**COURSE OUTLINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEG 133</td>
<td>Legal Research and Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class or Lecture Hours</th>
<th>Laboratory Work Hours</th>
<th>Clinical or Studio Hours</th>
<th>Course Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
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**Revision Date:**  
Spring Semester, 2019

**Course Coordinator:**  
Erin Rybicki, JD, M.Ed.  
(609) 570-3649  
rybickie@mccc.edu

**Legal Specialty Course Notice:**  
This course is a legal specialty course (LS) and is one of the four (4) required on-campus courses students are required to complete on campus to meet their 12 c on campus minimum for the Paralegal Studies AAS degree or Paralegal Certificate program. The following courses may only be completed on campus: LEG 129, LE
130, LEG 132, LEG 133.

**Required texts/other materials:**

**Required Textbook:**
*Determined by the course coordinator each semester.*

**Supplemental Materials:**
This course utilizes Westlaw and/or Lexis online databases. The professor will provide you with your unique student access code after the first week of class. In addition, each student shall receive supplemental materials as the course progresses. Students will tour the library, and will be expected to learn to navigate the library’s physical primary sources and media collection.

**Information resources:**

This course uses a textbook, PowerPoint presentations and online materials (videos, interviews, sample cases) as resources.

**Other learning resources:**

All materials should be provided to the students via their Blackboard course. This course is offered in an online delivery option. Therefore, supplemental materials are supplied online and students are expected to submit assignments through Blackboard.

**Institutional Learning Goals:**
Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English
Course Goals:

The student will be able to:

- **Course Competency One**: Students explain the basis of legal research, including the concepts and application of stare decisis, precedent, primary and secondary sources, case law and codified law. (ILG 5)
- **Course Competency Two**: Students can effectively analyze hypothetical scenarios and provide meaningful analysis based on their own legal research. (ILG 11)
- **Course Competency Three**: Students can draft a variety of legal research documents, which may include legal correspondence, a case brief, an internal legal office memorandum (memo of law), CIRAC/IRAC analyses and various pleadings. (ILG 1)
- **Course Competency Four**: Students demonstrate an understanding of the legal research process, and how to transition research work product into a well drafted legal document. (ILG 1, 4)
- **Course Competency Five**: Students demonstrate a mastery of legal writing principles, and understand the essential components of the legal writing process. (ILG 1)
- **Course Competency Six**: From the perspective of the paralegal’s role, students effectively navigate electronic legal databases including public access websites (federal and state government) and subscription-only access databases which may include Westlaw and/or Lexis. (ILG 4, 10)
- **Course Competency Seven**: From the perspective of the paralegal’s role, students effectively navigate a law library, or legal collection within a library, to locate statutes, cases and secondary sources. (ILG 10)

Units of Study:

Unit I Understanding Legal Research: Foundations and Sources

**Learning Objectives**

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. (Course Competencies 1, 6)
• Explain the essential aspects of legal research sources, including primary and secondary sources and binding and persuasive authority. (Course Competencies 1, 6)
• 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. (Course Competencies 1, 6, 7)
• Define the terminology used within the legal research and writing process. (Course Competencies 3)
• Recognize the philosophical principles of stare decisis and precedent, and how these concepts apply to the legal research process. (Course Competencies 1, 6, 7)
• Explain the structure of the federal and state court systems, and how this structure relates to legal research. (Course Competencies 1, 6)
• 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. (Course Competencies 1, 6)
• Describe the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, NALA & NFPA Rules of Conduct, and the ethical responsibilities that paralegals and attorneys have to clients in regard to drafting client’s documents. (Course Competencies 1, 6)

Unit II Understanding Legal Research

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

• Explain the process of legal research. (Course Competencies 2, 3)
• Draft a case brief for a landmark case of significant historical value. (Course Competencies 2, 3)
• Locate a specific case using an electronic database. (Course Competencies 2, 3)
• Locate a specific statute using an electronic database. (Course Competencies 2, 3)
• Draft a legal research memorandum (memo of law) under the direction of the attorney-faculty member. (Course Competencies 2, 3)
• Analyze hypothetical law scenarios and apply legal research principles to the issues presented. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6)
• Recognize those circumstances in which case law and/or codified law is the appropriate source of legal research. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
• Navigate electronic databases such as Westlaw or Lexis for a open research assignment. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
• Answer a specific legal issue (question of law) using an electronic database. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
• Navigate public access electronic databases/websites such as state and federal sources of codified law. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
• Navigate a law library or a legal section of a library for the purpose of locating codified law. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
• Navigate a law library or a legal section of a library for the purpose of locating case law. (Course Competencies 2, 3, 6, 9)
**Unit III Understanding Legal Writing**

_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. (Course Competency 4)
- Define the legal writing terminology and concepts presented in the course. (Course Competencies 4,5)
- Explain the process of legal writing, including legal research, pre-writing drafting a document, editing and attaining attorney approval. (Course Competencies 4, 5)
- Articulate and apply the segments of IRAC and CIRAC approaches to organizing legal research. (Course Competency 4)
- Analyze hypothetical law scenarios, and using their research provided by the faculty member, draft a (canned) legal office memorandum or CIRAC/IRAC document. (Course Competencies 2, 4, 6)
- Analyze hypothetical law scenarios, and using their own research, draft an (open) legal office memorandum or CIRAC/IRAC document. (Course Competencies 2, 4, 6)
- Draft a variety of legal documents, which may include pleadings and/or appellate documents. (Course Competencies 2, 4, 6)
- Draft legal documents, using a template or sample. (Course Competencies 2, 4, 6)
- 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. (Course Competency 8)
- Understand the process of editing a legal document. (Course Competency 8)
- 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. (Course Competency 8)
- Describe the utility and purpose of select legal documents. (Course Competencies 5, 8)
- Draft a professional email to a client. (Course Competency 5)

**Unit IV Special Considerations in Legal Research and Writing**

_The student will be able to…_

- Explain the paralegal’s role in the legal research process, the importance of ensuring that research is accurate and current, and the professional and ethical responsibilities therein. (Course Competency 7)
- Explain how cases and statutes are updated (good law) through a process such as Shepardizing, electronic or otherwise. (Course Competency)
- Explain the paralegal’s role in the legal writing process, and the professional and ethical responsibilities therein. (Course Competency 7)
- Understand the ethical implications of responsible legal research and writing, accurate research, and ensuring that the final product reflects good law. (Course Competency 8)
● Recognize correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and professional writing skills. (Course Competency 7)
● Draft documents without “legalese” and produce concise, clear legal documents. (Course Competency 2, 6, 7)
● Identify the correct legal document for the various legal research needs. (Course Competency 2, 6, 7)
● Work with a diverse population of clients, and will possess the basic understanding of how to meet the needs of clients with special needs, challenges and related personal matters. (Course Competency 2)

**Students with Disabilities:**
Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson's office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.

**Academic Integrity:** As per the student handbook, “A student will be guilty of violating academic integrity if he/she (a) knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, (b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of academic work, or (c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.” Students should read the Academic Integrity policy in the MCCC Rights and Responsibilities Student Handbook. Academic Dishonesty will result in failure of this course.

**Equal Opportunity Policy:** Mercer County Community College is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality, political views, religion, disability unrelated to job or program requirements or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited. Questions regarding the equal opportunity policy and compliance statement may be directed to the Affirmative Action Officer, West Windsor Campus, (609) 586-4800, ext. 3270.