ELECTIVE COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE NAME: Advanced Legal Research – Transactional Law

COURSE NUMBER: 8643T

PROFESSOR: Paul D. Callister

ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES: None

DESIRABLE PREREQUISITES: Intro to Law

COURSE BOOKS: None. Students will use library materials and information services

METHOD OF GRADING & APPRAISAL OF STUDENT FOR GRADE:

- Bibliographic Analysis Assignments and other Exercises—25%. These assignments are designed to help students see patterns in the proper use, function and place of various legal research resources common to transactional research.
- Research Problems—35%. Research problems derived from practice and experience will be used to help students identify problem types, apply the steps in the research process, and gain confidence in their ability to practice law.
- Research Pathfinder and Presentation—40%. Students must prepare and present an annotated guide (called a pathfinder), which is designed to walk other attorneys or users through the process of research in a specific legal topic or area of the law and provided annotated guidance to the various resources available on the topic. It is not simply an unannotated bibliography. The guide may be prepared in conjunction with a paper written (outside of the course) for research and writing credit.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

The course will refresh and refine research skills, help students to think systemically about legal research, and familiarize students with applicable resources used in transactional law. As the final project, students will have the opportunity to develop an in-depth research “path finder” or guide for an approved topic of their own choosing, which for students pursuing credit for an Area of Emphasis, must be approved by their Area of Emphasis Advisor.

COURSE CONTENT:

Sample research topics may include transaction subjects from tax, retirement plans and pensions, securities, business organizations, purchasing and sale of businesses, licensing,
employee compensation and benefits, estate planning, real estate, labor and competitive business intelligence. Research tools will include major transactional looseleaf services and treatises, business form books, online services (such as provided by CCH, RIA, and BNA), government securities filing databases, regulatory web sites and services, and competitive business intelligence and industry resources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to analyze and research complex transactional and business law problems with confidence, experience, and the conceptual basis necessary to competently, cost-effectively, and ethically resolve such problems. In meeting this objective, students will be able to:

(i) “Work research problems” by communicating effectively with clients and supervisors to uncover what their client or supervisors already know about specific problems and to understand what the client or supervisor expects for their satisfactory resolution;
(ii) Identify the function and utility of specific research resources and relate them to their appropriate place and function within a well-developed conceptual model of legal research resources;
(iii) Regardless of electronic or print format, determine the significant “flagship”, code, and subject-based services; treatises; formbooks; handbooks or guides; and news and “update” resources within any field of transactional or business law;
(iv) Identify and analyze research problems by type and match those problems to the best resources for their resolution;
(v) Understand and apply the research cycle (including standards for thorough and competent research) and master common strategies for research in transactional and business law;
(vi) Identify and resolve ethical issues confronting legal research;
(vii) Creatively adapt resources, research processes and conceptual models for new problems;
(viii) Reflectively assess their own performance and articulate why particular resources, research processes and conceptual models may have failed them;
(ix) Develop a pathfinder that attorneys with a general background in transactional law would find useful to familiarize themselves with the resources, processes, and basic legal knowledge necessary for effective research in a subspecialty or particular topic in transactional or business law.

RELEVANCY OF COURSE FOR CAREER PURPOSES:

This class prepares students who wish to focus on transactional law (including students interested in either Business and Entrepreneurial Law or Urban, Land Use and Environmental Law as an Area of Emphasis). However, currently, the course does not count toward meeting the stated requirements for either of these Areas of Emphasis.