

Advanced Research Seminar (Legal Studies 398-1,2)

Northwestern University Center for Legal Studies

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Course Description –

Legal Studies 398-1,2 is a two-quarter sequence required for all Legal Studies majors. This seminar exposes students to a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to law and legal institutions; over two quarters, students will develop their own research paper on a topic of interest.

Once you complete the Advanced Research Seminar, you should be able to:

- Read and analyze diverse primary legal and political sources carefully and accurately, with attention to the author's perspective, position, and credibility, and to the source's general context.
- Be familiar with research methods and best practices regarding qualitative and quantitative data, written materials, and electronic databases.
- Read, evaluate, summarize, and engage with scholarly works by others, and be able to analyze authors' arguments for evidence, context, strength, and credibility.
- Understand how to work with and situate one's own work within existing scholarship and how to properly cite facts, ideas, and scholarship.
- Generate original research questions regarding the relationship of law and society and devise research strategies for answering research questions.
- Make clearly written and organized arguments that are well supported by primary sources.
- Design and execute an original research project.

Required Texts (These books are available for purchase at the Northwestern University bookstore, and are on reserve at the library. New and used copies are widely available online. I have listed the ISBNs for the most recent editions below, but you may buy any edition you like.)

- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2014) ISBN:9780393935844
- Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2013) ISBN: 9781603848985
- Additional required reading will be available via Blackboard [marked as BB or BB e-reserve] and various NU library databases.

Other Requirements/Recommendations –

- You must establish some sort of backup system for your research and writing by early Fall Quarter. Dropbox, another cloud-based system, or an external hard drive are all fine – just make sure you are backing up your work consistently.
- A recommendation, not a requirement – investigate citation software early in the quarter. Free versions of Zotero and Endnote are available, and the NU library offers training systems on each. Using one or the other can save you a huge amount of work.
- I recommend the following books (on reserve at the library):
 - Kitty Calavita, *Invitation to Law and Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) –A great introduction to law and society questions (particularly recommended if you haven't taken Law & Society or if you'd like a refresher).
 - Loreen Wolfer, *Real Research: Conducting and Evaluating Research in the Social Sciences* (New York: Allyn & Bacon, 2006) – A useful guide to different kinds of research techniques (crafting surveys, designing interviews, etc.).

Assignments [total: 1000 points] –

- *active and informed* participation in class discussions – 100 points
 - I will assess your participation based on your thoughtfulness and your engagement with the reading and the class, not based on whether you agree with the reading or with other students.
- secondary source research exercise – 50 points
- summaries of scholarly articles – 80 points
- IRB training – 20 points
- primary source research exercise – 50 points
- annotated bibliography – 200 points
- methods exercise – 150 points
- report on the status of your research thus far – 25 points
- list of books and articles by topic – 100 points
- literature review – 200 points
- schedule for Winter research – 25 points

Fall Quarter Schedule of Readings and Assignments –

Week 1

Tuesday, Sept. 23 – **How to find literature on your topic**

- *in-class* *handout*:
 - Bizup's "BEAM," from John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2011)

**** Each of you must meet individually with Prof. Grisinger to discuss possible research topics by the end of Week 2.****

Thursday, Sept. 25 – **How to write a research question**

- *read before class:*
 - Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, ch. 3 [BB – e-reserve]
 - Martin A. Schwartz, “The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research,” *Journal of Cell Science* 121 (2008): 177 [find online through NU library databases]
 - Jill Lepore, “How to Write a Paper for this Class” [BB] [This is geared toward Prof. Lepore’s history course, but much of this is relevant here as well.]
- *turn in: [50 points total]*
 - (1) A brief (1-2 page) narrative description of the secondary source searches you’ve conducted thus far (what search terms you’ve used, what databases you used, what resources you’ve found, etc.) **[20 points]**
 - (2) The following **secondary** sources on your topic of interest **[5 points each]**:
 - two academic journal articles from JStor from different disciplinary fields (i.e. sociology and history)
 - one law review article from HeinOnline
 - one book from the Northwestern library system
 - one book review from an academic journal of the book you’ve chosen from JStor
 - order one book from Interlibrary Loan (*not* from the NU library system) (find via WorldCat) [**this will take anywhere from a few days to a week to arrive – you may turn this in through Week 3. Make sure to do this ASAP! **]

Week 2

Tuesday, Sept. 30 – **Analyzing academic articles**

- *read before class, and before you read the other articles for today:*
 - “How to Read in College” [BB]
 - “How to Read for History” [BB] [obviously oriented toward reading history texts, but applicable more broadly]
- *read and bring to class:*
 - Francesca Polletta, “The Structural Context of Novel Rights Claims: Southern Civil Rights Organizing, 1961-1966,” *Law and Society Review* 34 (2000): 367-406
 - Danielle L. McGuire, “‘It Was like All of Us Had Been Raped’: Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle,” *Journal of American History* 91 (2004): 906-931
- *turn in: [20 points each/40 points total]*
 - A short summary of each article (~100 words, or approximately 2 sentences) that describes what each article *does*. Describe the author’s argument, sources/methods, and what the author argues is new/distinctive.

