" above); and (c) the Internet. Students will be introduced to OpenLab, City Tech's open-source digital platform.

CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY NOT BE USED DURING CLASS FOR ANY PURPOSE. When class begins, silence them and put them where you cannot see them.

See the **Addendum** for additional college and department policies.

CLASS SCHEDULE ON NEXT PAGE

CLASS SCHEDULE

Below is a general outline of topics, assignments, and deadlines. It is subject to change. Chapters ("ch.") are from The Legal Research and Writing Handbook: A Basic Approach for Paralegals (7th ed. 2015) by Andrea B. Yelin & Hope Viner Samborn ("Y&S"). Readings and assignments are due in the classes for which they are listed. For example, when you come into class Wednesday, September 4, you should have joined the course OpenLab site, be ready to submit a paper copy of your "Who I Am" essay, and have read Y&S ch. 1 part A and ch. 2 parts B&C. Additional readings and work will be assigned in class and on OpenLab; check it frequently.

Class	Date	Topics	Readings & Assignments
1	W Aug 28	Course introduction; City Tech library visit	
2	W Sept 4	Types of legal authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join course on OpenLab • "Who I Am" essay • Read ch. 1 pt A & ch. 2 pts B&C
3	Th Sept 5 <i>Mon sched.</i>	Court systems: determining governing law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 1 pt B & ch. 2 pt A
4	M Sept 9	Court systems <i>cont'd</i> : walking tour of local courts!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review court charts & maps (OL)
5	W Sept 11	Court decisions: the case reporting system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 3
6	M Sept 16	Court decisions <i>cont'd</i> : locating cases; CT library visit	
7	W Sept 18	Legal citation: intro to <i>The Bluebook</i> and citing cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Y&S Appx. B • Read <i>Bluebook</i> ("BB") Intro (pp. 1-2), Rules 10 & 10.1 (Cases, pp. 94-96) & 10.3.2 (Reporters, pp. 103-104) • <u>Bring <i>Bluebook</i> ("BB") from now on!</u>
8	M Sept 23	Legal citation: citing cases <i>cont'd</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for quiz #1
9	W Sept 25	Quiz #1; intro to legal analysis: reading cases (<i>Hamer</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read case, <i>Hamer v. Sidway</i>
10	W Oct 2	Legal analysis <i>cont'd</i> : introduction to case briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 18 pts. A, B, C
11	M Oct 7	Writing and editing basics; peer review <i>Hamer</i> briefs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief <i>Hamer v. Sidway</i> • Read chs. 16 & 17
12	W Oct 16 <i>Mon sched</i>	Legal analysis <i>cont'd</i> : reading and briefing cases (<i>Frontiero</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise <i>Hamer</i> brief • Read case, <i>Frontiero v. Richardson</i>
13	M Oct 21	Validating cases; review for midterm exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 5 • Review for midterm exam
14	W Oct 23	MIDTERM EXAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for midterm exam!
	F Oct 25	<i>NO CLASS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised <i>Frontiero</i> brief due in Coughlin's mailbox by 6pm
15	M Oct 28	Introduction to NY Supreme Court Library— <i>Group A</i>	
16	W Oct 30	Introduction to NY Supreme Court Library— <i>Group B</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group A: NY Sup Ct library exercise due in mailbox by 6pm
	F Nov 1	<i>NO CLASS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group B: NY Sup Ct library exercise due in mailbox by 6pm
17	M Nov 4	Locating cases: the digest system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 4
	Tu Nov 5	<i>Last day to withdraw from any class with a "W"</i>	
18	W Nov 6	Constitutions: locating and citing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 7 pt. A and <i>BB</i> R11
19	M Nov 11	Statutes: the legislative process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 7 pt. B
20	W Nov 13	Statutes <i>cont'd</i> : locating them (CT library visit)	

21	M Nov 18	Quiz #2; statutes <i>cont'd</i> : citing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for quiz #2 • Read <i>BB</i> R12 & 12.1 (pp. 120-121)
22	W Nov 20	Statutes <i>cont'd</i> : reading and analyzing them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read statute and answer questions, both TBA.
23	M Nov 25	Court decisions revisited: analyzing and applying statutes & constitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read case TBA.
24	W Nov 27	Tour of Brooklyn Law School Library!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief case discussed in class 23.
25	M Dec 2	Administrative law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 9
26	W Dec 4	Quiz #3; introduction to secondary sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for quiz #3 • Read ch. 6 pt. A
27	M Dec 9	Secondary sources <i>cont'd</i> : legal encyclopedias & periodicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read ch. 6 pts. D-H
28	W Dec 11	Secondary sources <i>cont'd</i> : library exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review exercise TBA
29	M Dec 16	Review for final exam; course wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for final exam
30	W Dec 18	FINAL EXAM!!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study for final exam!

ENJOY THE BREAK! ☺