Credit Hours: 3.0  
Prerequisites: LSC 553 or nine graduate credits in law.  
Classroom: Marist Hall, Room 131

NOTE: This Syllabus is Subject to Change

Instructor: Larry Reeves, JD, MS-LIS  
Office: George Mason University Law Library, Second Floor, Admin Suite  
Hours: By Appointment

E-mail: lreeves4@gmu.edu  
Voice: (202) 640-3409

Course Description

Survey of legal information resources and services. Includes information needs and an introduction to bibliographic organization of legal literature and techniques of legal research; use of primary and secondary sources and finding tools including law journals, indices, encyclopedias, dictionaries, treatises, directories, casebooks, and searching of LexisNexis, WESTLAW, and other online legal databases.

Instructional Methods

The course may incorporate lecture/discussion; guest speakers; presentations and research projects. Class meetings will be supplemented by announcements, discussion, and other materials posted on the class Blackboard site (http://bb8.cua.edu).

Required Text


Other Readings

See Course Outline for additional required and optional readings.
Required Technologies

Capabilities Required for Course Delivery and Student Participation: Blackboard; standard CUA software; CUA library and information system accounts; ability to use ALADIN digital library resources. Every student should have daily access to a computer and high speed internet access.

Tools and Technologies Taught: This course presents the concept of technological innovation as a major factor in librarianship and information professions. You will receive basic training using LexisNexis and WESTLAW (passwords will be provided).

Course Goals and Goals for Student Learning:

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the specialized nature of legal bibliography and research. Emphasis will be placed on how to assist users with a broad range of legal questions that arise in various types of libraries including public, law firm, academic, and court.

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the American legal system (how law is made and where it is published)
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the process of legal research (where to start, when to stop, and what tools are available)
- Understand the difference between primary and secondary legal resources, and how and when to use both
- Evaluate the source of legal information to determine authenticity and authority
- Integrate the use of both print and electronic resources to maximize legal research efficiency and accuracy

Professional Standards Addressed


Core Competencies apply to all law librarians.

1.1 Demonstrates excellent service to users and evidences a strong commitment to continual service improvement by participating in regular training and by collecting, evaluating, and responding to user satisfaction data.

1.2 Recognizes and addresses the diverse nature of the library’s users and community.

1.3 Understands, supports, and contributes positively to the evolution of the culture and context of the library and its parent institutions.

1.4 Demonstrates knowledge of the legal system and the legal profession.
1.5 Understands the social, political, economic, and technological context in which the legal system exists.

1.6 Demonstrates knowledge of library and information science theory and the creation, organization, and delivery of information within its technological context.

1.7 Adheres to the Ethical Principles of the American Association of Law Libraries and supports the shared values of librarianship. [9]

1.8 Exhibits leadership skills including critical thinking, risk taking, creativity, negotiation, collaboration, and change management.

1.9 Demonstrates commitment to working with others to achieve common goals.

1.10 Acts within the organization to implement the principles of information management.

1.11 Exhibits an understanding of the importance of a multidisciplinary and cross-functional approach to programs and projects within the organization.

1.12 Shares knowledge and expertise with users and colleagues.

1.13 Displays excellent communication skills and is able to promote the library and advocate for its needs.

1.14 Communicates effectively with publishers and other information providers to advance the interests of the library.

1.15 Recognizes the value of professional networking and actively participates in professional associations and online communities.

1.16 Actively pursues personal and professional growth through continuing education.

Specialized Competencies

Specialized Competencies relate to specific areas of practice.

2 Library Management

2.1 Engages in a continual process of long-range planning.

2.2 Manages all financial resources, including planning and implementing budgets.

2.3 Selects, supervises, and evaluates library personnel, and provides for their training and development.

2.4 Understands the principles of project management and organizes people and resources to accomplish complex tasks.

2.5 Determines and articulates the applicable criteria for delivery of library services, and measures and evaluates the quality of those services.

2.6 Ensures the optimal use of library facilities to accommodate the evolving needs of users and staff.

2.7 Provides leadership, including negotiation and collaboration with relevant members of the organization, to ensure that the library is vital to the parent organization.

2.8 Maintains an understanding of trends, developments, new tools, and emerging technologies in publishing and the information industry.

2.9 Tracks, anticipates, and influences changes in policy and legislation that impact the library and the profession.
2.10 Promotes and markets the library’s services and collections in ways consistent with the needs and mission of the organization.

3 Reference, Research, and Client Services

3.1 Provides skilled and customized reference services, including specialized subject services on legal and non-legal topics.

