

Course Syllabus

Thesis research Seminar

Instructor: Dinara Asanbaeva

Offered Semester: Fall 2018

Class meeting hours: **Thursday @10.50**

Consultations : For consultations and appointments, contact:

asanbaeva_d@auca.kg

I. General Description of the Course

The "Thesis Research" seminar is designed to teach you the skills necessary for high-level legal research, analysis, and writing. These are the areas of expertise that every lawyer will need to succeed in the profession. The major goal of the course is to prepare you to write the senior project - the most significant piece of writing that you will undertake during your senior year and defend it before a committee of experts in law that will evaluate it in the second half of the academic year.

A senior project is an original, individual, intellectual, and creative activity that will round out and cap your program of study. The drafting process will help you improve your critical thinking and writing skills as well as understand how to perform advanced legal analysis and research. Most importantly, you will learn how to work with statutory and doctrinal sources efficiently, apply law to various factual situations, follow concrete citation guidelines, avoid plagiarism, employ available research methods, and produce legal work of publishable quality. At the culmination of the course, you will complete the roadmap and one chapter of your senior project and will be prepared to work with your supervisors to finish the writing of your project in the spring semester of this academic year.

II. Learning outcomes

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the Law Program should have the following competencies:

1. carry out professional activities in good faith on the basis of developed legal consciousness, legal thinking, and legal culture and with observation of ethical principles of the legal profession;
2. apply professional judgment, perform quality legal analysis, conduct legal research, and solve legal problems;
3. be able to speak and write in an argumentative, logical, and clear way in the legal context, have skills necessary to draft legal documents, be fluent in the English language at the level of professional communication;
4. draft normative legal acts and carry out their legal expertise in the field of professional activity;

5. interpret and apply substantive and procedural norms, provide qualified legal opinions and consultations in concrete types of legal activity;
6. demonstrate leadership qualities, active citizenship, take and develop initiatives aimed at promotion of civil society and welfare state;
7. understand the essence and significance of information in the development of modern society and law, master the basic methods of working with information and information technologies in the professional sphere.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:	Law Program Learning Outcomes
Understand principles of legal research and ethics	2 and 3
Carry out advanced legal research, using national and international legal databases	1,3 and 7
Synthesize and integrate legal data, construct legal arguments and perform advanced legal analysis	3and 7
Organize legal writing in a coherent, structured way and prepare research strategies and employ research methods in the course of the senior project writing;	1,3 and 7
Prepare to present and defend the senior project	1 and 3

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

As this seminar is the continuation of the "Legal Research Methods" course, students shall continue working on senior project topics they selected in spring semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. If they change their topics, they will automatically lose 10% of their final grade for this course.

The class will meet once a week. Students are expected to come to classes prepared and be ready to discuss the given materials. Upon the instructor's request each student will be required to submit his/her written assignments. The instructor will call on students randomly to discuss the given topic, or to perform any other task (questions etc.).

(1) Students are expected to BE ON TIME for classes. If a student is late, he/she will be marked as absent for the whole class, unless excused by the instructor.

(2) **ATTENDANCE:** Class and individual meetings' attendance is of the utmost importance for this course. If a student misses 2 class periods or individual meetings, he or she will automatically receive a grade of zero for class participation and attendance. **Missing 3 and more individual meetings may lead to the F grade for the entire course, regardless of any written submissions!**

(3) **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** Due dates and times for all assignments are strict. If the student misses the deadline, late work will not be accepted. Extensions are not generally granted.

Please, notice that all assignments must be turned in hard copy AND in an electronic copy. Electronic copies should be uploaded via the AUCA e-course system. You may access the system at <http://e-course.auca.kg/>. Please, contact the instructor immediately if you have any difficulty accessing the e-course.

(4) Students must observe the **AUCA ACADEMIC HONESTY** policy and the **LAW DIVISION PLAGIARISM POLICY**. All types of academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) are strictly prohibited. If a student fails to observe this requirement, the instructor shall assign an "F" grade for the work or for the whole course, depending on the type of assignment and gravity of the academic dishonesty.

(5) **CELL PHONES** and any other electronic devices should be either turned off or kept on silent during class.

V. GRADING

The final grade will be determined based on the following components

Literature review	10%
Thesis prospectus	10%
Draft 1 of Chapter 1	15%
Draft 2 of Chapter 1	15%
Draft 3 of Chapter 1	15%
Final draft of Chapter 1	25%
Attendance (class/meetings)	10%

VI. COURSE CONTENT

The instructor reserves the right to introduce changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced during class. It is your responsibility to stay informed of adjustments made!

VII. COURSE MATERIALS

You will be required to read handouts that will be distributed in class weekly. In addition, you may refer to the following list of recommended materials for further reading:

- Eugene Volokh, "Academic Legal Writing: Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar papers, and Getting on Law Review", New York, 2010;
- Amy E. Sloan, Basic Legal Research: Tools and Strategies, Fifth Edition (Aspen Coursebook Series) 5th Edition
- The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, 20th Edition, Harvard Law Review, 2015
- The Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research, Peter Cane and Herbert Kritzer, Oxford University Press 2010
- A Guide to Write a Senior Thesis in Social Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences Harvard University (2013);
- Christina L. Kunz, The Process of Legal Research", New York, 2004;
- Richard C. Wydick, "Plain English for Lawyers", Durham, North Carolina, 1998;
- Lisa Webley, "Legal Writing", New York, 2007;
- Michael Murray, "Legal Research Methods," Foundation Press, New York (2009);

VII. Grading Criteria

A 94-100%
A- 90-93%
B+ 86-89%
B 80-85%
B- 77-79%

C+ 74-76%
C 68-73%
C- 64-67%
D+ 60-63%
D 54-59%

D 54-59%
D- 50-53%
F below 50%