LAW 508: ADVANCED ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESEARCH
Fall 2016

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR:
Associate Professor Nancy L Strohmeyer
Office: Room 174 (in the Law Library)
618-453-8789
nstrohmeyer@siu.edu

CLASS MEETINGS:
Fridays, 10:00–10:50 a.m., Room 164

COURSE DESCRIPTION/LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Building on the research techniques presented in Law 503A and 504A (Lawyering Skills I and II), this course focuses on the effective and efficient use of both legal and non-legal research tools available to assist in the practice of law. Students will receive advanced training in Bloomberg Law, Westlaw, Lexis, and other commercial and free online research systems and resources. The primary purpose is that you will know so many ways to find answers when researching that you never have to worry when one method is unsuccessful. You will immediately be able to switch to another method to find what you need. You will know about free resources and paid resources, book and online, primary and secondary, giving you a large toolbox full of a variety of tools which are available to you depending on your situation at that moment.

Prerequisites: Law 503A & 504A (Lawyering Skills I and II). Although this course is S/U, grading will be based on a variety of assessment methods, including research assignments, the final assignment, and course participation.

ATTENDANCE:
The law school attendance policy is followed. Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled class meetings and is signified by signing the attendance sheet. No signature on an attendance sheet is conclusive evidence of absence. There is a maximum of three (3) unexcused absences; students with more than three will face sanctions, including receiving a grade of U and/or withdrawal from the course.

TWEN PAGE:
Students must register for and should regularly check the course’s TWEN page for general announcements and other course-related information or resources. Course assignments will be posted on TWEN beginning the date and time included in the schedule below and returned on TWEN as well.

READINGS:
There is no assigned text. Readings may be assigned on a periodic basis. Students are responsible for checking their email accounts and the course TWEN page for assignments.
GRADING:
Assignments: 2 at 100 points each, totaling 200 points
Final Assignment: 500 points
All assignments must be turned in and completed satisfactorily for you to receive an S in the class.

Assignments: Students must complete two (2) assignments that will be posted and submitted via TWEN. Assignments will consist of questions for which students will be asked to locate specified documents or information. Each assignment will have a maximum of 100 points possible.

Final Assignment: The Final Assignment will also be available via TWEN. You are given a week to complete the assignment so you do not feel rushed as you answer the questions. You should make certain you give yourself enough time to complete the assignment, however. Do not have empty spaces because you are trying to make the deadline before answering some questions. Those will earn zero points. In the Final Assignment, you will need to use and evaluate a variety of sources that we discussed throughout the semester.

Collaboration: You MUST work individually on all assignments. Do not discuss your assignments with other class members or any other individuals. You are free to ask me any questions you wish. I will answer those that can be answered fairly. Please do not ask anyone else in the Law Library for assistance, except for help in finding the location of materials. They may not show you how to use any materials or make recommendations on how to answer any questions.

Comparative Analysis of online legal research sites: Students will be expected to use evaluative skills to compare the strengths and weaknesses of online legal research sites. This requirement may be incorporated into the assignments.

Penalty for Late Assignments: A 25 point penalty will be assessed when an assignment is submitted after it is due. The late penalty for the Final Assignment is 100 points. The penalty points are subtracted from your grade on the assignment, not from the total points available.

COMPUTER USE: Because you have chosen this class, you should be trying to learn as much as possible about legal research. In order to achieve that goal, it is vital that you pay attention in class. You may use your laptops to take notes or follow along on the resources we are using. Do not use them to check email, chat, shop, cruise the Internet or perform any other non-class related purpose. Please turn off your cell phones.

RECORDING OF CLASSES: SIU School of Law no longer records classes automatically. Please do not record class sessions for this course. If you have a reason to do so, please talk to me in advance of class so we can discuss it. I need at least a week’s notice to approve and plan an exception to my policy of non-recording.
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:
Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIU Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu, on the Department of Safety’s website at www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES:
Disability Support Services provides the required academic and programmatic support services to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. DSS provides centralized coordination and referral services. To utilize DSS services, students must come to the DSS to open cases. The process involves interviews, reviews of student-supplied documentation, and completion of Disability Accommodation Agreements. http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/. Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreement to the School of Law Registrar's Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations.

SALUKI CARES:
The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a university-wide program of care and support for students in any type of distress-physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: 618-453-5714, or siucares@siu.edu, http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html. At the School of Law, Assistant Dean Judi Ray is also available to help students access university resources. Her email is judiray@siu.edu, and her phone number is 618-453-3135.

READING THE SYLLABUS:
Have you truly read this syllabus in total, including the notices you get on every syllabus? Well, you are either a star or a person who needs more to do. I would give you points if I could, but how could you prove you had read everything? Maybe someone else told you about this section. Maybe your eyes accidently saw the heading above, and you read only this paragraph. Would you be truthful? Besides, this is an S/U course. If you really need 10 more points, you are far too close to the U world, and I am already disappointed in you. Better to avoid that whole area. Now that we have established all that, and you have an idea of my personality, read on. The parts coming up are especially important.
Course Schedule

August 26
Course Introduction
Review of Legal Sources
Books

September 2
Bloomberg, LexisNexis, Westlaw: Cost Effective Searching
Lexis/Nexis Academic (University accounts)

September 9
Bloomberg, LexisNexis, Westlaw: Advanced Searching

September 16
Specialized Proprietary Online Systems
FastCase
CaseMaker X
BNA
CCH (Westlaw: Wolters Kluwer)

September 23
Specialized Proprietary Online Systems (cont.)
MOML
Index to Legal Periodicals
LegalTrac
HeinOnline

September 30
ProQuest Congressional
IICLE Smart Books

Assignment # 1: Available on TWEN page at 12:00 pm.
Due: Wednesday, October 5, by 4:00 pm to TWEN Dropbox

October 7
Review Assignment # 1

October 14
Government/Court Information on the Internet: State & Local

October 21
Government Information on the Internet: Federal
October 28
Government Information on the Internet: Federal (continued)

Assignment # 2: Available on TWEN page at 12:00 pm.
Due: Wednesday, November 2 by 4:00 pm to TWEN Dropbox

November 4
Review Assignment # 2
Introduction to Internet Legal Research
Evaluating Websites
Legal & Non-legal Information on the Internet
Morris Library resources
LibGuides

November 11 (Veteran’s Day: Closed) Make-up class
Assignments to make up time

November 18
Google Scholar
Cornell/Washlaw
Library of Congress
Final Assignment: Available on TWEN page at 12:00 pm.
Due: Friday, December 2 by 5:00 pm to TWEN Dropbox

November 25
No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2
Course Review
Available for questions regarding Final Assignment
Final Assignment due by 5:00 pm to TWEN Dropbox

Please Note: The syllabus is subject to change if needed. We may take some detours according to the interests of the class.