Law 508 ADVANCED ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESEARCH
Fall 2018

Syllabus & Schedule

INSTRUCTOR:
Professor Douglas Lind
Room 175A
453-8713
dlind@siu.edu

CLASS MEETINGS:
Fridays, 10:00–10:50 AM; Room 164

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
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 Westlaw, LexisNexis, and other commercial and free online research systems and resources.

Although this course is S/U, grading will be based on a variety of assessment methods, including research assignments, a comparative analysis of online legal research sites, a final assignment, and course participation.

Description
This course is designed to provide the student with the necessary information and skills to evaluate and utilize online resources for legal research. The course will build upon the basic research skills introduced in Law 503A and 504A, Lawyering Skills I and II. Emphasis will be given to helping the student develop strategies for becoming an efficient and effective legal researcher using both legal and non-legal research tools. Students will receive advanced training in Westlaw, Lexis, and other commercial and free online research systems and resources.

Learning Objectives
- Perform cost effective research in subscription databases such as Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg Law
- Evaluate free and fee-based electronic resources
- Learn cost-effective legal research strategies

Required Texts
There is no assigned text for this course. The professor will post assigned readings to the class D2L page or via email.

Workload Expectations
The American Bar Association standards for accrediting law schools contain a formula for calculating the amount of work that constitutes one credit hour. According to ABA Standard 310(b)(1), “a “credit hour” is an amount of work that reasonably approximates: (1) not less than
one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work per week for fifteen weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.”

Laptops and Other Electronic Devices
Please bring a laptop computer, electronic tablet, or other electronic device with access to a web browser to each class. We will explore resources online in class. Please do not use your device for any other purpose, such as online shopping, surfing the web, texting, playing games, checking or sending personal email, then course related activities during class time.

ATTENDANCE:
The law school attendance policy is followed. Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled class meetings and is signified by signing the attendance sheet. The absence of a signature on an attendance sheet is conclusive evidence of absence. There is a maximum of two unexcused absences; students with more than two will face sanctions, including grade penalties and/or withdrawal from the course.

GRADING:
Assignments (3): 300 pts  Final Assignment: 500 pts

Assignments: Students will complete three (3) graded assignments covering commercial resources, government information, and legal & non-legal information on the Internet 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 be a maximum of 100 points.

Final Assignment: The last assignment will be available electronically on April 11. Although you will have a week to complete the exam, it should not take that long. We are giving you additional time so that you do not need to feel rushed as you answer the questions. To complete the last assignment, you will need to use and evaluate a variety of sources that we discussed throughout the semester.

Comparative Analysis of online legal research sites: Students will be expected to use the evaluative skills learned in class to compare the strengths and weaknesses of online legal research sites. This requirement will be incorporated into the three (3) assignments and last assignment.

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.

Penalty for Late Assignments: A 25 point penalty will be assessed when an assignment is submitted after it is due.
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/](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](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.
Course Schedule

August 24
- Course Introduction
- Review of Legal Sources

August 31
- Lexis/Westlaw: Advanced and Cost Effective Searching

September 7
- Introduction to Specialized Proprietary Online Systems
  - FastCase
  - IICLE Smart Books
- More Specialized Proprietary Online Systems:
  - BNA / Bloomberg
  - Online Indexes
  - HeinOnline

September 14
- Lexis rep
- Assignment # 1: Commercial Resources
  - Due: Wednesday, September 19 by 11:00 pm

September 21
- Review Assignment # 1
- Government Information on the Internet: State & Local

September 28
- Government Information on the Internet: Federal
- Assignment # 2: Government Information
  - Due: Wednesday, October 3 by 11:00 pm

October 5
- Review Assignment # 2
- Introduction to Internet Legal Research
  - Evaluating Websites
**October 12**
Built in catch up day.

**October 19**
- Legal & Non-legal Information on the Internet
  - Statistics
  - Public Policy Centers and Think Tanks
  - Blogs
  - People Locating Resources

**October 26**
- Law Practice Realities – guest speaker TBD
- **Assignment # 3: Legal & Non-legal Information on the Internet**
  - Due: **Thursday, November 1 by 11:00 pm**

**November 2**
- Review Assignment # 3
- Course Review and Evaluations
- Last Assignment is distributed via email

**November 9**
- No Class
- Last Assignment due by 4:00 pm