

**SYLLABUS**  
**LAWYERING SKILLS RESEARCH - LAW 507A**  
**Sections 2 & 4 - Fall 2020**

**Research Professor:**

Nolan Wright, room 174 in the law school library, [nwright@siu.edu](mailto:nwright@siu.edu)

**Course Schedule, Classroom, and Time:**

Thursdays

Sec. 2: 9:15-10:30 am

Classroom: 206

Sec. 4: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Classroom: 206

Also offered simultaneously via Zoom.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this class, students should be able to:

- Plan and execute the process of finding relevant state and Federal statutes and case law.
- Choose from the authorities to find the ones that best address the simulated client problems assigned.
- Cite the authorities selected properly.

A more detailed list of the chunks of knowledge and skills that go into accomplishing these learning objectives is posted on the course management webpage (see Detailed Lawyering Skills Learning Objectives for Research, Fall Semester).

**Course Management Webpage:**

All information, materials, assignments, quizzes, and exams for this course will be posted on the course page for Law 507A-02 and 04 on D2L.

**Required Texts & Equipment:**

- Assigned readings on legal authorities and research, pulled from various sources, will be posted on the course webpage on D2L (no charges).
- Coleen Barger, *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation* (6th ed., Wolters Kluwer 2017). ISBN 9781454887768.
- A laptop computer (Windows or Mac) with webcam, or an iPad, with webcam. Note: other types of tablets do not currently work with the LockDown Browser app

required for some of the testing planned for this semester. You can use other tablets for note taking but will not be able to use them for quizzes or the final exam in this course.

### **Required Subscription Services & Related Account Registration**

Students will use Lexis Advance, Westlaw, and CALI (Computer Assisted Legal Instruction) subscription services. Check your @siu.edu mailbox for account registration information (and get in the habit of checking that email box daily). Prior to the first day of class, student should register for each subscription service and make sure they can login to their accounts.

Students will also need to download the Lockdown Browser application to use taking quizzes and exams in this course online. For additional information, see <https://web.respondus.com/respondus-lockdown-browser-the-student-experience/>.

Please contact Professor Nolan Wright at [nwright@siu.edu](mailto:nwright@siu.edu) if you have problems registering for or accessing your account.

### **Course Description:**

This course will help you develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively perform legal research, an essential foundation for your future work as an attorney. To succeed in law, you must find all of the legal authorities necessary to resolve a matter that is or may come to be in dispute. That is, to persuade a judge or other decision-maker to rule in your client's favor, or to predict the likely outcome if a dispute were to arise over a matter that concerns them. You will face analogous expectations well before that if you are on law review or moot court, work in one of the law school clinics, take a symposium course with a research paper requirement, work as a research assistant for a faculty member, serve as a judicial or agency intern, or work for a law firm during law school. The difference is that once you are in professional practice, you will have more problems to research, less time to do so, and more things competing for your attention, putting more of a premium on efficiency. Thus, it is vital that you start building a good foundation from the start. This course aims to help you do so.

### **Relationship to Lawyering Skills Writing Course:**

There is a symbiotic relationship between legal research and writing. Surveys of practicing attorneys (including those who do hiring) consistently demonstrate these are critically important skills. It does not matter how proficient you are at written or verbal communication if you are wrong on the law, and being right on the law cannot help your client if you are not able to communicate effectively.

Recognizing that relationship, Lawyering Skills Research, and Lawyering Skills Writing are taught in an integrated manner, each helping you develop knowledge and skills you will need in the other. The two courses are graded separately. However, their policies differ,

such as the way your professor monitors your attendance, rules about the use of electronic devices during class, and restrictions on collaboration, so be sure to read both syllabi carefully.

**Affiliated Writing Professor:**

Joe Lester

**Teaching Assistants:**

Simran Saini (2L)

Mary (Katie) Roesch (3L)

**Attendance, and COVID-19 Precautions:**

A weekly schedule for the course follows [below](#). As you will see, Lawyering Skills Research typically meets on Thursday each week, with Section 2 meeting from 9:15-10:30, and section 4 meeting from 11:00-12:15.

Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded for each session by having students complete one or more assigned activities. This policy applies to all scheduled class sessions, and the out of class research conference. Any student who misses a class session is responsible for communicating with their research professor to cover the missed material. Students are permitted one absence in this class for the semester. Students with additional absences will be referred to the Associate Dean.