Thursday, Oct. 2 – **Analyzing academic articles**

- *read before class, and before you read the other articles:*
 - Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, chs. 1, 2, 14, 17
 - Joseph Harris, *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006), ch. 2 [BB e-reserve]
- *read and bring to class:*
 - Aaron Schwabach, “Harry Potter and the Unforgivable Curses: Norm Formation, Inconsistency, and the Rule of Law in the Wizarding World,” *Roger Williams University Law Review* 11 (2006): 309-51
 - Cass R. Sunstein, David Schkade and Lisa Michelle Ellman, “Ideological Voting on Federal Courts of Appeals: A Preliminary Investigation,” *Virginia Law Review* 90 (2004): 301-354
- *turn in: [20 points each/40 points total]*
 - A short summary of each article (~100 words, or approximately 2 sentences) that describes what each article *does*. Describe the author’s argument, sources/methods, and what the author argues is new/distinctive.

Week 3

Tuesday, Oct. 7 – **Library introduction: how to find primary sources**

- Bring your laptop to class. Library/database orientation.
- *turn in: [20 points]*
 - Evidence that you have completed IRB online training [link on BB]

Thursday, Oct. 9 – **Choosing Research Methods**

- *read before class:*
 - “Lawrence Friedman and *The Roots of Justice*” and “Michael McCann and *Rights at Work*,” in Simon Halliday and Patrick Schmidt, *Conducting Law and Society Research: Reflections on Methods and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) [BB – e-reserve]
- *turn in: [50 points total]*
 - (1) A brief (1-2 page) description of the primary source searches you’ve conducted thus far (what search terms you’ve used, what databases you used, what resources you’ve found, etc.) **[20 points]**
 - (2) The following **primary** sources on your topic of interest **[5 points each]**:
 - one federal case and one state case (LexisNexis Academic)
 - one *Chicago Tribune* news article (Proquest Historical Newspapers or LexisNexis Academic)
 - one *New York Times* editorial (Proquest Historical Newspapers or LexisNexis Academic)
 - one congressional source (report, hearing, etc.) (Proquest Congressional)
 - one poll (link via research resources page)

Week 4

Tuesday, Oct. 14 – **Citation: Why and How (aka: Why the Chicago Manual of Style is the best)**

- *read before class:*
 - Quick Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style [BB]
 - Ole Bjørn Rekdal, “Academic Urban Legends,” *Social Studies of Science* 44 (2014): 638-654 [BB]

Thursday, Oct. 16 – **In Class Workshop: Annotated Bibliographies**

- You may not have a perfect vision of the whole project, but by now you should have a question firmly in mind, know what you plan to look at, and have done some reading about it.
- *turn in by 10am (so that we have time to make copies before class): [draft – ungraded]*
 - (1) A research question (at the top of your annotated bibliography is fine) following the model in *The Craft of Research*.
 - (2) A list in alphabetical order (by author’s last name) of *at least* 15 books and/or articles with a brief (~100 word) summary of each. It should be clear from your summary what the topic, question, and methods/sources are. All citations **must** be in approved **CMS bibliography** style. [15 is a floor, not a ceiling; more is always better. I’ll give 5 points extra credit for the student with the most qualifying books and articles listed in the final version (due Oct. 21).]
 - (3) A paragraph (at the end of your bibliography is fine) describing what you need to read next. (Titles of specific books are not necessary; I’m looking for something like “These books and articles mostly discuss the history of the statute; I need to find some studies on the implementation of the statute.”)

Week 5

Tuesday, Oct. 21 – **How to Write a Methods Section**

- *turn in: [200 points]*
 - A revised version of your research question, annotated bibliography, and descriptive paragraph.

Thursday, Oct. 23 – **In Class Workshop: Methods Sections**

- *turn in by 10am (so that we have time to make copies before class): [draft – ungraded]*
 - (1) A statement of your research question (at the top of your methods section is fine) (your research question may have changed – that’s great! It will probably continue to evolve).
 - (2) A description of the methods you’ll be using for your thesis (1-3 pages), modeled on the methods sections we’ve reviewed in class. You should describe your proposed primary sources and method with some specificity. You should briefly explain why your method and sources will be effective in answering your question.

