

**HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS DOCUMENT**

COURSE: PLS 102, Legal Research, 3 credits
Prerequisites: PLS 101, ENG 101 or concurrent registration

INSTRUCTOR: Andrew Kramer, M.A., J.D.

SEMESTER/YEAR: Fall 2016

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to various legal research sources such as codes, case law, digests, encyclopedias, etc. Instruction is provided in the use of books and computer-aided research. The “briefing” of cases and the use of proper citations are stressed. This course also stresses ethics as well as attitudes, skills, and behaviors required in a professional setting.

TEXTBOOK: Concise Guide to Legal Research and Writing, 2nd Ed. by Deborah E. Bouchoux

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: This course will assist the student to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject
2. Apply basic knowledge to new situations
3. Solve problems
4. Communicate solutions
5. Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior

Total Hours of Coursework:

To earn one academic credit at HCC, students are required to complete a minimum of 37.5 clock hours (45 fifty-minute “academic” hours) of coursework per semester. Those hours of coursework may be completed through a combination of hours within the classroom and hours outside the classroom. Certain courses may require more than the 37.5 minimum hours of coursework per credit.

For most classes, students should expect to do at least 2 hours of coursework outside of class for each hour of in-class coursework.

ASSIGNMENT/ASSESSMENT CLOCK HOURS

Attend class	37.5 hours
Read text and Moodle notes	30 hours
Outside of class assignments	25 hours
Prepare for tests and exams	15 hours
Total	112.5 hours

COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES: This course will assist the student in:

- Organizing the research project
- Using legal databases
- Reading and analyzing the law
- Use of Legal Supplements
- Writing briefs / Memoranda
- Citing sources
- Oral advocacy and communication
- Using technology in research

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:

1. Final Exam: worth **100 points**. The exam will have a variety of types of questions: true and false, multiple choice, short answer and essays. The questions on the exam will be **representative** of the material covered; in other words, there will be a few questions from each chapter.
 2. There will be 3 quizzes, **each worth 30 points, for a total of 90 points**. Each quiz will have 10 questions, with each question worth 3 points each. If you miss a quiz you will have to make special arrangements with the professor to make up the quiz.
 3. You will be required to complete and present on 2 individual issue-based research projects both with the books and on the computer. **Each of these smaller projects will be worth 50 points, for a total of 100 points**. Factors to be considered are how you identify and phrase the issues and the manner in which you address these issues..
 4. There will be 1 major brief / memoranda assigned that will be worth **100 points**. Grammar and spelling count! Five points will be deducted for each day the assignments are late.
 5. **100 points of your grade are based on professionalism**. Two important factors in this are participation and attendance. Attendance includes arriving on time and staying for the whole class. Generally, everyone starts with 100 points for this portion of your grade and 5 points will be deducted for each absence. Participation is an individual choice but those who demonstrate mastery of the material through appropriate discussion will be rewarded for their efforts by having some points added back on. Other factors include courtesy, professional quality of your work, timeliness, adherence to class policies, appropriate use of your phone and other devices.
- TOTAL COURSE POINTS: 490**

COURSE POLICIES: I ask that you comply with the following:

1. Please don't be late to class. Class will start on time, and you may miss a quiz if you are late. In addition, tardiness will be factored into your attendance/participation grade. Leaving class early is also a factor.
2. The college attendance policy can be found in the current college catalog.
3. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what we covered in class. As this is a

face-to-face class, we will make limited use of Moodle. However, I will provide you all the material you need in class. If you must leave early or are unable to attend, make sure you get the notes and material from a classmate.

4. You are expected to take the exams on the day they are scheduled. If there is a legitimate reason to miss the exam such as an illness or a business trip, please let me know before the exam. If you do not communicate with me about the missed exam I am not required to give a makeup exam.
5. You may not bring your small children to class. Older children are welcome.
6. If you have any special classroom needs (such as taping lectures) please see me privately.
7. Listen to the radio for announcements of school closings due to inclement weather.
8. Don't assume you are withdrawing from class by not coming. You must follow college policies and procedures. Please consult the HCC catalog to find the last date to withdraw.
9. Please turn all phones to vibrate or off during class. Please do not have phones or any devices out during exams. No texting during class.
10. Please bring your book to class. We may not use it every day but we will use it some days.
11. We will discuss current events so it will be helpful if you read or watch the news.
12. All work in this class is done under the HCC Code of Academic Integrity.
13. I will use the HCC e mail account to communicate with you.
14. Please come to class ready and with the proper supplies to take notes. This means the basics, i.e., paper and something with which to write.
15. At least one test per term must be taken in the Testing Center. This may be one of the quizzes that I post on Moodle and which you can access from your Moodle account, or it may be a pencil/paper test.

NOTE: The instructor retains the right to alter course content as may be required and/or the order in which material is presented, covered or assessed.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Direct Line: (240) 500 2481,
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Office: BSH 142
Office Hours: M, W: 1 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.; T, TH: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: Students may receive reasonable accommodations if they have a diagnosed disability and present appropriate documentation. Students seeking accommodations are required to contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office as early as possible. Students may contact a DSS staff member for an appointment at dss@hagerstowncc.edu or at 240-500-2530.