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 devise 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:** Class attendance is essential. This class will emphasize active, “hands-on” learning, and some classes will build on the skills learned in prior classes. **You may have one unexcused absence 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. Standard 304(e) of the ABA Standards for Accreditation of Law Schools requires regular and punctual class attendance.

- **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. Announcements relating to this class will be sent via e-mail throughout the semester to your OU e-mail address.

- **Reading Assignments:** 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. The recommended textbook for the class is *Legal Research in a Nutshell, 9th Ed.* by Cohen and Olson. It will be available on reserve.
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 concepts. 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 ten 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%) and the final project (75%). The assignments portion of the grade will be based on the 8 highest scores of the assignments submitted. All students must complete 8 of the 9 total assignments plus the final project.

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.
ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH
SYLLABUS

Week 1 - January 22

• Course Introduction
• Enrollment in Course Web Page
• Discussion of Article - This Is What I'm Thinking: a Dialogue Between Partner and Associate…from the Partner
• Research Methodology on Westlaw
• Westlaw Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 1/29

Week 2 - January 29

• Review of Research Guide Project
• Research Methodology on Lexis
• Lexis Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 2/5

Week 3 - February 5

• Meet in the Law Library at the Circulation Desk
• Research Methodology - Print Materials
• Print Research Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 2/12
• DEADLINE: Email your Research Guide subject selections (2) to Professor Fox

Week 4 - February 12

• Research Methodology - OSCN and Internet Resources
• OSCN/Internet Research Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 2/19

Week 5 - February 19

• Focus on Keyword Searching vs. Indexes, Headnotes, and Digests
• Keyword Searching, Indexes, Headnotes Assignment Due by Start of Class on 2/26

Week 6 - February 26

• Legal Research and Law Practice Resources Available from the Bar
• Guest Lecturer
• No Assignment Currently Scheduled

Week 7 - March 5

• Oklahoma Practice Materials
• Oklahoma Practice Materials Assignment - Due by the Start of Class on 3/12
Week 8 - March 12

- Legal Research in the Law Firm Environment
- Guest Lecturer - Law Firm Librarian and New Associate
- No Assignment Currently Scheduled

SPRING BREAK - March 14-22

Week 9 - March 26

- Citators - Keycite and Shepard’s
- WestCheck and CheckCite
- Citators Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 4/2

Week 10 - April 2

- Cost Effective Legal Research
- Cost Effective Research Assignment - Due by Start of Class on 4/9

Week 11 - April 9

- Focus on Looseleafs and Specialized Databases (BNA, CCH, RIA)
- Looseleafs and Specialized Databases Assignment Due by Start of Class on 4/16

Week 12 - April 16

- Technology for Organizing and Presenting Your Research
- No Assignment Currently Scheduled - Work on Research Guide Project

Week 13 - April 23

- Administrative Law Research - Oklahoma and Federal
- Researching Native American Legal Materials
- No Assignment Currently Scheduled - Work on Research Guide Project

Week 14 - April 30

- Class Evaluation
- “Putting It All Together” - Review
- **DEADLINE:** Research Guide Project Due by 5 PM on 5/15
- Projects can be submitted by email, but it is your responsibility to make sure I receive it on time. I will send you a confirmation.