- (3) You should include a rough timetable (1-2 pages). Carefully estimate how long it will take to interview each person/read each legal document, etc. If your project requires an amount of work that's not feasible, now is the time to figure that out and reframe your project.
 - You should make clear the order in which you plan to do the research; what is your plan of attack?
 - If you are planning to conduct interviews, turn in proposed schedule for when you plan to schedule the interviews.
 - If you are planning to use surveys, turn in a rough draft (very rough is fine!) of the survey, and a proposed schedule for administering it.
- (4) Evidence that you have met individually with our extremely helpful library liaison.

Week 6

Tuesday, Oct. 28 – **Academic Writing: Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Style**

- *read before class:*
 - selection from Helene S. Shapo, Marilyn R. Walter, Elizabeth Fajans, *Writing and Analysis in the Law* [BB – e-reserve]
 - selection from Verlyn Klinkenborg, *Several Short Sentences About Writing* (Knopf, 2012) [BB – e-reserve]
 - Gordon Harvey, *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students*—Gordon Harvey, ch. 2 [BB – e-reserve]
- *turn in: [150 points]*
 - A revised statement of your research question, methods section, and schedule.

Thursday, Oct. 30 – *No class – work on your research. We will be available for one-on-one meetings during this time.*

Week 7

Tuesday, Nov. 4 – **Methods Cafe**

Thursday, Nov. 6 – *No class – work on gathering primary sources. We will be available for one-on-one meetings during this time.*

Week 8

Tuesday, Nov. 11 – **The Literature Review**

- *read before class:* Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, chs. 3-11, and reread chs. 14, 17
- *turn in: [25 points]*
 - A report on the status of your research thus far (~2-3 pages).

Thursday, Nov. 13 – **The Literature Review, cont'd.**

- **turn in: [100 points]**
 - A list of books/articles (at least 20 – including the ones you used in your annotated bibliography, and with additional books/articles you have found since) grouped into subcategories (by topic and/or approach). It is fine to list one book/article under more than one heading – the idea here is to get you to think about how the secondary materials relate to one another, and where the gaps are. This will serve as a rough outline for your literature review.

Week 9

Tuesday, Nov. 18 – **Workshop: Literature Review and Background Information**

- **turn in by 10am (so that we have time to make copies before class): [draft – ungraded]**
 - A rough draft of your literature review and background section.
 - Your literature review should be approximately **5 pages** in length, double-spaced, with **1-inch** margins and **12 point** font. You should include *at least* 20 scholarly books/articles on your subject or on related subjects. Footnotes must be in CMS footnote form.

Thursday, Nov. 20 – *No class – work on your literature review*

Week 10

Tuesday, Nov. 25 – **Scheduling Your Research**

- *in class: develop a schedule for thesis research and writing over Winter Break and Winter Quarter*
- **turn in: [200 points]**
 - Final draft of literature review and background section.

Thursday, Nov. 27 – **No class – Thanksgiving Break**

Week 11 – No class – WCAS Reading Week

No later than noon on Monday, Dec. 8

- **turn in: [25 points]**
 - Week-by-week schedule for thesis research and writing over Winter Break and Winter Quarter

Winter Quarter Course Requirements –

- *active and informed* participation in class – 10% (100 points)
 - I will assess your participation based on your thoughtful (written and oral) comments on your colleagues' work.
- You are also required to meet at least **five times** with your Graduate Teaching Fellow and/or Prof. Grisinger to discuss your topic. – 2.5% (25 points)

- rough draft of thesis – 5% (50 points)
- oral presentation on thesis research – 10% (100 points)
- thesis – 70% (700 points)
- letter to future students – 2.5% (25 points)

Winter Quarter Schedule –

Week 1

- Tuesday, Jan. 6 – In-class workshop
 - Upload your (revised) 1-2 page (double-spaced) methods section by **noon on Monday, Jan. 5**. Include your research question at the top of your submission.
 - Before class, carefully read the submissions provided by each of your group members. (Group assignments will be posted before the start of Winter Quarter.)
- Thursday, Jan. 8 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and meet with us.*

Week 2

- Tuesday, Jan. 13 – In-class workshop
 - Upload 2-4 double-spaced pages of analysis (by the deadline established by your group). Include your research question at the top of your submission.
 - Before class, carefully read the submissions provided by each of your group members.
- Thursday, Jan. 15 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*

Week 3

- Tuesday, Jan. 20 – In-class workshop
 - Upload 2-4 double-spaced pages of analysis (by the deadline established by your group). Include your research question at the top of your submission.
 - Before class, carefully read the submissions provided by each of your group members.
- Thursday, Jan. 22 - *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*

Week 4

- Tuesday, Jan. 27 – In-class workshop
 - Upload 2-4 double-spaced pages of analysis (by the deadline established by your group). Include your research question at the top of your submission.
 - Before class, carefully read the submissions provided by each of your group members.

