Legal Research and Writing
PLS 412W - 3 credits
Doane College – Spring Term
March 19, 2014 to May 15, 2014

Description:
A course designed to strengthen skills for research, writing, analysis, and critical thinking. It focuses on the crucial issues of writing in the context of law practice. Students will learn how to: 1) report legal research findings in an appropriate format; 2) use appropriate citations for sources; 3) use the format and content in drafting client correspondence and legal documents; and 4) modify standardized forms found in form books, pleading files, or a computer data bank.

Prerequisite: Paralegal Studies 221.

Location and Times: Doane College - Lincoln
Thursday, 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Instructor: Jason W. Hayes, Adjunct Professor
Cell: (402) 304-9414
E-mail: jason.hayes@doane.edu

Textbook Materials:

Darby Dickerson, ALWD Citation Manual, a Professional System of Citation, Aspen Publishers (4th Ed. 2010). ISBN: 9780-7355-8930-8

Course Objectives:
The student, after completing the course instruction should have a heightened awareness of the following subject materials:

1) report legal research findings in an appropriate format;
2) use appropriate citations for sources;
3) use the format and content in drafting client correspondence and legal documents; and,
4) modify standardized forms found in form books, pleading files, or a computer data bank.

Assessment of Student Performance and Grading:
Students will be able to obtain a total of 300 points from assignments, discussions and examinations conducted during the course. The number of points that a student will be able to earn, is as follows:

Writing and Research Assignments 250
Class Participation 50
Summary of Examinations and Assignments:

Writing and research assignments will be assigned throughout the duration of the course that will test and refine the student’s research and legal writing skills. These assignments will consist of researching practice assignments, preparing legal documents, writing client letters, and the student preparing detailed legal briefs and memorandums.

Course Policies:

Attendance: Student attendance at all class meetings is expected. If a student will be unable to attend a class meeting, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor and perform any necessary makeup or additional assignments given to the student by the instructor. Students should obtain class notes from a fellow classmate, and the absent student is responsible for all material covered on the day of the absence. Two or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade.

Grading Scale: The grading scale is based on a nine point, A, B, C, D, F scale, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100 – 96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 – 85</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79 – 75</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69 – 65</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>64 – 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 – below</td>
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</tbody>
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Late Assignments: Assignments that are turned in late during the duration of the course are downgraded by one letter grade. For each additional week the assignment is late, an additional letter grade is reduced off the original score given. All assignments must be completed and handed in by May 15, 2014 to receive any credit.

Academic Integrity: The College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others’ ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in penalties to be determined by the instructor and/or the dean of graduate studies.

Format of Writings: All writing assignments to be completed outside of class should be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and using a font no larger than 12 pt. in Times New Roman, Arial or Courier. If you have any questions regarding this requirement please contact your instructor.
Course Schedule and Readings:

Mar 20  Chapter 12  E-Research: Legal Research Using the Internet  
          Chapter 13  Overview of the Research Process  
          Chapter 14  Back to the Basics  

Mar 27  Chapter 15  Strategies for Effective Writing  
          Chapter 16  Legal Correspondence  
          **Assignment #1 Due**  

Apr 3  Chapter 17  Legal Memorandum  
       **Assignment #2 Due**  

Apr 10  **No Class.**  

Apr 17  **No Class.**  

Apr 24  Chapter 18  Legal Briefs  
       **Assignment #3 Due**  

May 1  Chapter 19  Postwriting Steps  
       **Assignment #4 Due**  

May 8  Class Discussion  
       **Assignment #5 Rough Draft Due**  

May 15  **Assignment #5 Final Draft Due**  
       **No Class.**