Introduction

This course will cover online methods of finding primary and secondary sources of United States law. It will build upon the research instruction students have received in the Foundations program and in U.S. Legal Discourse. Each class session will consist of two lectures, with a break in between. There will be an opportunity for students to practice doing research in each class. A research assignment is due the Wednesday following each class.

Grading

This is a pass/fail course. In order to pass, students must attend all class sessions and hand in all assignments by the due date. Any student unable to meet these requirements must inform the professor immediately.

Course website

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This site will function as a method of distributing course materials and communicating information relevant to the course. Assignments are to be dropped off at this site.

Further reading

No text is required for this class, but there are many books on legal research available in the Reading Room Reserve section of the Williams Library. Two books that are particularly useful are Finding the Law and The Process of Legal Research. This syllabus includes suggestions for further reading from each book. These are suggestions only; the readings are not required. Full information about the books is given below.


Lecture and Assignment Schedule

CLASS 1 (SEPTEMBER 19, 2015)
First lecture: introduction to course, researching secondary sources
Lunch break
Second lecture: further researching secondary sources
Suggested Further Reading
Finding The Law: chapter 10
Process of Legal Research: chapters 4 & 5
Assignment distributed: secondary sources

ASSIGNMENT DUE: September 23, 2015 – submit on course website

CLASS 2 (SEPTEMBER 26, 2015)
First lecture: review of secondary sources assignment, questions and answers about same, statutory research
Lunch break
Second lecture: legislative history research
Suggested Further Reading
Finding The Law: chapters 5 & 6
Process of Legal Research: chapters 11 & 12
Assignment distributed: statutory research

ASSIGNMENT DUE: September 30, 2015 – submit on course website

CLASS 3 (OCTOBER 3, 2015)
First lecture: review of statutory research assignment, questions and answers about same, administrative research
Lunch Break
Second lecture: case law research
Suggested Further Reading
Finding The Law: chapters 4 & 8
Process of Legal Research: chapters 9, 10, 13 & 14
Assignment distributed: administrative and case law research

ASSIGNMENT DUE: October 7, 2015 – submit on course website