



## COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Number**  
**LEG 133**

**Course Title**  
**Legal Research & Writing**

**Credits**  
**3**

**Hours:**  
**Lecture/Lab/Other**  
**3/0/0**

**Co- or Pre-requisite**  
**None**

**Implementation**  
**Semester & Year**  
**Spring 2022**

### **Catalog description:**

Study of foundational concepts in legal research and writing. Utilizing computer-assisted legal research, includes an introduction to several common kinds of legal writing. This course does not instruct law for the purpose of practicing law in the jurisdiction.

**General Education Category:**  
**Not GenEd**

**Course coordinator:**  
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### **Required texts & Other materials:**

#### **Required Textbook:**

*Legal Research & Writing Handbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, (2018) by A. Yelin, Wolters Kluwer  
ISBN: 9781454896388

#### **Legal Specialty Course Notice:**

This course is a legal specialty course (LS) as designated in the college's American Bar Association (ABA) approval reports for the legal studies degree and certificate programs.

This course does not constitute the teaching of law for the purpose of practicing law; in the State of New Jersey only a licensed attorney may practice law.

**Legal Specialty Course Transfer Notice:** The following legal specialty courses must be completed at MCCC and may not be transferred: LEG 129, LEG 130, LEG 132, LEG 133, LEG 143, LEG 255.

**Legal Specialty Teaching Modality Notice:** LEG 133 must be completed in a synchronous learning modality which may be live remote or live campus sessions depending on the current course offerings. Per the ABA Guidelines for legal education courses, LEG 130, LEG 132 and LEG 133 are offered as synchronous learning modalities only for a required total of nine (9) credits per program.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

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

1. Explain the general process of initial legal research, including the application of stare decisis and relevant precedent. [Supports ILG # 4, 10; PLO #1 ]
2. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and identify applicable case law and codified law. [Supports ILG # 11 ; PLO # 4, 5 ]
3. Analyze hypothetical scenarios and provide meaningful analysis based on their own legal research. [Supports ILG # 10, 11 ; PLO #1, 2, 4 ]

4. Apply best practices in paralegal work by drafting effective documents which may include correspondence, a case brief, an internal legal office memorandum (memo of law) and/ or CIRAC/IRAC analyses. [Supports ILG # 1, 10, 11 ; PLO #1, 3, 4 ]
5. Demonstrate legal research and writing skills pursuant to the role of a paralegal. [Supports ILG # 1, 10, 11 ; PLO #1, 4 ]

**Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 4. Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

**Program Learning Outcomes for:**

**Paralegal A.A.S. degree and Paralegal Certificate (post-degree credential)**

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of legal professionals in a variety of legal employment settings;
2. Identify and implement standards of legal ethics and professionalism;
3. Demonstrate practical skills in a range of substantive legal areas;
4. Engage in effective written and verbal professional communication;
5. Develop appropriate methods for embarking on a legal career.

**Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

**Unit I Foundations of Legal Research**

**Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 3, 5]

**The student will be able to...**

- Discuss the United States legal system, sources of law, distribution of powers and how these concepts relate to the work of the paralegal.
- Explain the essential aspects of legal research sources, including primary and secondary sources and binding and persuasive authority.
- Explain the paralegal's role in the initial legal research process, and how the attorney and paralegal will work together to assess the research and writing needs.
- Define the terminology used within the legal research and writing process.
- Recognize the philosophical principles of stare decisis and precedent, and how these concepts apply to the legal research process.
- Describe the paralegal's role in the legal research process, specifically the paralegal's independent duties and those duties that must be monitored and approved by the supervising attorney.

**Unit II Foundations of Legal Writing**

**Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 1,2, 5 ]

**The student will be able to...**

- Explain the process of legal research.

- Draft a case brief for a landmark case of significant historical value.
- Locate a specific case using an electronic database.
- Locate a specific statute using an electronic database.
- Draft a legal research memorandum (memo of law) under the direction of the attorney-faculty member.
- Analyze hypothetical law scenarios and apply legal research principles to the issues presented.
- Recognize those circumstances in which case law and/or codified law is the appropriate source of legal research.
- Navigate electronic databases such as Westlaw or Lexis for a open research assignment.
- Answer a specific legal issue (question of law) using an electronic database.
- Navigate public access electronic databases/websites such as state and federal sources of codified law.
- Navigate case law and codified law from the practice of a non-lawyer.

### **Unit III Legal Research & Writing Process**

#### **Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 2, 3, 4]

##### **The student will be able to...**

- Discuss the principles and purposes of legal writing, and how legal writing differs from traditional writing, creative writing and academic writing tasks.
- Define the legal writing terminology and concepts presented in the course.
- Explain the process of legal writing, including legal research, pre-writing drafting a document, editing and attaining attorney approval.
- Articulate and apply the segments of IRAC and CIRAC approaches to organizing legal research.
- Analyze hypothetical law scenarios, and using their research provided by the faculty member, draft a (canned) legal office memorandum or CIRAC/IRAC document.
- Analyze hypothetical law scenarios, and using their own research, draft an (open) legal office memorandum or CIRAC/IRAC document.
- Draft a variety of legal documents, which may include pleadings and/or appellate documents.
- Draft legal documents, using a template or sample.
- Explain the ethical duties of the attorney and paralegal when handling legal writing assignments, specifically the differences between internal and external documents and the which items constitute work product.
- Understand the process of editing a legal document from the perspective of a non-lawyer.
- Understand the ethical obligations, and the process of recognizing when a document requires attorney review and attorney approval prior to filing or providing to the client.
- Describe the utility and purpose of select legal documents from the perspective of a non-lawyer.
- Draft a professional email from the perspective of a non-lawyer.

### **Unit IV Professionalism & Legal Research and Writing**

#### **Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 2, 4]

##### **The student will be able to...**

- Understand the ethical implications of responsible legal research and writing, accurate research, and ensuring that the final product reflects good law.
- Recognize correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and professional writing skills.

- Draft documents without “legalese” and produce concise, clear legal documents.
- Identify the correct legal document for the various legal research needs.
- Demonstrate practical legal skills to work with a diverse population of clients, including clients presenting special needs or sensitive legal matters.

**Evaluation of student learning:**

**Assignments:** Written research assignments, legal document drafting assignments and practical legal tasks designed to assess preparedness for practical legal writing and research work.

**Quizzes:** Essay, mechanics and grammar writing exercises and multiple-choice assessments designed to measure understanding of objective legal research and writing concepts.

**Discussions:** Course-related conversations in a live setting or via discussion board to support and assess concepts presented in the unit.