3.2 Evaluates the quality, authenticity, accuracy, and cost of information resources in a variety of formats best suited to the user’s needs, and conveys the importance of these to the user.

3.3 Assists users with legal research using information resources in a variety of formats best suited to the user’s needs.

3.4 Consistent with applicable codes assists non-lawyers in accessing the law.

3.5 Aggregates content from a variety of sources and synthesizes information to create customized products for users.

3.6 Creates research and bibliographic tools on legal and related topics in a variety of media.

3.7 Monitors trends in specific areas of the law.

3.8 Monitors and participates in trends in library resource sharing.

4 Information Technology

4.1 Understands the practical application of creating, accessing, and managing information including databases, integrated library systems, client-server applications, hardware, software, web applications, mobile applications, networks, and electronic information resources.

4.2 Evaluates the need for new and emerging technologies and implements required changes.

4.3 Conducts long-range planning and policy formulation for technology services and training needs.

4.4 Evaluates, purchases, implements, and tests software and hardware necessary for accessing electronic information.

4.5 Assists and educates users and colleagues in the use of the library’s information systems, both internal and external.

4.6 Diagnoses and resolves library hardware, software, local area network, website and Internet connectivity problems.

4.7 Develops, creates, and maintains the library’s online presence.

4.8 Determines technology training needs of users through observation, discussion, and the use of needs assessment tools, and provides training to meet those needs.

4.9 Understands the importance of information technology standards and prefers standards-compliant information technologies.

5 Collection Development

5.1 Creates collection development policies intended to meet the needs of users and to the overall mission of the parent organization.

5.2 Makes selection decisions in consideration of all relevant factors, including the library’s collection development policy, differences among formats, costs of purchase, upkeep, licensing, and copyright.

5.3 Evaluates information resources in all formats, integrates them to meet the needs of users, and discards or archives them as appropriate.
5.4 Understands the acquisition and management of a diverse collection of legal and non-legal resources. Understands the principles of copyright, licensing, purchasing, and accounting, and creates procedures respecting these issues consistent with the procedures of the parent organization.

5.5 Applies appropriate preservation practices to the library's collection.

6 Cataloging

6.1 Ensures the optimal arrangement of and access to the library's resources to meet the needs of users.

6.2 Improves the power and scope of library services through resource sharing.

6.3 Selects and implements an appropriate level of descriptive cataloging, classification, and subject analysis to meet the needs of the institution and the nature of its legal materials.

6.4 Creates, selects, and manages catalog records according to national standards and accepted practices.

6.5 Selects, implements, and continually improves an integrated library system appropriate to the needs of the institution's users.

7 Teaching

7.1 Determines the educational needs of users through observation, discussion, and needs assessment tools.

7.2 Effectively teaches library users and colleagues with differing needs and technological skill levels.

7.3 Knows and applies the principles of adult learning.

7.4 Designs curricula and teaches to meet the educational needs of users, and evaluates the educational process for effectiveness.

7.5 Educates users in cost-effective and efficient methods of legal research.

7.6 Provides training and guidance on the organization and use of legal resources in various formats.

7.7 Trains users in commercial research databases, coordinating with vendors where appropriate.

7.8 Promotes the effective use of new resources and technologies for the retrieval of information.

7.9 Prepares and packages materials such as bibliographies, pathfinders, training scripts, podcasts, webinars and handouts.


Course Requirements

Your final grade will be based on the following course requirements:

- **Attendance and Participation.** Attendance at all class sessions is required. The class is designed to be highly interactive as such each student is expected to participate in the activities scheduled for each session. Students who attend regularly and contribute the most to the shared pool of knowledge will receive highest grades in this area.
- **Reference Resource Critique.** Each student will evaluate a legal reference source. Options will be provided.

- **Legal Pathfinder.** Each student is required to prepare a pathfinder on sources for performing research on a specialized topic of law. You may select any area of law or topic. The pathfinder must incorporate all relevant legal materials, including both secondary and primary legal resources in print and electronic formats. Each student will present their pathfinder on the final day of class. You must submit your topic proposal (2-3 sentences) to the instructor via the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard by Thursday, October 7th.

- **Research Exercises.** Research exercises are designed to familiarize you with key legal resources by reinforcing the materials and techniques discussed in class. It is not expected that you will become expert legal researchers. Exercises are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. **You will be given time during class to complete research exercises.**

**General Expectations for Students:**

- Enroll in Blackboard and check it frequently to receive communications from your instructor (http://bb8.cua.edu).
- Read, evaluate, and be prepared to discuss the information provided in reading assignments.
- Follow instructions in completing in-class research exercises. Instructions will generally inform students whether working in groups is permitted, and/or whether the use electronic resources is permitted.
- Turn the **Reference Resource Critique** and **Legal Pathfinder** in at the beginning of class on the due date, and be prepared to make the presentation.
- Incompletes will be granted only under extreme circumstances.

