Introduction to Legal Research: IIST 457/557

Thursday 7:15pm-10:05pm

Husted 004

Instructor: Colleen Ostiguy, Interim Head of Public Services and Electronic Services Librarian at Albany Law School.

Email: costiguy@gmail.com

Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Meetings: The course will meet 13 times. There are no quizzes for the course and no final examination. Final projects are due the last day of class.

Class Attendance: Attendance is taken each week. Students who miss 3 or more classes will have their final average dropped a letter grade.

Readings: There is no required text for this class. Be prepared to discuss readings on the due date listed on the Blackboard site.

Class Participation: Class participation is worth 10 points and is based on contribution in class discussion.

Objectives for Students: Students who finish this course should be able to:

- Demonstrate a sense of professional identity by applying the concepts and principles of library and information sciences and related disciplines (IST Goal 1).

- Select, acquire, organize, describe, retrieve, and disseminate information using relevant theories and practices (IST Goal 3).

- Recognize the crucial role of users in the development and delivery of user-centered information systems and services (IST Goal 4)

- Promote and demonstrate the use of ethical standards in the creation, management, and use of information (IST Goal 7)

- Discuss current issues in reference services including policies and trends (IST Goal 1 and 7).

Email: Each student is expected to have an email account for this class. Students will need to check email at least once a week. This is also the best method of communication with the instructor concerning assignments, questions, and readings.

Incomplete: No incompletes will be given in this class without the express permission of the instructor in advance of the end of the semester.
Food and Phones: Please feel free to bring a snack to class. Cell phones should be turned off or to vibrate.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism, self-plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, the instructor will pursue further disciplinary action at the University level. If you are not sure, ask the instructor or err on the side of citing more than you think necessary.

Assignments: Each student is responsible for handing in his/her own individual assignment. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization will make the difference in assigning full points for each assignment.

Research Paper or Pathfinder (Final Project)

The final project for this class can either be a (1) paper on a new or ongoing issue in legal information or (2) pathfinder on a topical legal issue. The project should be 8-10 pages in length, not including references or endnotes. The paper should include a discussion of the legal issue, a thorough literature review, and your findings and analysis. The pathfinder should include an overview of the legal area, all relevant resources on the topic and any researching issues you have encountered. Final paper and pathfinder topics must be approved by the instructor.

Paper Topic Examples:

1. Supporting researching needs of law students or pro se patrons.
2. The future of the academic law library.
3. Public libraries meeting the legal needs of their community.
4. Electronic access to federal and NY legal materials.

Pathfinder Examples:

1. Digital inheritance rights.
2. Legal issues surrounding fracking.
3. Access to cell phone records.
4. State recognition of same sex marriage.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Secondary Sources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Federal and NY Primary Sources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Federal and NY Administrative Sources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Federal and NY Case Reporters</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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Requirements for all assignments:

- Assignments due on the date specified.
- Individuals should be prepared to discuss their findings and conclusions with the class.
- Assignments should be word-processed and double-spaced.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Awarded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>80-84</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>79-75</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>74 or less</td>
<td>E (failure)</td>
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Class Meeting Dates:

8/29: Introduction to Law Librarianship
9/12: Types of Law Libraries and Issues Facing Them
9/19: Introduction to Legal Research
9/26: Secondary Legal Sources
10/3: Federal Statutory Sources and Legislative History
10/10: NY Statutory Sources and Legislative History
10/17: Federal Administrative Sources
10/24: NY Administrative Sources
10/31: Federal Case Reporters
11/7: NY Case Reporters
11/14: Form Books
11/28: Court Information
12/5: The Future of Law Libraries and Final Project Due

Additional course information can be found on the Blackboard site located at: https://blackboard.albany.edu/