

Report:
ALL-SIS Committee on Legal Research:
Advanced Legal Research Web Sourcebook Subcommittee

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I. Introduction

ALR Web Sourcebook Mission Statement

This Subcommittee will consider the various components involved in administering an advanced legal research course. In particular the Task Force will review and identify model course proposals, law school course descriptions, methods of evaluation, pathfinders, research guides, class exercises, and course syllabi. The Task Force will also review course content, and the wide variation in topics included in ALR courses. Finally, the Task Force will consider appropriate methods to devise a web sourcebook which addresses these various issues and cumulates sample materials.

Membership of the Committee in 2002-2003

Wendy Scott, Chair
Rebecca Trammell
Gigi Panagotacos
Scott Childs
Rob Truman
Billie Jo Kaufmann

Support from Beth DeFelice, Victoria Trotta and Brian McFarland at Arizona State.

ALR Survey

Our primary project for this year was the development of a survey instrument to gather data from librarian-instructors of Advanced Legal Research. The subcommittee agreed that a web-based survey with a database 'back end' would be the most efficient and meaningful way to gather and manipulate the data. Tory Trotta graciously volunteered to house the survey at the ASU web site until it could be relocated on the ALL-SIS web site. Brian McFarland, Director of Information Technology at Arizona State, constructed an Access Database for the survey so that entered data would drop directly into the database for analysis. The electronic survey was completed after a number of revisions in February, 2003. The survey was disseminated through the Library Director's listserv on February 20, 2003.

As of June 25, 2003, sixty-eight respondents have responded to the survey. A comprehensive analysis of the data follows.

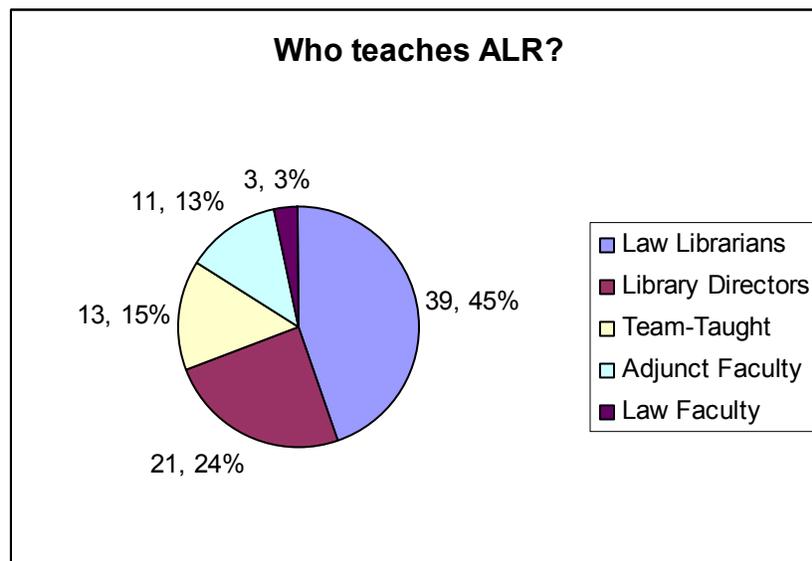
II. Survey Results and Discussion

A. Who Teaches Advanced Legal Research? (Questions 3 – 3b)

Most ALR courses are taught by one or more librarians. This figure includes 21 Library Directors, or 14.3% of the respondents. Approximately 10% of ALR courses are team-taught by law librarians. At Marquette, the course is team taught by law library JD/MLS librarians, other local JD/MLS librarians, and local attorneys.

Fourteen (approx. 9.5%) of the law schools represented in the survey employ adjunct faculty or full-time faculty to teach ALR. This figure includes faculty-librarians and librarians who are employed as adjunct instructors, and therefore does not reveal how many schools employ non-librarian faculty to teach ALR. I propose that the survey be modified to clarify this point.

Table 1: Who Teaches ALR?