**Academic honesty:** Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty is required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic honesty, such as plagiarism, improper use of a student’s own work, cheating, and fabrication.

The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty (from http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.cfm): “The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of an undergraduate student’s past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. ...In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction.”

Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm.

**Important University Resources:**
CUA Network:
All students should know their NT (CUA network) account information and be able to log on to the CUA network. Contact the Center for Planning and Information Technology at 202-319-4357 for assistance.

CUA Libraries:
All students should be able to use the CUA library resources, including the ALADIN online system. Visit the CUA Library homepage at http://libraries.cua.edu for assistance and directions. See also the Mullen Library welcome page at http://libraries.cua.edu/welcome.html, or phone (202) 319-5070.

CUA Center for Academic Success:
See http://success.cua.edu
Pryzbyla Center
Phone: (202) 319-5655

CUA Counseling Center:
See http://counseling.cua.edu/services/
127 O'Boyle Hall
Phone: (202) 319-5765

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact Disability Support Services (at 202 319-5211, room 207 Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu.

**Assessment: (Guidelines – May be Adjusted by Instructor)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Resource Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Research Pathfinder &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Exercises</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale:**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>94-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>88-84</td>
<td>B</td>
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University grades:
The University grading system is available at http://policies.cua.edu/academicgrad//gradesfull.cfm#iii for graduate students.

Reports of grades in courses are available at the end of each term on http://cardinalstation.cua.edu

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td><strong>In-Class:</strong> Share your professional goals and what you hope to take away from this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>Course Overview: Schedule, Grading,</td>
<td><strong>Reference Resource Presentation Assignments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>American Legal System: Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Library Tour</td>
<td><strong>MEET IN LAW LIBRARY ATRIUM @ 7PM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>American Legal System: Publishing Process</td>
<td><strong>Reading Assignment:</strong> Sloan, Chapter 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction to LexisNexis and Westlaw</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Legal Research</td>
<td><strong>Reading Assignment:</strong> Sloan, Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Generating Search Terms</td>
<td><strong>In-Class:</strong> Research Exercises (LexisNexis and Westlaw)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LexisNexis and Westlaw, continued</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>Secondary Legal Resources</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Reference Resource Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
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| Week 5  | September 30 | Secondary Legal Resources, Continued | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapter 3  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (LexisNexis and Westlaw)  
**DUE:** Pathfinder Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 6  | October 7 | Primary Legal Resources: Case Law Research (Print) | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapters 4 and 5  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (LAW LIBRARY REFERENCE ROOM @ 8:30PM) |
| Week 7  | October 14 | Primary Legal Resources: Case Law Research (Online) | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapters 4 and 5  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (LexisNexis, Westlaw, Internet) |
| Week 8  | October 21 | Primary Legal Resources: Statutory Law Research (Print) | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapter 6  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (LAW LIBRARY REFERENCE ROOM @ 8:30PM) |
| Week 9  | October 28 | Primary Legal Resources: Statutory Law Research (Online) | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapter 6  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (LexisNexis, Westlaw, Internet) |
| Week 10 | November 4 | Primary Legal Resources: Administrative Law Research | **Reading Assignment:** Sloan, Chapter 8  
**In-Class:** Research Exercises (GPOAccess, FDsys, FR2.0, LexisNexis, Westlaw)  
**DUE:** Pathfinder Outline |
| Week 11 | November 11 | Electronic Legal Information  
Alternative and Free Sources | **Reading Assignment:**  
Online Dockets & Court Records by Carole Levitt,  
http://www.llrx.com/features/onlinedockets.htm  
Navigating the Maze of Criminal Records |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 12   | November 18| Law Librarianship Profession: Academic, Law Firm and Court Libraries  | **Reading Assignment:** [Law Library Administration and Management](http://...)  
“Educating Aspiring Law Librarians: A Student’s Perspective” by Serena Brooks, 97 Law Library Journal 517 (Summer 2005)  
**Vision:** The Essence of Professionalism and Key to the Future of Law Librarianship as a Profession by Dennis Sears, 98 Law Library Journal 81 (Winter 2006)  
Guest Speakers |
| 13   | November 25| Thanksgiving—NO CLASS                                               |                                                                                            |
| 14   | December 2 | Pathfinders                                                         | **DUE:** Pathfinder                                                                       |
| 15   | December 9 | Wrap Up                                                             | **Pathfinder Presentations**                                                                |