

WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF LAW  
SUMMER 2013  
WEDNESDAYS 4:00 TO 6:00 PM

CALIFORNIA LEGAL RESEARCH

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**Instructors:**

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**SYLLABUS**

**I. Course Description and Goals**

Our goals for this class are to help you develop your legal research skills and strategies, improve your knowledge of the California legal system, and introduce you to valuable resources for researching California law.

Since legal research is best learned through active participation, classroom and library exercises will accompany the lectures. The myriad of laws affecting the legal practitioner in California requires the ability to navigate constitutional provisions, statutes, judicial opinions, regulations, and other sources to analyze legal issues. The examples and exercises we review in class will cover a variety of legal subjects.

The reality of legal practice involves combining resources to advise clients in legal matters. In this class, we will stress the importance of integrating all sources of law that may be relevant to an issue. Because this class is *California Legal Research*, we will not be emphasizing federal law or federal research materials, though we will raise awareness of federal research when it may be useful. Our lessons will emphasize expanding your practical research skills and awareness of California resources. These skills and knowledge take years to develop, and this class simply gives you a foundation for continued growth throughout your legal career.

**II. Course Materials**

You are not required to purchase a textbook for this course. You will be provided with any necessary reading materials. For students interested in supplemental reading, we

recommend California Legal Research by Hether C. Macfarlane and Suzanne E. Rowe. A copy is available at the Library Reserve desk [Call number KFC74 .M33 2008].

### III. Course Outline

The general outline for the course is as follows:

1. Class 1 (June 5, 2013): Introduction to the Course & Overview of Legal Research
2. Class 2 (June 12, 2013): Secondary Sources for California Research (Part 1)
3. Class 3 (June 19, 2013): Secondary Sources for California Research (Part 2)
4. Class 4 (June 26, 2013): California Legislative Law Materials
5. Class 5 (July 3, 2013): California Administrative Law Materials
6. Class 6 (July 10, 2013): California Judicial Law Materials
7. Class 7 (July 17, 2013): Misc. Topics, Introduction to Legislative History and Review

### IV. Assignments and Grading

We will provide problems during class for you to do in class, either individually or in small groups (depending on the problem).

Students will work on Assignments 1 through 6 outside of class as part of the learning process. The assignments will be handed out at the end of each class and involve a variety of exercises related to the lessons. The final assignment will be a research project integrating all the topics covered in class. It will be due July 26, 2013. The instructors will provide instructions for completing the final project and will continue to be available to answer your questions by email, telephone, and in person.

The out-of-class assignments are:

Assignment	% of Final Grade
1 – Overview of Legal Research	5
2 – California Secondary Sources (Part 1)	5
3 – California Secondary Sources (Part 2)	5
4 – California Legislative Law Materials	5
5 – California Administrative Law Materials	5
6 – California Judicial Law Materials	5
Final Project	65
Attendance and Class Participation	5

Some of the assignments involve group collaboration and others necessitate independent work. The Final Project will require you to work independently, reflecting your own efforts without input or advice from anyone (other than the instructors and reference librarians). If you are unsure about the rules regarding collaboration, please consult the WSU Student Handbook. Generally try to follow ALWD standards when citing to legal materials; however, grading in this class is based on factors other than citation style.

In class we will discuss methods for submitting assignments. Late submission of any assignment will not be accepted, except where the student is excused under a provision of the Student Handbook.

#### **V. Instructor Availability**

Normally, at least one of the instructors will be available in the library when the reference desk is open. Additionally, we check our email regularly. We ask that you direct any email inquiries to all three instructors. You also may contact us to arrange an appointment.

#### **VI. Class Attendance**

Attendance and participation are required. Attendance must comply with the provisions of the Student Handbook, unless special arrangements are made.

*Note: This syllabus is subject to minor revisions.*