- Thursday, Jan. 29 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*

Week 5

- Tuesday, Feb. 3 – In-class oral presentations. [Presentation groups listed below. Group 1 presenting; Groups 3 and 4 attending.]
 - **Thesis rough draft due.**
 - **Oral presentation of thesis research** – Your presentation should describe your topic and specific research question, your methodology, what your data revealed, and what is original about your conclusions. Each presentation should be *10 minutes long*. (You should practice your talk ahead of time in order to time it. As a general rule of thumb, it takes 2 minutes to read a double-spaced page.) Following the presentations, there will be a general question & answer session with the class as a whole.
 - If you cannot present on your assigned day, you will need to find someone willing to swap with you.
 - Powerpoint will not be permitted. You may have handouts (with, for example, charts and images); if you plan to do this, please contact me ahead of time so that I can make copies.
 - Each of you will be required to attend three of the five in-class presentations (as scheduled below). You are free to attend more. On those days you are not required to attend, you should be working on your thesis.
- Thursday, Feb. 5 – In-class oral presentations. [Group 2 presenting; Groups 4 and 5 attending]

Week 6

- Tuesday, Feb. 10 – In-class oral presentations. [Group 3 presenting; Groups 1 and 2 attending]
- Thursday, Feb. 12 – In-class oral presentations. [Group 4 presenting; Groups 3 and 5 attending]

Week 7

- Tuesday, Feb. 17 – In-class oral presentations. [Group 5 presenting; Groups 1 and 2 attending]
- Thursday, Feb. 19 – In-class oral presentations (if necessary).

Week 8

- Tuesday, Feb. 24 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*
- Thursday, Feb. 26 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*

Week 9

- Tuesday, March 3 – *No class - opportunity for you to make headway on your thesis and/or meet with us.*
- Thursday, March 5 – **THESIS DUE – *turned in electronically and hard copy in class* by 2pm.** Refreshments will be provided!

Exam Week

- Monday, March 16 – **Final assignment [due by 5pm]** –
 - *Turn in:* A letter to future Legal Studies thesis students describing your research experience and letting them know what to expect (approximately 2 double-spaced pages, but you're free to exceed this if you have more to say). Unless you ask me to keep this letter private, I will share it (with your name removed) with students in years to come.

The Legal Studies Thesis: Requirements

- Your thesis should be **25-30 pages** in length (not including the bibliography or any appendices), double-spaced, with **1-inch** margins and **12 point** Times New Roman font.
- In addition to the sections specified below, you should include a title page, bibliography, and any necessary appendices in your final draft. Your bibliography should have separate categories for primary and secondary sources.
- Your thesis should use footnotes throughout, and should be consistently formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

The Basic Elements of your Thesis

- I. *Introduction* (no more than 2 pages)
 - Introduce the major research question you are addressing.
 - Present your thesis statement.
 - Provide a brief description of the rest of your thesis. What are your methods and conclusions? What is your contribution to the literature? Think of this as the “roadmap” to guide the reader to the rest of the work.

- II. *Background Information (if necessary)* (no more than 2 pages)
 - Offer your readers whatever background information/context they will need to understand the literature review and the rest of the thesis.
 - If you find you only need one or two paragraphs of background, combine this with your introduction.

- III. *Literature Review and Theory* (no more than 5 pages)
 - Review the existing literature concerning your research questions.
 - Present your review in terms of major findings and arguments (instead of simply listing authors and studies).
 - Locate your thesis in this literature. What is your contribution (or, what is unique about the way that you are examining your topic)? What are the

arguments in the literature that contradict all of, or parts of, your own argument?

IV. *Methodology* (no more than 2 pages)

- Explain the methods you are using to support your argument.
- Be sure to provide the sources of your data in this section, and explain why you chose these sources.
- Present your arguments as to why your method can answer your research questions.
- Explain, in detail, how you conducted your analysis. For example, how many interviews did you conduct? How did you determine the people you would interview? How long were your interviews, on average?
- Briefly acknowledge any limitations of your data or research method (generalizability, lack of access to certain documents or officials, small number of cases, etc.)

V. *Results, Analysis, and Discussion* (15-20 pages)

- What did you find in your data analysis?
 - Depending on your method, you might present your results in a variety of ways. For example, if you conducted interviews, you may want to present summary statistics about the responses you received, as well as provide more in-depth results through quotes. Survey research might be presented solely through summary statistics.
 - Depending on your research questions, you may break down your respondents according to their responses and demographic groups, for example.
- Explain the implications of your results on your broader research questions.
- Do your results support your thesis statement?
- Can you rule out alternative explanations for your findings, which may be present in the existing literature?

VI. *Conclusion* (1 page)

- Return to your main argument, and assess how future research might contribute to answering your research questions.
- Why are your findings important? (For example, your project may contribute to the existing literature, broader legal theory, or policy reform).