3 credit hours
Prerequisites: LSC 830 or LSC 553 and permission

Classroom: Library of Congress, Adams Building, LA 100
Meetings: Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change

Instructor

Matthew Braun, JD, MSLS
Legal Reference Specialist, Law Library of Congress
Office: Library of Congress, Madison Building, LM 201
Phone: 202-707-3190
E-mail: braun@cua.edu
Office hours: By appointment, or following the weekly class meeting

Course Description

The course will provide an in-depth analysis of legal research processes and key bibliographic tools. Students will review basic research tools and techniques, and will gain experience with, among other objectives, researching federal legislative history, using foreign and international legal sources, and consulting practice-oriented and interdisciplinary materials. Particular attention will be paid to the various types of legal research methodologies and strategies to conduct thorough, yet cost and time-efficient, research using a myriad of print and electronic sources.

Instructional Methods

The course will incorporate a combination of lecture and class discussion, with particular attention paid to student questions and analysis regarding class assignments and projects. Students will give one class presentation, and guest speakers/lecturers may participate in the course. Class meetings will be supplemented by
announcements, discussion, and other materials posted on the LSC 839 Blackboard site (login at [https://blackboard.cua.edu](https://blackboard.cua.edu)).

**Required Texts**


**Optional Text**


**Required Technologies**

- The following capabilities are required for course delivery: Blackboard, standard CUA software; CUA library and information system accounts. Each student should have daily computer and high-speed internet access.

- The following technologies are taught as an essential part of this course:
  The course presents the concept of technical innovation as a major factor in law librarianship and other information professions. Students will receive basic training using LexisNexis and Westlaw (passwords will be provided).

**Libraries**

The CUA Libraries' wide range of resources and services, including databases, online journals, and FAQs are on the main web site, [http://libraries.cua.edu](http://libraries.cua.edu). For assistance on papers and assignments, consult the research guides, at [http://guides.lib.cua.edu](http://guides.lib.cua.edu), or schedule an appointment with a subject librarian, at [http://libraries.cua.edu/about/subjlibs.html](http://libraries.cua.edu/about/subjlibs.html).

**Course Goals**

The key goal of this course is to build upon students’ understanding of legal bibliography and research. Emphasis will be placed on how to assist library patrons and other users with a broad range of legal questions that arise in various environments, including, but not limited to, (1) public law libraries, (2) academic law libraries, (3) private/law firm libraries, (4) court libraries, and (5) federal and state government libraries.
Goals for Student Learning

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

- Demonstrate research skills necessary for successful professional practice in a law library or other legal/information environment.
- Critically evaluate legal research tools and make strategic selections from a wide range of available sources.
- Utilize a variety of indexing tools to find the law on a particular topic or matter.
- Apply legal concepts to fact-based problem solving.
- Utilize both print and electronic sources for effective legal research.
- Understand the differences between and strengths of a variety of electronic legal research tools.

Course Requirements

Final course grades will be based upon the following requirements:

- **Class Attendance and Participation (10 percent):** Attendance at and participation in the Wednesday class meetings is mandatory. The course is designed to be interactive and students are expected to complete the assigned reading and be prepared to discuss the reading in class. Students who attend the class meetings and contribute the most to the discussions will receive the highest grades in this area.

- **Blackboard Postings (5 percent):** Students will make at least five substantive postings on the LSC 839 Blackboard site detailing a research experience and/or strategy, or reflecting on the assigned readings for the course. Credit will be given for thoughtful postings intended to advance the knowledge and understanding of the students in the class.

- **Research Exercises (3 exercises x 10 percent/each = 30 percent):** Students will complete three research exercises, assigned at various points of the semester, which will cover concepts that have previously been addressed in assigned readings and/or class meetings. The exercises will be handed out during class, and then due at the beginning (4:30 p.m.) of the next class meeting, either by handing in the assignment to the instructor or by e-mailing the assignment to the instructor.

- **Secondary Source Analysis (15 percent):** Students will write a short (4-5 pages double-spaced) critique of a secondary legal source, in print format. Options and instructions will be provided.
• **Presentation (10 percent):** Students will present a 10-15 minute report to the class on the sources and the search strategies employed for the Research Guide assignment. Instructions will be provided.

• **Research Guide (30 percent):** Students will write a formal analysis (approximately 20 pages double-spaced) on how a substantive legal issue or topic is addressed by the variety of materials studied in the course throughout the semester. Detailed instructions will be provided. Students will submit topic proposals consisting of a two-paragraph description and five annotated sources to the instructor in person or by e-mail by an assigned due date.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1. Extension of the due time for the assignments will not be given absent an emergency situation in the eyes of the instructor.
2. Assignments handed in after the due time will be penalized five points for each day past the due time.

