Advanced and specialized approaches to utilize the legal resources available in a law library, and elsewhere, will be examined. The conceptual differences between computer-assisted legal research and hard copy research will be taught. You will also learn how to formulate WESTLAW search queries and effectively and efficiently use WESTLAW and other online legal research methods as timesaving devices in legal research and legal writing. Coursework in Advanced Legal Research is equivalent to 45 clock hours of study.

This seven-week course is designed to examine more thoroughly advanced and specialized approaches to utilizing the legal sources available in the law library and online.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** After successfully completing the tests and assignments for this seven-week course, you will know:

- The hierarchy and structure of our court systems
- The importance of and applications of the different types of legal authority
- The doctrine of stare decisis
- The difference between common law and civil law
- The necessity for preemption by the federal government.
- The concepts of jurisdiction and venue
- The purposes of the different sets of books
- The elements of research
- How to organize a research project
- How to define issues
- How to narrow and refine a research project
- How to begin a research project
- How to search by key number
- How to search by topic
- The purpose of head notes and annotations

**EXPECTATIONS:** You will be expected to spend an average of 8 hours per week reading and completing writing assignments. Please note that, barring extenuating circumstances, extensions will not be granted for this online course. 70% is the minimum passing score on all tests and assignments for this course. Students may consider working ahead in the curriculum if they have the time.

**PREREQUISITES:** Successful completion of Paralegal Certificate Course, Part I (Paralegal 1 & 2), or the equivalent, or law office experience.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


WESTLAW online legal research access, available for the duration of the course for only $75.00. Order online

Highly Recommended Legal Resources:


Reading Assignments for Lesson Topics:

Lesson One: LEGAL RESEARCH: REVIEW OF BASIC CONCEPTS
Read Chapters 1 & 2 in Legal Research in a Nutshell (Nutshell)

Lesson Two: ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH AND WESTLAW
Read Chapters 3, 4 & 5 in Nutshell

Lesson Three: ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH AND WESTLAW CONTINUED
Review Chapters 3, 4 & 5 in Nutshell

Lesson Four: LEGAL RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET
Read Chapters 6-10 in Nutshell

Lesson Five: LEGAL RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET CONTINUED
Review Chapters 6-10 in Nutshell

Lesson Six: CITATION FORMAT AND PRIMARY SOURCES OF LAW
No required reading

Lesson Seven: COURSE REVIEW
No required reading

TESTS: For each of the six lessons you will submit a 50-point test covering the information within that topic. These tests are due by 9 a.m. each Friday, and can be found under the assignments link as well as within the course content.

BULLETIN BOARD ASSIGNMENTS: You will also post your responses to six class participation assignments. These Bulletin Board Assignments assignments make up your class participation grade. All lesson objectives, assignments, and tests can be found within the Lesson Material and also under Activities. Additional resources are available by accessing the URL Library tool.

GRADING: Your grade will be based on your completion of six Bulletin Board assignments (class participation) and six tests. You will have the opportunity to engage in “class participation” by using the Bulletin Board forums to respond to the bulletin board assignments throughout the course. Also, participating in the bulletin board assignments will enhance your understanding of the reading material.

Your final grade will be figured as follows:

The six exams are worth 50 points each and comprise 70% of your grade.

Your participation in class participation assignments comprises 30% of your grade.