B. Credits and Frequency of Course Offering (Questions 4 - 5)

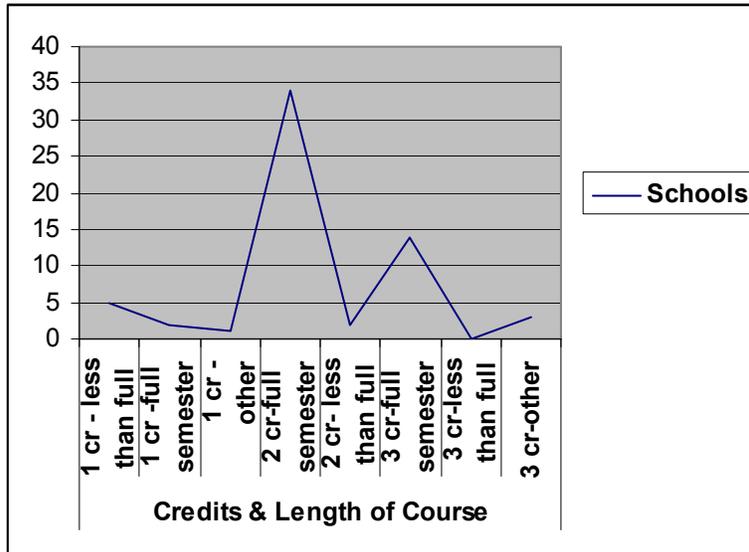
Credits

Slightly more than ½ of the ALR courses are currently 2 credit, full-semester courses. About 1/3 of the ALR classes are 3 credit, full-semester courses. Eight schools indicated that they taught single credit ALR courses. Single credit courses are being offered according to a variety of schedules, including:

- First 7 weeks of the semester (Marquette)
- First 3 weeks of the semester (William & Mary)
- Two hours/week for ½ semester (Notre Dame)

d. Two hours/week for first 8 weeks of the semester (U. Maryland)

Table 2: ALR : Number of Credits & Course Length

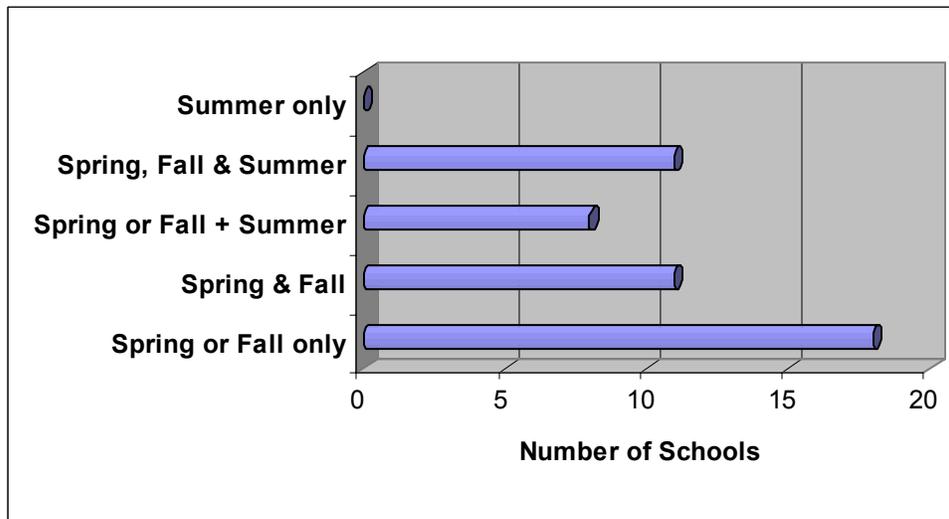


When ALR is Offered

The most surprising figure was that 19 schools, approximately 30% of the total respondents, teach ALR in the summer. Perhaps summer offers more ‘down time’ for librarians. Alternatively, perhaps students’ preferences or scheduling restrictions come into play.

Eleven schools, or 16% of the total number, teach ALR every semester, including summers. Approximately the same number teaches the course once a year in either the fall or spring semester (or on an academic quarter basis). None of the schools teach the course during the summer only.

Table 3: ALR: How Often Offered, and In Which Semesters



C. Course Text (Questions 6a – 6d)

About ½ of the ALR instructors who responded require a course text.

The ‘nutshell’ was cited the most often as a thorough, but succinct and inexpensive text. Several schools recommended texts, but did not make them mandatory. Although only two respondents mentioned in-house produced handouts or other materials as required, it seems reasonable to conclude that other schools are using their own materials as well, but did not list them as required texts.

