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LEG 186T.01: Introduction to Legal Research

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA–MISSOULA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

COURSE SYLLABUS

LEG 186T INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL RESEARCH

Fall Semester 2004

FACULTY: Colleen M. Dowdall, Esq.
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PREREQUISITE: Acceptance into program or consent of department head

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the legal system and legal authorities, both hardcopy sources and research using a computer. All available sources will be explored as well the interrelationship between sources.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the role of the paralegal in Legal Research.
2. Determine the value of various authorities and how they interrelate. Utilize primary and secondary authority under appropriate circumstances.
3. Use hard copy digests and on-line resources to research case law.
4. Read and analyze cases to determine issues, holdings, facts, legal reasoning, and disposition.
5. Create accurate, word-processed case briefs according to IRAC or other appropriate formats.
6. *Shepardize* cases for validation and research.
7. Perform constitutional and statutory research. Identify how the legislative process affects legal research.
8. Utilize secondary authority to understand, analyze, and tie together primary authority and to find additional primary authority to support a legal issue.

GRADING AND POLICIES:

Grading Scale:	A - 93-100%	Weight of grading:	Homework assignments 10%
	B - 87-92%		Midterm Exam - 20%
	C - 80-86%		Case Briefing - 25%
	D - 75-79%		Final Exam - 40%
	F - Below 75%		Attendance - 5%

Attendance Policy: Attendance is not mandatory but will count towards 5% of your grade. Each day of class will be assigned a numerical value that will result in a calculation of 5% of your grade.

Make-up Tests Make up tests will be allowed if I have been notified prior to the test that you are unable to take the test due to illness or emergency. Notification may be by email, in person or phone message. Make-ups will be completed by the end of the week in which the test was scheduled.

Due Dates: Homework assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date **and must be typed**. A late assignment will have 7 points deducted from the score. Rough drafts are due to be turned in on the date indicated.

Disabilities: If you need special assistance due to a disability contact me personally after class or by phone or email by the end of the 2nd week of class.

Plagiarism Warning

"Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion." The University of Montana, 1999-2000 Catalogue, Page i8. Also see Student Conduct Code. You may work with other students on the library exercises and in researching the writing assignments. The actual writing on the written assignments must be your own. When working with other students, be sure to understand the resources and process used to get the answer.

REQUIRED TEXT: ***The Legal Research and Writing Handbook, Second Edition*** by Andrea Yelin and Hope Viner Samborn
ALWD Citation Manual, Second Edition by Darby Dickerson, Association of Legal Writing Directors