

Prepared by the Department of Social Sciences, Behavioral Sciences, and Human Services

Date of Departmental Approval: March 2014

Date Approved by Curriculum and Programs: May 2014

Effective: Fall 2014

1. **Course Number:** LGS133
Course Title: Legal Research and Writing
2. **Description:** (formerly BIT133) This course is an introduction to the methods and materials employed in legal research and the writing of legal memoranda and briefs. Emphasis is placed on how and where to locate the law and how to present the law that is found in those sources. Many different strategies of research are explored including computer resources and online database research.
3. **Student Learning Outcomes:**
Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to do the following:
 - Engage in critical thinking by reading, writing and describing the methods and tools of legal research and applying cases and laws to specific facts.
 - Develop communication skills by organizing and presenting ideas in a logical order, responding to and building on ideas, and advocating for a particular interpretation.
 - Speak publicly, applying laws and cases using persuasive argument.
 - Evaluate different interpretations of laws and cases, in order to successfully advocate for a client's position.
 - Identify conflicting values and find solutions to those conflicts.
 - Recognize moral and ethical dilemmas, including subculture norms. Distinguish between fact and opinion, recognize legal issues, and draw reasonable conclusions from the application of law to facts.
 - Find and use general and specific laws and apply them to specific facts and cases for use in the law office, including legislative history and public policy.
 - Organize, research, and draft a polished appellate brief.
4. **Credits:** 3 credits
5. **Satisfies General Education Requirement:** No
6. **Prerequisites:** LGS130/BIT130 and ENL101 and two of the following: (LGS/BIT131 or LGS/BIT134 or LGS/BIT135 or LGS/BIT136 or LGS/BIT137)
7. **Semester Offered:** Spring
8. **Suggested General Guidelines for Evaluation:** Students are evaluated by means of examinations, research and writing projects, a substantial midterm, and final research and writing project.
9. **General Topical Outline:**
 - Introduction to Court Opinions and the Legal System
 - Introduction to the Law Library; Where to start your Research; Citations
 - Background Research; Major Sources of Legal Research; How to Brief a Court Opinion
 - Identifying Legal Issues
 - Reading and Finding Case Law; How important is a dissenting opinion?
 - Reading and Finding Statutes; Taking Effective Notes
 - Legislative History; Monitoring Proposed Legislation; Writing Proposed Legislation
 - Reading and Finding Constitutional Law; Writing letters
 - Finding Administrative Law; Preparing a Memorandum for the Attorney
 - Finding Local Law
 - Finding Court Rules; Preparation of Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law
 - Finding International Law; Preparation of an Appellate Brief
 - The Third Level of Research (Validation); Computer Assisted Legal Research
 - Updating the Law - what are the most current cases?
 - Stopping Research and Preparing an Annotated Bibliography
 - Oral Advocacy