This class is offered in-person in Room 206 and simultaneously via Zoom at the times listed. Students have the option of attending in-person or via Zoom out of COVID-19 concerns. This is subject to change, as possible pandemic-related circumstances may make it necessary to shift to online-only instruction.

The course's learning activities are designed to provide everyone with the opportunities needed to achieve the targeted learning objectives, whether meeting online or in person. Your research professor will be using the “shared screen” function in Zoom to respond to problems students have doing the in-class research exercises. This will allow for assistance to individual students in the classroom while maintaining social distancing, as well as to those participating online.

Additional details:

- Everyone attending the in-person class will be required to use the designated entrance and exit to the room, sit in their assigned seats, otherwise maintain physical distance from others in the classroom, and wear a mask covering their nose and mouth.

- Students choosing to attend via Zoom are required to have their webcams on during the class session and should make sure they have reliable internet service. Note that wireless service is available to students throughout the law school building, including the law library.
- No student should attend in person, but should instead attend via Zoom, if they do not feel well, have COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 unless the student has since tested negative and been cleared per CDC guidelines.
- Students will participate in the same learning activities, including small group assignments that include a mix of in-person students and online students, collaborating using features in Zoom and the course website, and will be graded the same way, whether attending in person or online.
- Instructions will be provided on using the necessary features of Zoom and the course websites.

### **Assignments:**

There will be weekly assignments to prepare for class, posted on the course management web page, including a mix of readings, videos, exercises, polling, and/or quizzes.

Students will complete additional assigned exercises in class, including opportunities to practice research techniques and short writing assignments that will ask you to identify challenging points in the material covered or to reflect on the implications of that material. We will be using the discussion board on the course management webpage as a vehicle for sharing those writings, and all students are required to post observations there.

In addition to short in-class exercises, there will be three out-of-class research exercises assigned to help students develop their skill, and four quizzes to test knowledge and understanding, with feedback to help students see where they need to improve and how to do so, before the final examination in the course.

A final exam will be given to test whether students have achieved the learning objectives for the course.

Finally, although not part of your grade in this course, your Lawyering Skills Writing professor will be assigning a writing problem that requires students to perform research to respond to a simulated client problem, drawing on what you learn in this course.

### **Minimum Requirements/Time Commitment:**

You must satisfactorily complete every assessed assignment in the course to pass the course. “Every assessed assignment” includes the class preparation exercises, in-class research exercises, reflective writings, and discussion board assignments, quizzes, a Zoom

research conference to review your research for your Lawyering Skills Writing assignment, and the final examination.

You should expect to spend at least 3 hours on this class weekly, including 75 minutes of classroom instruction. You will need to do so to complete the assignments and do well on them, and the American Bar Association standards require it.<sup>1</sup>

### **Grading:**

You earn points toward your grade in Lawyering Skills Research as follows:

- Class preparation and participation: 30 points
- Out of class research exercises: 30 points
- Quizzes: 40 points
- Final research exam: 100 points

At the end of the semester, your research professor will add up the points you earned in each of those categories to arrive at your raw score. Then they will curve the raw scores for their two sections together, following the required grade distribution and required grade median for all first-year courses at the School of Law, to arrive at your final course grade.

### **Classroom Electronics:**

You will need a laptop computer or tablet with access to the law school wireless network at each class session. Please have your laptop or tablet up and running at the start of each class period, including the Zoom connection to the class session, whether attending online or in-person.

You may only use electronic devices during class for class purposes. By “class purposes,” we mean using your electronic device to explore online legal research resources (guided by your research professor), performing in-class research exercises and other assignments for the course, note-taking if desired, and completing research quizzes and examinations. Unauthorized use during class includes texting, emailing, gaming, shopping, and accessing other sites not related to the classroom topic. This rule applies to your use of laptops, phones, tablets, and other mobile or wireless devices.

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<sup>1</sup> Lawyering Skills Research is a one credit hour class. The American Bar Association standards require “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.” ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools 2019-2020, Standard 310(b)(1). For purposes of this Standard, fifty minutes suffices for one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction. An “hour” for out-of-class student work is sixty minutes. The fifteen-week period may include one week for a final examination.” Id., at Interpretation 310-1.

Be sure to turn off phone ringers and texting functions before class begins. You will discover as lawyers that failure to do so in court can result in a bailiff confiscating your phone. We reserve the right to do so in class if it becomes a problem.

