

Legal Research and Writing

I. Course Code: 2300157 **Class hours:** 16 **Credits:** 1

II. Suitable Specialty: Law

III. Prerequisites: none

IV: Course Goals/Overview:

Legal Research and Writing is an overview class that will cover the basics of legal research and writing with a focus on researching international law. It will focus on these skills in the English language. The course will cover legal reasoning and argumentation, researching both primary and secondary sources, and organizing and structuring a legal paper. At the end of the course students should have an understanding of how to write an effective, well-reasoned legal essay. Further, students will understand the basics of submitting academic papers to conferences and publications.

I have an open-door policy. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the class. I am available to meet in person if you set up an appointment.

Email: pjblount@gmail.com; blountsfolly@yahoo.com

WeChat: pjblount

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author.”¹ If you are unsure as to whether a use is plagiarism, then please consult the instructor. Students are required to abide by the rules and policies of Beijing Institute of Technology and the School of Law.

V. Teaching Methods:

Classroom lectures and feedback on student writing.

VI. Contents

Class 1 – October 9 3 class hours
Introduction to the Course. Who am I and who are you? & How to write an abstract.

Class 2 – October 16 3 class hours
Legal Reasoning; Using Sources

- Reading: Levi – An Introduction to Legal Reasoning (1948)
- Paper Topic Abstract due

¹ Dictionary.com

Class 3 – October 23 3 class hours
Research Methods & Citations

- Reading: Michael Reisman – International Incidents
- Source List Due

Class 4 – October 30 3 class hours
Structuring an Argument

- Reading: McKeever – Researching International Law
- Outline Due

Class 5 – November 6 3 class hours
Putting it All Together

- Reading: Eugene Volokh – Legal Writing
- Draft Introduction Due

Class 6 – November 13 3 class hours
Getting Read: Conferences and Publishing

- Reading: Lindley – Advice for Graduate Students and Others on Attending Academic Conferences
- Final Paper Due

VII. Grading

1. Paper Topic Abstract (10%)
2. List of Sources (10%)
3. Paper Outline (10%)
4. Draft Introduction (10%)
5. Final Paper (60%)

Assignments are due at the beginning of each class. Your assignments should be turned in in hard copy.

VIII. Textbook and References

There is no textbook for this class. All materials will be provided by the instructor.

Edward Hirsch Levi, "An Introduction to Legal Reasoning," 15 *University of Chicago Law Review* 501 (1948).

W. Michael Reisman, "International Incidents: Introduction to a New Genre in the Study of International Law," *Yale J. Int'l L.* 10 (1984): 1.

Eugene Volokh, *Academic Legal Writing* (Foundation Press 2010)

Kent McKeever, "Researching International Law," (2006)

Dan Lindley, "Advice for Graduate Students and Others on Attending Academic Conferences" (2013)

IX. Syllabus Writer: P.J. Blount