



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	LAW
Course Number:	17
Descriptive Title:	Legal Research and Writing
Division:	Business
Department:	Law
Course Disciplines:	Law
Catalog Description:	This course is an introduction to the practical writing skills and necessary analytical skills required in the law office. Topics include analysis of cases; analysis of statutes and administrative regulations; drafting and generating objective documents used in the legal environment; and generating and drafting persuasive documents submitted by attorneys to the trial and appellate courts.
Prerequisite:	Law 11 with a minimum grade of C
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	
Transfer UC:	No
Effective Date:	
General Education: ECC	
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	
Term:	
Other:	
IGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	

CalGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Legal Memoranda and Forms Draft pleadings/memoranda including court forms in a manner sufficient for submission to the applicable court. SLO #2 Providing Direct Assistance to Attorneys Apply knowledge of the law in order to provide direct assistance to attorneys including research, client interviews, problem resolution and the examination of ethics in the legal workplace. SLO #3 Legal Comprehension Understand and apply theories and principles of the law to interpret legal documents, perform legal research and communicate those results.
Course Objectives:	1. Demonstrate effective legal writing skills. 2. Formulate effective legal research strategies. 3. Analyze and evaluate substantive and procedural law issues, particularly those of civil discovery practice and legal ethics. 4. Evaluate, identify and prepare appropriate pleadings.
Major Topics:	I. Analysis of Court Decisions in terms of Legal Writing Style (3 hours, Lecture) A. Case Briefs B. Majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions C. Case Briefs compared to Issue Rule Application and Conclusion (IRAC) II. Drafting of Interoffice Memos (3 hours, Lecture) A. IRAC Writing format B. Legal letters C. Persuasive vs Expositive writing III. Organizing the search and updating research methods (3 hours, Lecture) A. Primary and secondary authority B. Mandatory and persuasive authority C. On point authority D. Distinguished and analogized authority IV. Civil discovery practice (3 hours, Lecture) A. Discovery Timing Requirements B. Discovery Notice Requirements C. Discovery Tools V. Discovery motions (3 hours, Lecture) A. Meet and confer B. Notice requirements C. Points and authorities VI. Unlawful Detainers (3 hours, Lecture) A. Forms B. Timing requirements C. Notice requirements VII. Summary Judgments (3 hours, Lecture) A. Summary Judgment Requirements B. Prima Facie Case C. Matters of fact vs matters of law VIII. Jury Instructions (3 hours, Lecture) A. Drafting jury instructions

	B. Researching jury instructions C. Using case law to create jury instructions IX. Judgments (3 hours, Lecture) A. Holding B. Dicta C. Enforcing judgments D. Post judgment motions and remedies X. Analysis of pleadings, trial briefs (6 hours, Lecture) A. Required pretrial submissions B. Internal pretrial preparations C. Responding to opposing moving papers XI. Use of effective and persuasive language (3 hours, Lecture) A. Persuasive non-controlling authority B. Unpublished opinions C. Opinions outside of jurisdiction XII. Style and highly effective writers (prominent jurists) (3 hours, Lecture) A. IRAC format B. Active voice C. Proper use of passive voice XIII. Common mistakes in legal writing (3 hours, Lecture) A. Citations B. Legal document format C. Writing in plain English XIV. Identifying key facts and legal issues (3 hours, Lecture) A. Crafting informative, helpful issue statements B. Using statutes and case law to identify issues C. Drafting statement of facts using only legally relevant facts XV. Writing tools and non-legal aids to effective writing (3 hours, Lecture) A. Citation manuals B. Style manuals C. Dictionary D. Thesaurus XVI. Drafting and refining the appellate brief (3 hours, Lecture) A. Table of contents B. Table of authorities C. Appellate process timeline XVII. Euphemisms, gender-based writing, pronoun selection, clarity of expression, and foreign and technical terms (3 hours, Lecture) A. Common grammatical errors B. Techniques for clear communication of ideas C. Techniques and tips for word choice
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 -	1) Substantial writing assignments

