

**PLS 51 Course Outline as of Fall 2017****CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: PLS 51

Title: LEGAL RESEARCH

Full Title: Legal Research

Last Reviewed: 2/28/2022

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade Only

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly:

**Catalog Description:**

This course acquaints students with procedural and substantive law; statutes, cases, codes and regulations; and how to find the law through legal encyclopedias, digests, and other resource materials. Citation format, basic case analysis, and Shepardizing are emphasized. Once experience is developed in locating information, students analyze material, brief cases, and prepare research memoranda. Assignments and activities require extensive law library time.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites:**

Course Completion or Current Enrollment in PLS 50

**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ESL 100

**Limits on Enrollment:****Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: This course acquaints students with procedural and substantive law; statutes, cases, codes and regulations; and how to find the law through legal encyclopedias, digests, and other resource materials. Citation format, basic case analysis, and Shepardizing are emphasized. Once experience is developed in locating information, students analyze material, brief cases, and

prepare research memoranda. Assignments and activities require extensive law library time.  
(Grade Only)

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Course Completion or Current Enrollment in PLS 50

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ESL 100

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

## **ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:**

<b>AS Degree:</b>	<b>Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
<b>CSU GE:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:

<b>IGETC:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
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<b>CSU Transfer:</b>	Transferable	Effective:	Spring 2010	Inactive:
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<b>UC Transfer:</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
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### **CID:**

### **Certificate/Major Applicable:**

Major Applicable Course

## **COURSE CONTENT**

### **Outcomes and Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe federal and California court structures.
2. Differentiate between primary and secondary resources.
3. Differentiate between substantive and procedural law.
4. Discuss state and local rules.
5. Locate various treatises containing civil and/or criminal pleadings.
6. Search for legal Internet resources.
7. Analyze cases, shepardize, compose case briefs, and draft legal office memoranda.

### **Topics and Scope:**

1. Overview of Court Structures
  - a. Federal Court
    - 1) Supreme Court
    - 2) Appellate Court
    - 3) Trial Court
  - b. State Court
    - 1) Superior Court
    - 2) Appellate Court
    - 3) Trial Court
2. Primary and Secondary Resources
  - a. Codes and statutes
  - b. Case law
  - c. Constitutional law

- d. Secondary resources
  - 1) Treatises
  - 2) Legal encyclopedias
  - 3) Practice guides
- 3. Research the Law by Topic
  - a. Procedural
  - b. Substantive
- 4. Court Rules
  - a. State
  - b. Local
- 5. How to Locate Boilerplate Pleadings, Agreements, and Letters
  - a. Civil/family
  - b. Criminal
- 6. Locating Legal Information on the Internet
  - a. California codes
  - b. Federal Statutes
  - c. Court rules
  - d. Forms
  - e. Case law
  - f. Shepardizing case law
- 7. Case Briefs
  - a. Overview of case analysis and briefing
  - b. Outline of document
  - c. Writing contents
- 8. Legal Office Memoranda
  - a. Overview of legal memoranda
  - b. Developing a research plan
  - c. Outline of document
  - d. Writing contents

### **Assignment:**

- 1. Read textbook and outside sources of approximately 50 pages per week.
- 2. Study and become familiar with different publishers and resources in a Law Library.
- 3. Write citations to resources found.
- 4. Locate legal resources on the Internet for use in legal document preparation - homework.
- 5. Compose legal briefs of 5 pages or less to be extracted from case review.
- 6. Draft legal office memoranda based on fact pattern scenarios.
- 7. Midterm and Final Exam.

### **Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:**

**Writing:** Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Written homework utilizing resources in a Law Library, composition of legal documents, briefs, and memoranda
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Writing 30 - 40%
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**Problem Solving:** Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Homework problems, research legal resources on the Internet for use in legal document preparatio

Problem solving  
30 - 40%

**Skill Demonstrations:** All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None

Skill Demonstrations  
0 - 0%

**Exams:** All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Midterm and final

Exams  
10 - 25%

**Other:** Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Attendance and participation

Other Category  
5 - 25%

**Representative Textbooks and Materials:**

Legal Research and Writing for Paralegals, by Deborah Bouchoux, Aspen Publishing, 7th ed., 2013.

California Style Manual, by Edward W. Jessen, West Publishing, 4th edition, 2000 (classic in field).