

Minnesota State University Moorhead

PARA 251: Legal Research and Writing

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credits: 3

Lecture Hours/Week: 3

Lab Hours/Week: 0

OJT Hours/Week: *.*

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

MnTC Goals: None

Introduction to legal research and analysis. Students will develop skills in legal issue identification, analysis and research through progressively more complex exercises, including preparation of case brief, legal memorandum and a correspondence project. Paralegal majors must earn a "C-" or better in this course.

B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 02/24/2015 - Present

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

1. Introduction to course.
2. Introduction to case briefing.
3. Identifying the parties.
4. Assignment: case briefs.
5. Identifying objectives and theories of parties.
6. Identifying the history of the litigation.
7. Identifying key facts.
8. Identifying issues and holdings.
9. Identifying the reasoning.
10. Identifying the disposition.
11. Composite brief.
12. Fact comparisons and application.
13. Rule of law comparison and application.
14. Assignment: case analysis focusing on facts and rules of law.
15. Factors determining comprehensiveness of case analysis.
16. Primary and secondary authority use and abuse in legal writing.
17. Using and abusing legislative history in legal writing.
18. Writing the memorandum of law.
19. Clarity in legal writing.
20. Writing exercises.
21. Back to basics: mechanics of writing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
22. Strategies for effective writing.
23. Assignment: rough draft of memos due.
24. Discussion of memo rough drafts.
25. Legal memoranda.
26. Citation exercises.
27. Second memo project assigned.
28. Westlaw.
29. Memos - issues and statement of facts.
30. Memos - analysis.

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)

1. Introduce students to legal reference materials which are most commonly used in practice.
2. Give students opportunities to use the materials by assigning research projects and requiring written results.
3. Introduce students to teamwork by conducting research in small groups.
4. Learn legal analysis through the use of hypothetical case studies and exercises.
5. Formulate and find possible resolutions and legal issues.
6. Learn the process of applying statutory case law to hypothetical cases.
7. Increase basic writing skills.
8. Learn to write a memorandum of law.
9. Learn effective legal writing for inter-office memos and legal correspondence.

E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies

None

F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

As noted on course syllabus

G. SPECIAL INFORMATION

None noted