Nashville State Community College
Business, Applied Arts & Technologies Division
Paralegal Studies

Master Course Syllabus

PLAW 1200 Legal Research
3 Credits
3 Class Hours

Introduces students to the law library and methods of researching primary and secondary legal authority. Topics include where and how to find answers to legal questions, how to read and analyze court opinions, and how to write and research through legal citations. Research will be conducted through computerized methods and will also include the use of codes, administrative regulations, reporters series, legal digests, encyclopedia, treatises and law reviews. Prerequisite(s): PLAW 1000, PLAW 1100

Instructor Information:
Name:
Email:
Office Phone:
Office Location:
Office Hours:

Textbook and Other Materials:
ISBN 13: 9780073520513
Reference Materials: None

Course Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
• Explain the importance of legal research in today’s legal system.
• Identify and explain the importance of databases.
• Describe and define the different types of searches utilizing Westlaw.
• Analyze and Interpret Statutory Law and Court Opinions.

Course Competencies:
The following are detailed course competencies intended to support the course outcomes:
• Identify the role of research in the law office setting.
• Differentiate and describe the various sources of legal research.
• Develop proficiency in performing legal research using Westlaw.
• Demonstrate the ability to locate relevant authority in response to legal issues.
• Distinguish between mandatory and persuasive, primary and secondary authorities.
• Determine whether statutes and cases are current, valid law.
• Apply Bluebook Uniform System of Citation to cases, statutes and other authorities.
Course Assessments:
The following performance assessments will be used to demonstrate students’ understanding, knowledge and skills:
- Quizzes
- Examinations

We will have four tests this semester, including the final exam. Test and Quiz questions come from material covered in class and from the textbook. Students are responsible for all assigned reading in addition to class discussions. Please contact the instructor to make arrangements to take a test early if you will not be able to attend class on the date scheduled for the test. STUDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY ONE MAKE-UP.

Grading Policy
Four test grades - 80% of final grade
Quizzes from chapters - 15% of final grade
Participation and attendance - 5%

Grading Scale:
Grades will be determined as follows (Average = Total points earned / Total points):

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Attendance Policy
A student is expected to attend all scheduled classes and laboratories. Each instructor will formulate an attendance policy and provide it on the course syllabus. Absences are counted from the first scheduled meeting of the class, and it is the responsibility of each student to know the attendance policy of each instructor in whose class he/she is enrolled. If a student is absent from a class, he/she should give an advanced explanation to the instructor. Absences in a course may affect a student’s final grade. The student is responsible for all assigned work in the course regardless of excused or unexcused absences. Tardiness may also affect a student’s final grade.

Failure to attend class will result in a final course grade of “FA” or “FN” (see explanation below) depending on the individual instructor’s course policy.
FA= failure, attendance-related (unofficial withdrawal) Last recorded date of attendance required.
FN= failure, never attended class (unofficial withdrawal)

Student Communication Channels
It is the student’s responsibility to check D2L and MyNSCC email on a regular basis. These are the official communication channels between the college and students. Students are responsible for the information communicated through those channels. D2L contains specific course information and MyNSCC contains information important for other purposes.
**Early Warning System**
Nashville State Community College has implemented an Early Warning System to notify students via e-mail about academic problems such as poor classroom attendance, poor performance on assignments/tests, poor communication skills, late/missing assignments, and/or lack of classroom participation. Please note that Early Warning Alerts do not affect a student’s academic standing.

**ADA Compliance Statement**
Nashville State complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you wish to request any special accommodations for any courses in which you are enrolled, contact the Student Disabilities Office at 353.3721.

**Classroom Misconduct**
Nashville State Community College has a zero tolerance policy for disruptive conduct in the classroom. Students whose behavior disrupts the classroom will be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Please consult your Student Handbook for more specific details.
The instructor has primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity. He/she can order temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or in conduct which violates the general rules and regulations of the College.
Disruptive behavior in the classroom may be defined as, but is not limited to, behavior that obstructs or disrupts the learning environment (e.g., offensive language, harassment of students and professors, repeated outbursts from a student which disrupt the flow of instruction or prevent concentration on the subject taught, failure to cooperate in maintaining classroom decorum, etc.), the continued use of any electronic or other noise or light emitting device which disturbs others (e.g., disturbing noises from beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, lap-top computers, games, etc.).
Please be aware that children are not allowed in class or unattended on campus.

**Academic Dishonesty (Honor Code)**
Any form of academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarizing, or other academic misconduct is prohibited. “Plagiarism may result from: (1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words (A Writer’s Reference 331). Academic dishonesty may be defined as, but is not limited to, intentionally trying to deceive by claiming credit for the work of another person, using information from a web page or source without citing the reference, fraudulently using someone else’s work on an exam, paper, or assignment, recycling your own work from another course, purchasing papers or materials from another source and presenting them as your own, attempting to obtain exams/materials/assignments in advance of the date of administration by the instructor, impersonating someone else in a testing situation, providing confidential test information to someone else, submitting the same assignment in two different classes without requesting both instructor’s permission, allowing someone else to copy or use your work, using someone else’s work to complete your own, altering documents, transcripts or grades, and forging a faculty/staff member’s signature.
In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through regular college procedures as a result of academic dishonesty the instructor has the authority to assign an “F”
or a “Zero” for the exercise, paper, or examination or to assign an “F” for the course. Students may appeal through the appropriate college grade appeal procedures.

**Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of an inclement weather event, check the Nashville State web site home page at www.nscc.edu for announcements on campus closures. Campus closures will also be announced on local television stations (channels 2, 4, 5, and 17).

When classes are cancelled, an online assignment will be posted in NS Online. Check your NS Online email for a message from your instructor regarding your online assignment requirements. Even though classes may be cancelled, some areas, i.e. Testing Center, may be open. However, you should check before commuting to campus.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Security are responsible for cancellation decisions during an inclement weather event for the Nashville State main campus and the Southeast campus. Cookeville, Waverly, and Dickson Campus Directors will make class cancellation decisions based on conditions in their respective areas. Decisions about class cancellations are based on actual conditions, not forecasts. The perspective used for making decisions is that of the college as an employer, not as a K-12 institution. Students should use their own best judgment in determining whether to report to campus during inclement weather when classes are not cancelled.

**NOTE:** This syllabus is meant simply as a guide and overview of the course. Some items are subject to change or may be revised at the instructor’s discretion. Each instructor will further clarify their criteria for grading, classroom procedures, attendance, exams and dates, etc. on his/her course syllabus.