**Expectations and policies**

**Academic honesty:** Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are 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](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](http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm).

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** Any student who feels that he or she 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 of the Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable
accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: http://dss.cua.edu.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Due date(s)</th>
<th>Weight of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing through semester</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Postings</td>
<td>Ongoing through semester</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Exercises</td>
<td># 1: February 1&lt;br&gt;# 2: February 22&lt;br&gt;# 3: March 21</td>
<td>10 percent/each = 30 percent total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Source Analysis</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>March 28 or April 4</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Guide</td>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 percent</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Points (out of 100)</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>A minus</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-90</td>
<td>B plus</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B minus</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 70</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>

The University grading system for graduate students is available at http://policies.cua.edu/academicgrad//gradesfull.cfm.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Class</th>
<th>Topic(s) and Assignment(s)</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>× Orientation to Course&lt;br&gt;× Review of Basic Concepts of Legal Research&lt;br&gt;× Tour of Law Library Reading Room (LM 201)</td>
<td>Olson, pp. 1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>× Legal Research Methodologies&lt;br&gt;× Secondary Sources, pt. I</td>
<td>Olson, pp. 333-348; Osbeck, pp. 5-12, 17-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>× Legislative Processes&lt;br&gt;× Statutory Research &amp; Tracking&lt;br&gt;× Constitutional Materials</td>
<td>Olson, pp. 51-92, 29-42; Osbeck, pp. 28-37</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Research Exercise # 1</td>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong> “How Our Laws are Made” (2007), at THOMAS&gt;The Legislative Process&gt;How Our Laws are Made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment Given:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Secondary Source Analysis</td>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong> “Enactment of a Law” (1997), at THOMAS&gt;The Legislative Process&gt;Enactment of a Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>× Legislative History, pt. I</td>
<td>Olson, pp. 109-142</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment Given:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Research Guide Topic Proposal and Annotations requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>× Legislative History, pt. II&lt;br&gt;× Administrative Law</td>
<td>Olson, pp. 172-191; Osbeck, pp. 37-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Secondary Source Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment Given:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Research Exercise # 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Reading Materials</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **February 29** | × Mid-Semester Review  
× Federal and State Case Law, pt. II  
× LexisNexis/Westlaw demo, pt. II  
| **March 7**   | NO CLASS - CUA Spring Recess                                                                         |                                        |
| **March 14**  | × Foreign Law & International Law, pt. I                                                                 | Olson, pp. 430-448; Osbeck, pp. 47-63  |
|              | **Assignments Given:**  
× Research Exercise # 3 & Presentation requirements                                                      |                                        |
| **March 21**  | × Foreign Law & International Law, pt. II  
× Subject-Specific Legal Research                                                                            | Olson, pp. 402-429                     |
|              | **Assignment Due:**  
× Research Exercise # 3                                                                                       |                                        |
| **March 28**  | × Presidential & Other Executive Branch Materials                                                      | Olson, pp. 162-167                     |
|              | **Assignment Due:**  
× Presentation (1/2 class)                                                                                   |                                        |
| **April 4**   | × Practice-Oriented Materials                                                                            | Please read the entry for one state from STATE PRACTICE MATERIALS: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES, Houdek and Postar, eds., available in the Law Library Reading Room and at the CUA Law Library;  
Street and Runyon, Finding the Middle Ground in Collection Development..., 102 LAW LIBR. J. 399-439 (2010) (issue no. 3), available from the AALL website  
| **April 11**  | × Non-Legal & Interdisciplinary Materials  
× Legal Information Instruction  
× The Future of Legal Research                                                                                   |                                        |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 18   | × Revisiting Legal Research Methodologies  
| April 25   | NO CLASS - CUA Reading Day                                             | Assignment Due: Research Guide (by e-mail)                                  |

Bibliography

Websites of Interest on the Open Web

- Judge Kathryn J. DuFour Law Library, Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America: [http://www.law.edu/library/index.cfm](http://www.law.edu/library/index.cfm)
- Regulations.gov: [http://www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)
- Legal Information Institute, Cornell University Law School: [http://www.law.cornell.edu](http://www.law.cornell.edu)
- The Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: [http://www.oyez.org](http://www.oyez.org)
- Supreme Court Online, Duke University School of Law: [http://www.law.duke.edu/publiclaw/supremecourtonline](http://www.law.duke.edu/publiclaw/supremecourtonline)
- FindLaw (for legal professionals): [http://lp.findlaw.com](http://lp.findlaw.com)
- Justia: [http://www.justia.com](http://www.justia.com)