



WE ARE NEW YORK'S LAW SCHOOL



NYLS STUDENT COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Design and carry out legal research projects

Understands the sources of law: statutory, regulatory, common law

Recognizes and understands the hierarchy and weight of each type of legal authority

Can identify all legal issues underlying a research project and can use the legal concepts presented to develop functional search statements

Can make good choices regarding the best source to start with: electronic vs. paper; primary vs. secondary; free vs. low cost vs. premium

Understands the role of secondary sources and can choose effectively among sources that provide additional authority, better explanation, or deeper analysis

Can broaden search statements appropriately to find all relevant material by distinguishing specific factual scenarios and rule applications and the use of argument by analogy

Understands the importance of evaluating research sources for authenticity, reliability and currency

Understands the importance of updating all research results

Can keep appropriate notes and documentation for self and team members for returning to relevant points and/or to get complete citation information

Understands the importance of time, cost, and efficiency considerations in a client-based project

Understands the importance of keeping current on developments in law

WHY FOCUS ON RESEARCH SKILLS?

The ABA requires law schools to prepare students to practice law and to impart to them the skills necessary to do so. Among the most important skills all lawyers rely upon is the ability to do legal research: to find the material needed to interpret and analyze legal issues. Legal research is an integral part of the "competencies" that NYLS and the ABA both require of law students. Effective research skills are vital to students engaged in any type of legal writing, to those who are clerking or participating in externships, and to those entering law practice.

To help you prepare for the realities of law practice, we offer a number of courses designed to build upon skills learned in the first year. The courses will enhance your skills and make you a more efficient, confident and successful researcher. Students may take up to five credits of research classes, and an unlimited number of research workshops that the Mendik Library's Reference Librarians offer throughout the year.

Legal Research: Practical Skills (1 credit)

Reviews core methods introduced in the first year to help students refine their skills, learn shortcuts, and develop effective research strategies. This course focuses on finding legislation, administrative materials, and related cases; using citators to enhance and update research; learning about important secondary sources; and attaining a greater comfort level with Lexis Advance, Westlaw, Bloomberg BNA, and other electronic resources, including reliable free and low-cost sources. We also offer this class with a focus on a particular substantive practice area, including **Corporate & Business Law; Criminal Law, Family Law; Foreign & International Law, Intellectual Property Law, Labor & Employment Law; & Real Estate Law.**

Legal Research: Skills for the Digital World (3 credits)

Continues to build on the fundamentals described in **Legal Research: Practical Skills**. Students have time to concentrate on more advanced techniques of developing research strategies and evaluating online and print materials to choose the best source for particular projects. Students pursue research assignments that may be geared to their individual subject interests. Students also complete take-home assignments that test and enhance their understanding of research tools, their understanding of important process and strategy considerations and their ability to perform various research tasks.

For the ABA's specification of competencies, see **ABA Standard 302. Learning Outcomes:** <http://bit.ly/2IKpvYv>



For the NYLS list of competencies beyond legal research, visit: <http://bit.ly/2nk5tBF>