**Professionalism:**

Lawyers are professionals, and part of what you will be learning in both of your Lawyering Skills courses each semester is how to handle yourself professionally in the context of your legal education and your newly acquired legal skills. You begin to establish your reputation here, by your timely completion of assignments, your attendance and active participation in class, your adherence to the course policies, and how you conduct yourself in person and by email, with your classmates, the TA's, and the professors. For example, surfing the Internet in class, disrupting the class with questions not submitted in good faith, emailing a professor during the time you are in another professor's class, coming to class late, or emailing the professor with a question answered in the syllabus would be unprofessional conduct. This is not an exhaustive list of unprofessional conduct. Before you act, please consider whether you would say or do what you were about to say or do in front of a judge or a meeting with a client or a senior attorney in a law office.

**Weekly Course Schedule:**

**Week 1**

**Thursday, August 20**

Class Topic: Introduction to legal research and information literacy:

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on the D2L course webpage.

**Week 2**

**Thursday, August 27**

Class Topic: Source of legal authority in the United States.

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on the D2L course webpage.

**Friday, August 28, 1 pm**

Quiz #1 goes live on D2L

**Week 3**

**Thursday, September 3**

Class Topic: Statutory research and citation.

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on the D2L course webpage.

**Friday, September 4, 1 pm**

Research exercise #1 available for download on D2L.

**Week 4**

**Tuesday, September 8, 5 pm**

Deadline for submitting research exercise #1 work product on D2L.

**Thursday, September 10**

Class Topic: Statutory research and citation continued.

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Friday, September 11, 1 pm**

Quiz #2 goes live on D2L.

**Week 5**

**Thursday, September 17**

Class Topic: Case law research and citation.

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Friday, September 18, 1 pm**

Research exercise #2 available for download on D2L.

**Week 6**

**Tuesday, September 22, 5 pm**

Deadline for submitting research exercise #2 work product on D2L.

**Thursday, September 24**

Class Topic: Case law research and citation continued.

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Friday, September 25, 1 pm**

Quiz #3 goes live on D2L.

**Week 7**

**Thursday, October 1**

Class Topic: Introduction to research planning

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Week 8** MIDTERM WEEK

No LS classes or study block this week

**Week 9**

**Thursday, October 15**

Class Topic: Using secondary sources effectively

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Friday, October 16, 1 pm**

Research exercise #3 available for download on D2L.

**Week 10**

**Tuesday, October 20, 5 pm**

Deadline for submitting research exercise #3 work product on D2L.

**Thursday, October 22**

Class Topic: Using secondary sources effectively continued

Preparation: Complete the readings and other pre-class learning activities listed for the week on D2L course webpage.

**Friday, October 23, 1 pm**

Quiz #4 goes live on D2L.

**Week 11**

**Monday, October 26 - Friday, October 30**

Research conference with your research professor at scheduled time slot via Zoom (must submit your log of completed research by email by 5 pm the day before your scheduled conference)

**Week 12**

**Thursday, November 5**

Class Topic: Course review and review of research exam logistics

**Week 13**

**No research class**

**Week 14**

**Sunday, November 15, 1 pm**

Research final exam goes live on D2L.



Friday, November 20, 5 pm

Deadline to complete research final exam

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** *We ask that you become familiar with **Emergency Preparedness @ SIU**. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, on the Emergency Preparedness @ SIU website, and through text and email alerts. To register for alerts, visit: <http://emergency.siu.edu/>.*

**DISABILITY POLICY.** *SIU Carbondale is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all students with disabilities. Disability Support Services coordinates the implementation of accommodations. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but have not yet obtained approval please contact DSS immediately at 618-453-5738 or [disabilityservices.siu.edu](http://disabilityservices.siu.edu). You may request accommodations at any time, but timely requests help to insure accommodations are in place when needed. Accommodations and services are determined through an interactive process with students and may involve consideration of specific course design and learning objectives in consultation with faculty. Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreements for each course to the School of Law Registrar's Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations. Accommodation [request](#) and [renewal](#) forms can be found here: <https://law.siu.edu/academics/>.*

**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) 453-2461, or [siucares@siu.edu](mailto:siucares@siu.edu), <http://salukicare.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](mailto:judiray@siu.edu), and her phone number is 618-453-3135.*

**COVID-19.** *As a condition of on-campus enrollment, all SIUC students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19, including the requirement that all students wear a mask in campus buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, and studios when others are present, regardless of social distancing. Students are expected to follow physical or social distancing guidelines by keeping at least 6 feet from others, and practicing good hand hygiene. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. SIUC will follow federal, state and county public health recommendations and mandates in all decisions relating to university operation. Students should regularly review the link for the [SIUC COVID-19 response](#).*