Table 4: Required Course Texts

Title of Required Text	# of Schools Using Text	Reasons for Selection
Legal Research Nutshell	7	Good basic text, not too much reading required, can be easily supplemented; Switched from Legal Research Illustrated. This was cheaper; Best text. Not too involved; A good comprehensive source of legal research information
Legal Research Illustrated	6	It is up to date, covers most of what I want to cover, handles electronic materials fairly well, and is reasonably priced; Cost, coverage, currentness; Legal Research Illustrated works best for the upper level students - they seem to like this book the best of the ones we have tried; Succinct, affordable, current; good guide to all legal research, incl. international & computerized sources.
Fundamentals of Legal Research	5	Currency & depth of discussion of research topics; Well organized. Succinct. Serves as a post-law school reference tool -- Most students keep it.; Most comprehensive for least expense
Process of Legal Research (Kunz)	5	Focus on the legal research process, as opposed to several texts that are primarily bibliographies with text, better suits the course; Clearest explanations; most realistic research problems. Selected by legal research and writing program for use in both 1st and 2nd year research and writing programs.
Finding the Law	4	Concise writing; covers the

		basics; I supplement with other readings from time to time; Practical orientation; good online treatment; relatively brief
ALWD Citation	1	
Lawyers' Research Companion	1	Better than the survey first year books although the Internet book is dated
Legal Information (Olsen)	1	Straightforward, useful as a reference book, pretty current
Legal Research Exercises (N. Johnson)	1	Good review for basic legal research.
Legal Research Tools & Methods	1	Practitioner-oriented
Materials Produced In-House	2	
State Resources	1	
Winning Research Skills (West)	1	I use the text for the first few weeks and then I develop my own materials.

Those who do not require a course text provide a variety of alternatives in print and electronic form, including:

- ✓ In-house produced materials
- ✓ Bob Berring Legal Research videos
- ✓ Readings (articles or a choice of research texts)
- ✓ Internet materials such as LLRX
- ✓ Intranet or self-developed web course
- ✓ A 'mix' of sources rather than a single text

D. Will You Share? Materials for the Sourcebook (Question 7)

The data culled from this section of the survey will be used to contact instructors who have expressed a willingness to share course materials for posting on the ALL-SIS Advanced Legal Research Web Sourcebook. This will be the main thrust of the next phase of the web project.

E. Online Research

Internet (Question 8)

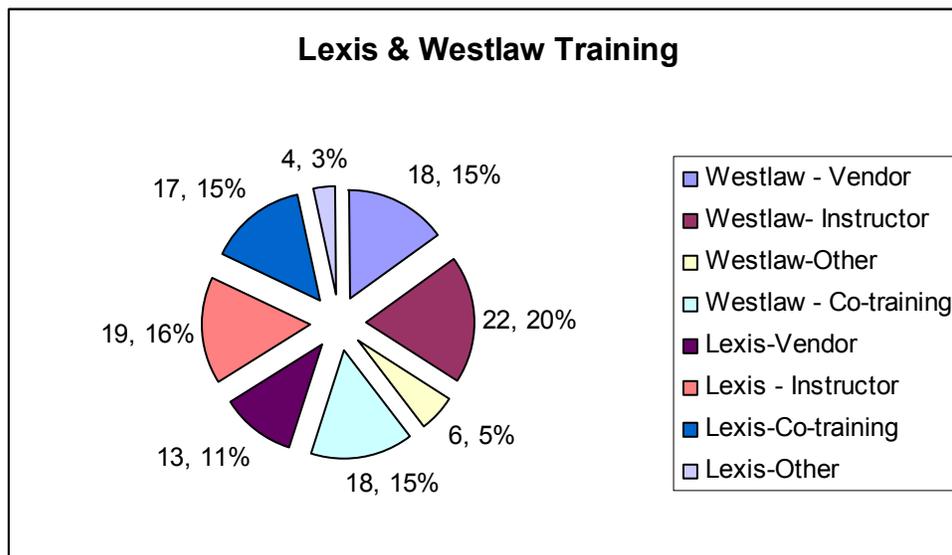
All but five of the respondents reported that they provide training in Internet research. In the next iteration of the survey it might be helpful to add sub-questions to solicit more information about the nature of the training and the categories of sites explored in the course.

