

## ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH AND LITERACY

LAW 929L-001

Spring 2015, Wednesdays, 1:00 pm -2:50 pm

Room TBA

This course provides the advanced legal research, reading and writing skills essential to law school seminar papers, dissertations, and independent study. It is an integrated skills course open to all JD, LL.M., and SJD students through which you will write an annotated bibliography called a “pathfinder” in a specific area of legal study to show competence or expertise. There will be problems, exercises, and presentations to enhance your knowledge of the recursive processes of legal research and writing. You will identify the best, most authoritative sources and strategies relating to your particular research interest and learn how to use them for advanced academic and occupational proficiency.

Each student must complete a pathfinder, the primary and core work for this course. This is a detailed, annotated analysis of the primary and secondary research resources available for your legal topic, and the best strategies for writing on that topic using principles of English for legal purposes. Outcomes for learning in each half of the semester follow, depending on whether you write a research paper for another course:

<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment Measure</b>
Students will be able to <b>research, read, critically examine, evaluate, and write critically</b> about multilingual legal authorities in the context of a legal research problem or issue.	<u>Midterm assessment:</u> Annotated bibliography (8 page minimum length)
Students will be able to <b>paraphrase, summarize, synthesize, and analyze</b> primary and secondary legal English sources with citation in the context of a legal research problem or paper.	<u>Final assessment:</u> Annotated bibliography (20 page minimum length)  <b>OR</b> Research paper with clearly-defined research problem, purpose, and thesis. (20 page minimum length)

Note that there is an 8 page minimum length requirement for an annotated bibliography with a legal research paper.

Your final grade will be determined by the quality of your written Pathfinder, oral presentations, and class participation: that is, your research problem/topic, exercises, readings, and demonstrated knowledge of criteria for graduate-level research and writing in English.

Your grade is based on:

- Pathfinder or Research Paper for an in-depth Research Problem 70%
- Class presentation of the Research Problem (Research Question and Purpose) 10%
- Class presentation of the Pathfinder and/or Research Paper Outline 10%
- Attendance, Participation, Collaboration (online and face to face) 10%

You may receive extra credit toward your grade by completing Lexis and Westlaw outside training. You may also receive extra credit by completing the strategies questionnaires and checklists for the final stages of writing a research paper (pre-writing, drafting, and revising).

Individual consultations will take place by appointment any time you need interactive and/or corrective feedback.

If you have any questions about this course, please email one of the instructors below:

Professor Bain Butler: [dbbutler@wcl.american.edu](mailto:dbbutler@wcl.american.edu)

Professor Roddy: [roddy@wcl.american.edu](mailto:roddy@wcl.american.edu)

## TEACHING SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topics	Tasks	Readings, Viewings and Lectures
1	Jan. 7	Introduction	1. Student introductions  2. Discussion of research interests and multilingual research writer needs	<b>In class:</b> Handout - What Is a Pathfinder? Pathfinder examples

2	Jan. 14	Pence Law Library Resources Secondary Sources	<p>1. Choose a secondary source (print or electronic) and review it for the class (template on MyWCL)</p> <p>2. Choose a legal website and review it for the class (template on MyWCL)</p>	<p><b>Before class:</b>  CALI Lessons - <a href="#">Introduction to Secondary Resources and Evaluating Web Sites</a>  Skim chapters 1 and 2, <i>Legal Research in a Nutshell</i> (e-book available on lawschool.westlaw.com)  Review Pence Law Library website</p> <p><b>In class:</b>  Handout on secondary sources  Handout on developing a research plan</p>
3	Jan. 21	Objective Legal Research Writing in English  e.g., case analyses, issue papers	<p>1. Bring a hard copy of the secondary source you reviewed last week to discuss discourse this week.</p> <p>2. Prepare a ppt presentation of the structure of your secondary source.</p>	<p><b>Before class:</b>  <i>U.S. Legal Discourse: Legal English for Foreign LLMS</i> (Hoffman &amp; Tyler, 2008)  Read handout: Ch.1, pp. 1-7.</p> <p><b>In class:</b> pair/group work</p> <p>a) Analyze the written language use of your secondary source by commenting on the legal English, discourse (including citations), and large-scale structure.</p> <p>b) Learn how to make your legal writing (small-scale structure) effective: word choice and superfluous language, Ch. 3 exercise</p>
4	Jan. 28	American University Library Resources U.S. Legal Research	<p>1. Submit pathfinder topic</p> <p>2. Choose a non-legal resource from the AU Library that is relevant to your topic and review it for the class (template on MyWCL)</p>	<p><b>Before class:</b>  CALI Lesson - <a href="#">Finding Statutes</a>  Skim chapters 3-8, <i>Legal Research in a Nutshell</i> (e-book available on lawschool.westlaw.com)  <a href="#">Review AU Library website</a></p> <p><b>In class:</b>  Handout on U.S. legal resources  <a href="#">Discussion of pathfinder topics and research challenges</a></p>

