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LEG 186.01: Introduction to Legal Research

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**MISSOULA COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY**

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: LEG 186-AU18-Trigg,
Introduction to Legal Research
DATE: Autumn 2018
INSTRUCTOR: Thomas W. Trigg, Adjunct Faculty
E-MAIL: thomas.trigg@umontana.edu
PHONE: None provided by MC
OFFICE: MC 411
OFFICE HOURS: As posted or by appointment
CREDITS: 2

PREREQUISITES:

Acceptance into program or consent of instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an introduction to legal research with emphasis on understanding the legal system, legal authorities, commonly used research tools, standard usage of written English in the law office, and proper citation format.

Course Goals:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proficiency identifying the various branches of federal and state government and the roles they play within our legal system;
2. Recognize legal issues and associate those issues with the proper jurisdiction;
3. Research constitutions, statutes, administrative rules, and case law;
4. Understand and utilize primary and secondary authority;
5. Employ finding tools and hybrid sources of authority;
6. Verify and validate research findings;
7. Utilize proper legal citation form, grammar, and style;
8. Employ standard English usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling in written materials.

Course Objectives:

1. Read descriptions of governmental organization, and participate in class discussions developing the topic.
2. Discuss legal issues that arise in cases the student might work on in the future.
3. Identify legal authorities, become familiar with how to find legal authorities, and, through reading and analysis, develop an understanding of which authorities are apposite.
4. Become familiar with books and other printed materials in the library containing legal authorities.
5. Learn tools employed to ascertain whether specific legal authorities remain good law.

6. Through the study of legal style manuals, develop and ease in using correct citation format for legal authorities.
7. Through reading, practice, and discussion, become familiar with standard English prose.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Legal Research and Writing Handbook

Andrea Yelin and Hope Samborn

ISBN 978-1-4548-4081-7 (7th ed.)

ISBN 978-1-4548-9638-8 (8th ed.)

The Bluebook : A Uniform System of Citation (20th ed.)

The Harvard Law Review Association and others

ISBN 978-0-6924-0019-7

The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation

Bryan A. Garner

ISBN-13:978-0-226-18885-0 (cloth)

ISBN-13:978-0-226-19129-4 (e-book)

Each of these books is available in multiple editions. Having the newest one is fine but not crucial. If you can locate a used copy for less money, so much the better. I suggest you check www.amazon.com, <http://www.powells.com/>, and any other online supplier you can locate.

RECOMMENDED/OPTIONAL TEXT: None

SUPPLIES: None

STUDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT METHODS AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

Testing and Assignments:

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
80 - 86 C
73 - 79 D
Below 73 F

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.