

**SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
CITY, AND MIRAMAR COLLEGES
ASSOCIATE DEGREE COURSE OUTLINE**

SECTION I**SUBJECT AREA AND COURSE NUMBER:** Legal Assistant 105**COURSE TITLE:** Legal Research**Units: 3**
Grade Only**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This core course introduces students to the basics of legal research. Students receive an overview of the types of research methods used, the primary and secondary sources available, an understanding of official and unofficial opinions, a review of binding and persuasive authority, the Shepards system of validating cases and statutes, use of internet research, and an introduction to Lexis-Nexis, an online legal research system.

REQUISITES:**Advisory:**

LEGL 100B with a grade of "C" or better, or equivalent

Limitation on Enrollment:

This course is not open to students with previous credit for ADJU 107 or BUSE 181

FIELD TRIP REQUIREMENTS: May be required**TRANSFER APPLICABILITY:** Associate Degree Credit & transfer to CSU and/or private colleges and universities**TOTAL LECTURE HOURS:** 48 - 54**TOTAL LAB HOURS:****STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Identify, analyze, and summarize primary and secondary authority
2. Differentiate between mandatory and persuasive sources
3. Compare and contrast the federal and California court systems: their jurisdictions, precedential authority, and appellate processes
4. Formulate research goals utilizing outlines, flow charts, legal dictionaries, and indexes discerning underlying potential issues to investigate
5. Review techniques to locate sources of law in a general library
6. Shepardize all major forms of research to validate their currency
7. Use proper source citation according to California Style Manual or Harvard Blue Book
8. Perform basic computerized research using Lexis/Nexis
9. Define and comprehend extensive legal terminology.

SECTION II

1. COURSE OUTLINE AND SCOPE:

A. Outline Of Topics:

The following topics are included in the framework of the course but are not intended as limits on content. The order of presentation and relative emphasis will vary with each instructor.

- I. Introduction to research materials
 - A. Origins of law and legal terminology
 - B. Four sources of law
- II. Primary sources
 - A. Use and understanding of statutory law
 - B. Organization of case law
 - C. Resources for writing and editing citations
 - D. Legal reasoning process
 - E. State and federal court systems
 - F. Official vs. unofficial legal opinions
 - G. Mandatory vs. persuasive authorities
- III. Law library
 - A. Overview of facility (legal & general)
 - B. Research materials
 - C. On-line legal research
- IV. Researching techniques
 - A. Descriptive word approach
 - B. Topic method
- V. Secondary sources
 - A. Finding tools (digests, american law reports)
 - B. Explanatory tools (encyclopedias, law reviews)
 - C. Validating resources (Shepards, Harvard Bluebook)
 - D. Shepard's citations
- VI. Computer Assisted Legal Research
 - A. Lexis/Nexis
 - B. Westlaw
 - C. Computer Assisted Legal Research (LEXIS)
 - D. Law review articles
- VII. Legal Writing
 - A. Techniques for briefing cases
 - B. Use and apply citation rule books (California Style manual and Harvard bluebook)
 - C. Legal document format requirements (local rules)

B. Appropriate Outside Assignments:

Outside assignments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1) Online research to facilitate the writing of legal
- II. materials.
- III. 2) Textbook chapters, study guide and supplemental
- IV. materials.
- V. 3) Research in a law library.
- VI. 4) Assigned/recommended legal media materials.

C. Writing Assignments:

Writing assignments are required and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1) Essay examinations.
- II. 2) Personal analysis of a case and a written legal brief.
- III. 3) A legal research paper on a given legal problem.
- IV. 4) Essay that examines techniques for briefing cases.

D. Reading Assignments:

Reading assignments are required and may include but, are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1) Readings from textbook chapters and study guide.
- II. 2) Supplemental readings for legal research from sources
- III. such as the County Law Library and San Diego Local Rules.
- IV. 3) Readings from handouts provided in class.
- V. 4) Assigned readings summarizing current case law decisions.

E. Appropriate Assignments that Demonstrate Critical Thinking:

Critical thinking assignments are required and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1. Analyzing and evaluating research material.
- II. 2. Preparing legal memoranda
- III. 3. Analyzing and evaluating in writing how laws apply to
- IV. given situations
- V. 4. Comparing and contrasting federal and state laws.

2. METHODS OF EVALUATION:

A student's grade will be based on multiple measures of performance unless the course requires no grade. Multiple measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. In-class objective examinations that test definitions of legal terminology and proper source citations.
- Analytical semester research project
- Class participation in discussions of the research value of Lexus/Nexus.
- Participation in field trips.
- Out-of-class writing assignments that test the ability to brief a case.

3. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * Lecture
- * Lecture Discussion
- * Computer Assisted Instruction
- * Audio-Visual
- * Distance Education
- * Distance Education

4. REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES:

Textbooks may include, but are not limited to:

TEXTBOOKS:

1. Bouchoux, Deorah. Legal Research & Writing for paralegals, 3rd ed. Aspen Publ., 2002,
2. Harvard law Review. The Bluebook, A Uniform System of Citation, 17th ed. Harvard law Review, 2002,

MANUALS:

PERIODICALS:

SOFTWARE:

SUPPLIES:

ORIGINATOR: Terry Truitt

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PROPOSAL ORIGINATOR: Helen Webb
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PROPOSAL DATE: 05/05/2002