5	Feb. 4	Scholarly Writing  e.g., empirical research, use of citations	1. Present key terms and discourse structure in the non-legal resource you reviewed last week.	<b>Before class:</b> <i>Lost in Translation: Effective Legal Writing for the International Legal Community</i> (Fandl, 2013) Read handout, Ch. 7, pp. 81-86. <b>In class:</b> pair/group work a) Discuss why this topic is important at this time with key terms and structural (ppt) outline. b) Q&A to turn your research topic into a research question or thesis. c) Make your legal writing effective by drafting to avoid ambiguity, Ch. 3 exercise.
6	Feb. 11	Foreign & International Legal Research	1. Prepare brief presentation on researching foreign or international legal topic of your choice (template on MyWCL)	<b>Before class:</b> CALI Lesson - <a href="#">Introduction to Foreign Legal Research</a> <a href="#">Skim chapters 1-9, International Legal Research in a Nutshell</a> (e-book available on lawschool.westlaw.com) <b>In class:</b> Handout on foreign & international legal resources
7	Feb. 18	Textual analysis of a law journal article relevant to your research topic	1. Prepare a structural (ppt) outline of a law journal article of your choice, in any language.	<b>Before class:</b> Analyze the text of law journal article (model uploaded to MyWCL) <b>In class:</b> pair/group work a) Comment on the Abstract, Table of Contents, Introduction and Conclusion sections, and Footnotes. b) Make your legal English writing effective: parallel structure exercise
8	Feb. 25	Research strategies	1. Individual meetings regarding pathfinder	<b>After class:</b> Submit 1 page research plan for completing research
9	Mar. 4	Analyze Your Research with Original	1. Use quotations, summary, and paraphrase to write	<b>In class:</b> lecture, pair/group work . Bloom's pyramid of learning . "sandwich technique" handout:

		Writing	from multilingual sources. 2. Critically assess your sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use CALP skills to cite</li> <li>- follow w/ critical comment.</li> </ul> b) Make your legal writing effective: active/ passive voice ex.
10	March 18	Mid-term Presentations	1. Submit 8 page pathfinder for content review and feedback	<b>In class:</b> PowerPoint presentations on status of research and research plan for completing research
11	Mar. 25	Editing for Clarity	1. Individual consultations regarding pathfinder writing	<b>Before class:</b> Read CLARITY journal article uploaded to MyWCL (pp. 33-37). <b>In class:</b> pair/group work a) Self-edit pathfinder with journal article checklist and consultation. b) Summary of principles for effective legal writing (handout).
12	April 1	Westlaw/ Bloomberg Law Research	1. Prepare at least 2 questions related to your research topic	<b>In class:</b> Trainings by WCL Westlaw & Bloomberg Law representatives
13	April 8	Original Writing and the Legal Research Paper	1. Complete the <i>Strategies for Academic Legal Writers</i> © (stages 2 and 3) questionnaire  2. Evaluate the <i>Goals for Academic Legal Writers</i> © (stages 2 and 3) checklist	<b>In class:</b> guided writing a) Work on original writing of research problem, research purpose, and thesis statement OR research question. <i>These are key elements in a legal research paper that comprise the Introduction and Conclusion sections.</i> b) Connect thoughts with headings and transitions (handout).
14	April 15	Final Presentations	1. Submit final pathfinder or stage 2 draft of paper	<b>In class:</b> PowerPoint presentations on pathfinder topic