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Fall 9-2-2018

LEG 272.01: Computers and Law

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MISSOULA COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

COURSE NUMBER & TITLE:
LEG 272-AU18-Trigg Computers and Law

Faculty: Thomas W. Trigg

Term: Autumn 2018

Credits: 3

Office Hours: As posted on office door or by appointment

Office: MC 411

Phone: Not provided by MC

E-Mail: thomas.trigg@umontana.edu

PREREQUISITES: CAPP 120 and LEG 185, or consent of instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course provides an introduction to developments affecting the use of computer technology in law offices. Topics will include computerized legal research, case management systems, data entry including speech recognition and scanning, collaborative document editing, remote computer access, modern computer hardware, and computer security. The course will touch on simple operating systems issues, non-law specific programs, including those for word processing and spreadsheet creation, and Internet-related issues.

Course Goals:
To create attractive and effective publications for business and industry, students will:

1. Become familiar with several software tools used in legal research.
2. Become familiar with a standard computer program used to manage law office activity, including timekeeping, trust account management, task allocation, client contact information, document management, and file records of case activity.
3. Be introduced to alternate forms of data capture, including speech recognition software and scanning with optical character recognition.
4. Practice collaborative document editing, as it might be employed in a small law firm.
5. Be introduced to remote computer access, with discussions of its application in law practice.
6. Examine and experiment with modern computer hardware in addition to the Microsoft products in common use.
7. Acquire an overview of computer security issues in the law office.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student will:

1. Practice using free and commercial research systems including resources offered by the state and Federal government and several universities, such as Thomson-Reuters (Westlaw), Fastcase, and LexisNexis Academic.
2. Practice using Clio, a case management system.
3. Acquire hands-on experience with ScanSnap scanners and Dragon NaturallySpeaking speech recognition software in a law firm setting.
4. Employ collaborative document editing tools available in Google Drive.
5. Acquire hands-on experience with inexpensive Chromebook computers.
6. Study Montana CLE materials on computer security.

REQUIRED TEXT:

We will use resources published on the Internet by legal research companies and case management companies. From time to time, I will direct you to additional materials on the Internet, and I encourage you to conduct independent research for new resources relevant to the subject matter of this course.

RECOMMENDED/OPTIONAL TEXT: None

SUPPLIES: None

EVALUATION:

Your final grade in the course will be determined by your written work on homework, quizzes, and examinations. Written work turned in on time will be graded shortly thereafter and returned to you. If you are unable to turn in your work on time, you should mark the first page of your assignment "Late" and give it to me in a later class. I will not give you a lower mark because your work is late, but I encourage you to keep up so you can benefit as much as possible from the course. If you wish to know your ongoing grade average, save your graded timely papers and use the grade scale below to get an idea of how you are doing. Please do not ask me to do your arithmetic for you.

If you attend classes, do the reading, and complete all your work on time, you are likely to learn the material thoroughly and to do well in the class. If you skimp, your learning and your grade are likely to suffer, perhaps severely. If you come across circumstances that make the class challenging, contact me to discuss how you can improve upon your situation.

Grade Scale:

94 - 100   A
87 -   93   B

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80  -     86   C
73  -     79   D
Below  73   F
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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Be honest, and never offer someone else's work as your own. Missoula College insists that all students practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. You can download a copy of the Code at: http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/documents/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20PDF-%20FINAL%208-27-13.pdf

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:

Eligible students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course when requested in a timely way. Please contact me after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at http://www.umt.edu/dss/ or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES: The University of Montana believes that cell phones are inappropriate during class times.

I have a different opinion. All law offices rely on computers, smartphones, and similar machines. I encourage you to bring them to class and to use them suitably. Whenever a machine can help you learn and contribute to the class, use it. Whenever the contemplated usage might prompt an irascible senior partner to fire you from a job, don't use it. Treat this class -- and machines -- as an opportunity to learn how to practice your profession.