

Advanced Legal Research Survey
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Goals

The goals of this survey course are:

- to introduce you to a wide variety of research sources and techniques
- to provide opportunities for you to practice research in a variety of areas
- to learn from practitioners, librarians, and classmates about how research is conducted in the “real world.”

In the first class, students will vote on the topics to be covered. Possible topics include local ordinances, state administrative law, state legislative history, updating (with Shepard’s and KeyCite), and topical research (e.g., business law, labor law, tax law, environmental law, international law). Training will be provided for print resources, free Internet sites, Westlaw, and LexisNexis. In class discussions and assignments, students will compare the effectiveness of research with various resources.

Textbooks

You do not need to buy books for this course. A number of books will be used for background reading, including *Specialized Legal Research* (edited by Penny Hazelton), *The Process of Legal Research* (Christina Kunz et al.), and *Oregon Legal Research* (by Suzanne Rowe). Copies of each book are available in the library for your use. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or distributed in class.

Class meetings and attendance

This is a two-credit course; class will meet once per week. Attendance is required at all classes. After two hours of unexcused absence, a student’s grade will be decreased. After four hours of unexcused absence, a student will be administratively dropped from the course.

Research assignments

For the first part of the course, you will write a short research paper (two to three pages) every few weeks. In each paper, you will (a) briefly explain the research problem, (b) describe your research process, explaining the choices you made at each step, and (c) summarize your findings and analyze the problem. Format requirements for these papers will be posted on Blackboard.

Research exam

Around the midpoint of the semester, you will take an open-book, open-computer research exam. The goal of the exam will be to test your understanding of research processes and results.

Research project

During the last part of the course, you will research a more substantial topic. You will discuss the topic with a law librarian, prepare a short synopsis, and present an interesting portion of your research—especially the research process—to the class.

Grading

The grade will be based on attendance and participation, the short research papers, the exam, and the major research project. There will be no final exam or major paper.

Attendance and participation	20%
Small research assignments	20%
Research exam	20%
Major research assignment (synopsis and presentation)	40%