all courses; choose one):	
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	(a) Irene Gerston sued Vince O'Donnel for civil battery. While Gerston was sleeping, O'Donnel (a total stranger) kissed her on the cheek. When she awoke and found out, she was outraged. One of the elements of battery is an "offensive touching." O'Donnel argued that the kiss was not offensive because Gerston was unconscious at the time. The trial court agreed and ruled that the touching was not offensive even though Gerston totally disapproved of what he had done. Gerston appealed. Reversing, the appellate court held that a touch is offensive if the victim considers it unwanted and unpleasant. Assume that you are reading the opinion of Gerston v. O'Donnel, which is the appellate court opinion that reversed the trial court. In a one-page paper, answer the following: (i) Briefly state the issue of Gerston v. O'Donnel. (ii) (a) What rule of law is involved in the issue? (b) What part of this rule of law is in contention? (c) What do you think the key facts in the opinion were?
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Sam Landlord is having problems with a tenant. In one of his apartment buildings he has had a long-term renter named Joe Doaks. Doaks has lived in Sam's building since 1989. On November 25, 1997 Sam served Doaks with a 3-day notice to pay rent or quit the premises. He served the notice by certified mail but the mailing was accepted by a friend of Doaks's who was staying with Doaks. The friend immediately threw out the notice and said nothing to Doaks about it. Doaks denied receipt of the notice in his answer to the complaint, and denied the validity of the notice, but raised no affirmative defenses. On its face, the notice demanded rent for the period November 1, 1996 through November 30, 1997. At the court trial, when Sam's lawyer offered the 3-day notice into evidence, Doaks's lawyer objected in a timely fashion, but the judge overruled the objections, stating, "Counsel, as far as the face of the notice, you did not object to it by affirmative defense, so you have waived that defense. As far as the objection based on service, service was clearly by certified mail, which is obviously the same - or amounts to the same - as personal delivery, especially since we have a signed return receipt. If your client wants to deny receiving the notice he must do that in his case in chief. The notice is received in evidence." In the defense case, Doaks did testify that he did not receive the notice, the judge ruled against him anyway, and granted judgment in Sam's favor for restitution of the premises, the amount of rent in the notice, some monetary damages, attorney's fees, and costs. Doaks appeals. Write Doaks's opening brief on appeal. Be sure that your brief thoroughly and zealously advocates Doak's position using case law and the IRAC method, while adhering to the current California Rules of Court for appeals.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	Parker Jones is an unmarried male model who just began a job at the Vital Day Model Agency in Detroit. He has a reputation as a "ladies man," but denies it. The Agency is owned and run by Linda Farrell. There are no employees. Farrell manages six models by herself. A week after hiring Parker, she asks him to go to a bar with her after work for a drink. Parker does not want to go, but is afraid of offending Farrell. He reluctantly agrees. At the bar, Farrell puts her arm around Parker and says, "Why don't you spend the night at my place?" Furious at this request, Parker walks out of the bar. Instead of going to work the next day, Parker quits his job and sues Farrell and the Vital Day Model Agency for sex discrimination. Parker is a client of Henderson and Henderson, where you work. Your supervisor, Susan Grotte, asks you to prepare a 2500 to 4000 word interoffice memorandum of law

	addressing the question of whether Parker has a valid claim for sex harassment. Assume that after thoroughly researching the law, the only relevant authorities you are able to find are the following: A. Michigan Civil Right Act, 103 (h): "Discrimination because of sex includes sexual harassment which means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of communication of a sexual nature when:... (iii) Such conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment...or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment...environment." B. Radtke v. Everett, 471 N.W. 2d 660, 189 Mich. App. 346 (Mich. Ct. App. 1991).
Other Evaluation Methods:	Homework Problems, Term or Other Papers, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	Reading and analysis of case law and statutes.
Work Outside of Class:	Answer questions, Problem solving activity, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Putnam, William. Legal Analysis and Writing. 4th ed. Cengage Learning, 2012. (Discipline Standard)
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	Prerequisite
Category:	sequential
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	Law-11
Requisite and Matching skill(s):Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	Summarize and analyze a fact pattern to discern relevant information; and be able to identify and state legal issues. LAW 11 -Analyze legal resources and be able to state a set of legal issues. Utilize the law library to perform basic legal research. LAW 11 -Prepare basic research techniques using a specialized legal library including encyclopedias, code books, case reports and other legal practice materials. Cite legal works and references. LAW 11 - Examine and identify legal citations. Establish skills in online research LAW 11 -Establish skills in online computer research. Organize and initiate legal documents and legal pleadings.

	LAW 11 - Organize and initiate legal documents including legal memorandum, agreements and legal pleadings.
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
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Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Dagmar Halamka
Date:	10/01/1975
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Nicolas McGrue
Date:	11/13/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	01/21/2026
Effective Term:	FA 2026