

LIS 9318 Legal Information
Graduate Program of Library and Information Science
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Western University
Fall 2021

Instructor: Stephen Coulstring
Email: scoulstr@uwo.ca

Course Description

This course features primary and secondary sources of legal information and their use. Primary sources include bills, statutes, regulations, and cases; secondary legal sources include blogs, articles, conference proceedings, and textbooks. Students will explore the use of these sources in a variety of formats and study their application to the information needs of academic, public, government, and legal practitioner clientele.

PREREQUISITES: LIS 9003

Course Objectives

1. To analyze the characteristics and needs of legal information users.
2. To study the various types of institutions providing legal information.
3. To examine methods of organizing legal materials.
4. To identify methods of providing legal information services.
4. To develop an awareness of the sources of legal information.
5. To consider the role of the information professional in legal information transactions.

Pedagogical Approaches

Pedagogical approaches for course instruction include lectures, guest lectures, database labs, and online forum topics. If health and safety policies permit, a tour of the Western Law Library will be arranged. Assigned readings are drawn from academic, technical, and conference publications.

Instructor Information

Stephen Coulstring (BSc, BA, BEd, MA, MLIS) is a lecturer with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. He has over two decades of experience with reference service, bibliographic instruction, collection management, and quality assurance in a special government library context—Canada Revenue Agency. His research experience and interests include business, law, science, and public records. He has taught the following LIS courses: LIS 9323 Business and Industry Information; LIS 9318 Legal Information; LIS 9316 Government Information; LIS 9319 Science, Technology, and Medical Information.

Course Policies

Writing - Professional, grammatically correct writing is expected. This means that spelling, punctuation, and grammar are part of assignment evaluation. If you need assistance with writing, find someone whose writing skills you trust to proofread your written work or visit the Writing Support Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>.

Scholastic offences - These offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf
 Collaboration is inappropriate in this course. Penalties for inappropriate collaboration (with no plagiarism) could include any of the following: the grade on the assignment is divided equally among all the students who collaborated inappropriately; failure on the assignment; and in extreme case (such as when the assignment accounts for a high proportion of the course grade), failure in the course.

Wellness - Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Student Accessibility Services - Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

Communication – The instructor plans to respond within 24 hours to all relevant course email that is sent to scoulstr@uwo.ca.

Formatting – Assignments should have single-line spacing. Assignments have due dates and instructions posted to the course site on OWL. Assignments are due unless other arrangements apply.

Grading – Grading will conform to the guidelines published in the MLIS Graduate Student Handbook (https://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mlis/mlis_grading.html).

Assignments

To complete this course, students must follow online content on the course OWL site and submit the following assignments:

Assignment Name	Weight	Scheduling
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Students are expected to attend class and participate.

All students are required to submit:	Weight	Assigned	Due
Definitions Assignment	15%	Sep 13	Sep 24
Business Case	25%	Sep 20	Oct 8
Topic Report	25%	Sep 27	Nov 12
Topic Report Presentation	20%	Assorted dates in Nov and Dec	
Participation	15%		
Forum Topic Intro (1 post and 1 response)	2%	Sep 13	Sep 17
Forum Topic Notable Class Actions (1 post 1 response)	2%	Sep 20	Sep 24
Forum Topic Foreign Law (1 post 1 response)	2%	Oct 18	Oct 22
CanLII lab questions	3%	Sep 20	Sep 24
Lexis Advance Quicklaw lab questions	3%	Sep 27	Oct 1
WestlawNext Canada lab questions	3%	Oct 4	Oct 8