Law Librarianship

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Benjamin Keele
Research and Instructional Services Librarian
Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law
Inlow Hall 131H
bkeele@indiana.edu
317.274.1929

Office Hours (video, voice, or in person): Mondays 10:00am-12:00pm, Thursdays 2:00pm-4:00pm, or by appointment (all times EST).

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. Critically evaluate legal information.
2. Distinguish between primary and secondary legal materials.
3. Locate and use legal materials produced by U.S. federal and state governments, non-U.S. governments, and international organizations.
4. Identify appropriate legal information resources for a given research task.
5. Understand the institutional and economic context in which law libraries operate.
6. Practice fundamental tasks of law library public services.

Assigned Readings

There will be no required textbook for this course. Instead, students will access assigned readings through Canvas, resources licensed by IU, or the open web.

Course Policies
Students are expected to comply with all academic and campus regulations, accessible at http://registrar.iupui.edu/course_policies.html (Links to an external site.).

Course Structure

This course is taught online through Canvas. Generally, each week of the course will have three modules consisting of audiovisual and textual content. There will be discussion forum and I will offer online and in-person office hours.

Each class module roughly corresponds to a session of an in-person course. Each student will

1. Review any assigned reading materials.
2. Review any assigned lectures. These will mostly be audiovisual presentations, but some will only be audio, like a podcast.
3. Complete any tasks and answer any questions contained in the lectures.
4. Participate in assigned discussion forums.

Assignments

Students will develop and demonstrate their understanding of course materials through 1) answering in-lecture questions and participating in forum discussions (20% of course grade), 2) completing research assignments (20-40% of course grade), and completing a paper and presentation (40-60% of course grade).

Generally, two out of three modules each week will have some questions embedded in the presentation. These questions may relate to reading materials or the lecture and should be answered as you progress through the lecture. For two out of three of the modules each week will have a discussion forum in which you should substantively participate by responding to instructor prompts and peer student entries. From time to time, each student will be asked to propose some discussion topics for a module.

The research assignments will let you develop and demonstrate your understanding of locating and using legal research methods and tools. How many research assignments you are assigned will depend on which paper option you select.

The paper and presentation has two options.

The longer paper option will require a 15-30 page research paper on a topic of your choice (subject to instructor approval) and a 15-20 minutes presentation to the class. You will be assigned five research assignments (indicated on schedule by RA*). The research assignments will be 20% of your grade, while the paper and presentation will be 60% of your grade. This option is best suited for students wishing to engage in deeper study of a particular topic, seeking to prepare an article or presentation for publication or job talks.

The shorter paper option will require a 7-15 page research paper on a topic of your choice (subject to instructor approval), and a 10 minute presentation to the class. You will be assigned 10 research
assignments (indicated on schedule by RA* and RA). The research assignments will be 40% of your grade, while the paper and presentation will be 40% of your grade. This option is best suited for students wishing to have structured practice with more research tools.

You must select a paper option by the beginning of the third week of class. You may write a longer paper than required by the shorter paper option, or complete more research assignments than required by the longer paper option, but that will not change instructor expectations or grade weightings.

**IU Grading Scale**

Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

**A -- Outstanding achievement.** Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

**A- -- Excellent achievement.** Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirement in a superior manner.

**B+ -- Very good work.** Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus.

**B -- Good work.** Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and performs at an acceptable level.

**B- -- Marginal work.** Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

**C+ -- Unsatisfactory work.** Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials.

**C or below -- Unacceptable work.**

**Schedule of Topics (subject to change with reasonable notice)**

**Week 1**

1. Course scope, objectives, and expectations; values of law librarianship
2. Law libraries as institutions and careers in law librarianship
3. Podcast—typical day as a law librarian

**Week 2**

1. No module—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
2. Nature of law and types of law
3. Legal institutions and processes
Week 3

1. Basics of cases and litigation
2. How to find cases—citations
3. Podcast—research process

Week 4

1. Finding cases with full-text searching
2. Case digests and other tools (RA*)
3. Podcast

Week 5

1. Citators
2. Dockets and other court documents (RA)
3. Podcast

Week 6

1. Basics of statutes
2. Finding statutes, full-text searching, indexes, popular name tables, and tables of contents (RA*)
3. Podcast

Week 7

1. Legislative history (RA*)
2. Proposed legislation
3. Basics of regulations

Week 8

1. Rulemaking
2. Finding regulations (RA*)
3. Administrative and executive materials (RA)

Week 7

1. Treatises, books, and the legal citation
2. Law journals, American Law Reports (RA*)
3. Podcast

Week 8
1. Restatements of law, legal encyclopedias
2. Specialized sources
3. Business information (RA)

Week 9

1. Basics of international law and treaties (RA)
2. United Nations materials
3. European Union materials

Week 10 -- spring break

Week 11

1. Non-U.S. legal research (RA)
2. Collection development and licensing
3. Cataloging and technical services

Week 12

1. Teaching
2. Government libraries
3. Private libraries

Week 13

1. Access services and ethics
2. Access to justice
3. Digitization and publishing

Week 14

1. Copyright
2. Podcast
3. Topics outstanding or by student request

Week 15 -- Work period and student presentations

Week 16 – Student presentations