

## UMKC SCHOOL OF LAW ELECTIVE COURSE INFORMATION MINI-TERM Spring 2010

**COURSE NAME:** Bridging the Research Gap: From Classroom to Practice

**CATALOG NUMBER:** 8746B

**PROFESSOR:** MacLachlan & Hall

**ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES:** Completion of Intro to Law and attendance at all 1L research lectures

**DESIRABLE PREREQUISITES:** Ongoing familiarity and use of Lexis, Westlaw and Internet based sites for legal research

**COURSE BOOKS:** Any material will be provided by the instructors

**METHOD OF GRADING & APPRAISAL OF STUDENT FOR GRADE:** Pass-Fail. Completion of daily research problems after the initial presentation of the material for each day plus class participation in the interactive review sessions examining research strategies and evaluation of results. Thinking and sharing strategies about the research process and strengths of each source is more important than finding specific “right answers”. Plus initial brief reflection pre-and post visit to the Courthouse on expectations and observations of the reality of the case-handling process there.

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:** Research training, including first-hand observation at a courthouse of how a case moves through the legal system and hands-on use of print and electronic research tools for problem solving and analysis of results to help students make the transition from doing legal research for the classroom to the practice setting. Students will use Lexis' Total Litigator package of resources; Westlaw sources for transactional research; sources for legislative history, administrative law and secondary sources; and learn to develop research strategies and how to analyze the results for each.

**COURSE CONTENT:** Five modules of three hours each - the sequence may vary but the following is generally the content.

1. Research theory, structure of a research plan; and issues in professional responsibility for students and new attorneys entering the profession
2. Lexis Total Litigator 1 hour; problems to work on for a 1 hour; re-convene for 1 hour interactive review session to include choice of database, formulation of query, evaluation of results
3. Transactional resources on Westlaw for 1 hour; problems to work on for a 1 hour; re-convene for 1 hour interactive review session to include choice of database, formulation of query, evaluation of results
4. Research strategies and secondary sources for 1 hour; problems to work on for a 1 hour; re-convene for 1 hour interactive review session to include evaluation of the problem, choice of secondary source, use of and updating the source
5. Internet based legislative history and administrative resources for 1 hour; problems for 1 hour; reconvene for a 1 hour interactive review session to focus on choice of resource and its applicability to the problems.

Students will be expected to both do the problems and while doing so keep notes of the steps of their research process and be prepared to identify them, compare and evaluate approaches and results in the review sessions.

**RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR CAREER PURPOSES:** The course will strive to demonstrate, and for the students to experience, the processes of legal research in the practice setting, the choices that need to be made, the priorities that need to be identified, the use of specific types of resources and the evaluation of the results from a client or practice oriented setting compared to academic coursework.