Course Information and Policies

• **Goals:** The ability to “find the law” is an important practical skill for attorneys. The goals of this course will be (1) to reinforce basic legal research skills, (2) to further develop your ability to formulate effective legal research strategies, (3) to enhance your understanding of practical issues relating legal research and information delivery, such as cost efficiency and current awareness, and (4) to give you an opportunity to critically evaluate and explore research sources in an area of interest to you. This course builds on the research skills introduced during the first year legal research and writing course.

• **Office Hours:** My office is located in Room 3112 on the third floor of the Law Library in the northwest corner. As an administrator, I am generally in my office every day from 8 AM to 5 PM unless I am in a meeting or teaching. I also check email frequently throughout the day. If you’d like to setup an appointment, email me at darinfox@ou.edu or check with my assistant, Kathy Shahan. Feel free to stop by my office or send email if you have any questions about the assignments or the course.

• **Attendance:** Standard 304(e) of the ABA Standards for Accreditation of Law Schools requires regular and punctual class attendance. In addition, this class will emphasize active, “hands-on” learning, and some classes will build on the skills learned in prior classes. Class attendance is essential. **You may have one unexcused absence (i.e. a single two hour class period from 10:00-11:50) during the semester.** Excessive absences will result in a grade reduction or withdrawal from the class. Attendance will be recorded by students signing a daily roll sheet. Signing the roll sheet on behalf of another student is not permitted and is an Honor Code violation.

• **Tardiness:** Please be on-time to class. We will often begin walking through problems online as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it will be difficult to catch up, and it will be disruptive. Tardiness will result in your being counted absent for that class period.

• **Course Web Site:** There is a web site for this course. The web site is part of The West Education Network (TWEN), and it may be found on Westlaw at lawschool.westlaw.com. Students will be instructed on how to access the course web site during the first class period. All course materials, including the syllabus, reading assignments, in-class exercises, and after-class assignments can be found on the web site.

• **Reading Assignments:** The required textbook for the class is *Legal Research in a Nutshell, 9th Ed.* by Cohen and Olson. Reading assignments will generally be light since you will be required to work on in-class exercises and/or after-class assignments during most weeks. Occasionally, readings will be assigned from handouts or online materials.
• **Exercises and Assignments:** Part of the grade for this course will be based on after-class assignments. Most classes will also include in-class exercises.

  **In-Class Exercises:** Most class periods will consist of a short lecture and a hands-on demonstration of skills to be learned that day. Some time will be set aside for students to work on an in-class exercise. These exercises give you a chance to practice the skills discussed that day with the instructor present. All students are required to work on in-class exercises while class is in session.

  **After-Class Assignments:** Most class periods will have an accompanying after-class assignment which will give you a chance to further practice, on your own, the skills you learned that day. All assignments will be posted on the course web site in TWEN. Almost all assignments will be completed online using Westlaw, Lexis, or another online source. Students are responsible for completing 8 of the 9 assignments. Assignments are due by the start of the next class period, unless otherwise instructed. Late assignments will not be accepted. Most assignments will require less than 1 hour to complete, and they are designed to familiarize you with specific resources or processes. You must do your own work unless you have been assigned to work in teams.

• **Research Guide / Final Project:** Part of the grade for this course will be based on a final project, called a Research Guide or “pathfinder.” The purpose of this project is to allow you to pick an area of law that interests you and to examine, in detail, the resources that are available to attorneys in that field. The Research Guide will be a 12-15 page, double-spaced, footnoted paper which discusses the best sources to use when conducting research in a particular subject area. A detailed description of the Research Guide project will be distributed and posted to the course web page.

• **Final Exam:** There is no final exam. Legal research is a skill. You need to practice it to improve. This course is designed to build solid research skills through hands-on learning and assignments. You will get prompt feedback on your work throughout the semester.

• **Grading:** Your grade in Advanced Legal Research will be based on the assignments (25%), the final project (70%), and attendance and participation (5%). The assignments portion of the grade will be based on the 8 highest scores of the assignments submitted. Remember that all students must complete 8 of the 9 total assignments.

• **Disability:** OU is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for this course are requested to contact me as soon as possible in the semester. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The Office of Disability Services is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, 325-3852 or TDD only 325-4173.