Westlaw/Lexis (Questions 9-10)

As expected, Westlaw and Lexis training are a component of most ALR courses, with more than 80% of those surveyed offering training in both systems. Only 4 schools reported that they do not offer training in either system in their advanced research courses. None of the law schools offer training in only one of the research systems.

It is worth noting that, for both research systems, approximately 30% of those who responded offered training by both course instructors and company vendors. According to comments, some instructors gave preliminary lectures followed by hands-on instruction by the vendors. In another instance, the instructor was also present during the training provided by vendors. One instructor provided the training but asked the vendors to provide pricing information. It would have been useful to examine the differences in content and class format for training offered by course instructors, by company trainers, and by both.

Table 5: Lexis & Westlaw Training – Who Provides Training?



Note: Westlaw & Lexis ‘Other’ Categories:

This category represents respondents who expressed variants of the explicit categories, i.e., a combination of instructor and vendor training.

Loislaw (Question 11)

About 50% of the respondents offer Loislaw training in their ALR courses; in all but two instances the training is given by course instructors rather than company trainers. Sally Waters at Stetson reported that she gives her students an assignment that asks students to compare research results from Loislaw, Westlaw and Lexis.

CD-ROM (Question 12)

Training in law-related CD-ROM products is given by only 6% of those who responded. This figure appears to be consistent with the move away from local and networked CD-ROM to wider availability and greater reliability of web-based resources. It will be interesting to see if this number falls even more in future survey instruments.

F. Technology Used in Teaching ALR (Question 13)

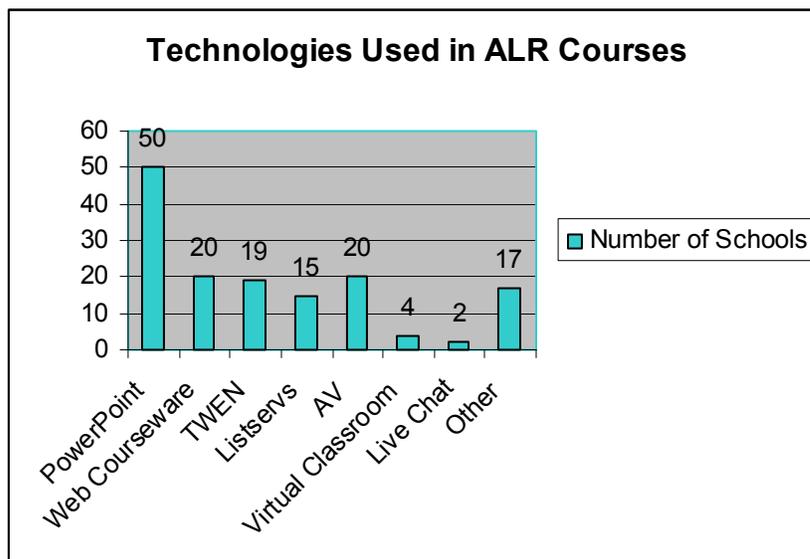
Instructors are employing a wide variety of educational technologies to support their ALR courses. PowerPoint is being employed by almost 75% of the instructors. Blackboard and other web courseware is being used by approximately 30% and TWEN, Westlaw's courseware, is being used by approximately 27% of those who responded, for a total of almost 60% using web based courseware for instruction. These figures may suggest ideas for future ALL-SIS conference presentations at the annual meeting.

Only four ALR courses are using a virtual classroom environment and only two have incorporated live (virtual) chat. Based on these statistics, and the kinds of technologies being actively employed, we can surmise that few of the courses are distance learning courses.

In the category of 'other [technologies],' were included 'live' Internet, academic institutions' web sites, labs, overhead projectors, interactive tutorials devised by the library, intranets and the ever-popular chalkboard.

Only one respondent mentioned CALI as an educational technology used in ALR. It might be productive to add CALI as a listed option to the next iteration of the survey instrument to ascertain whether and to what degree CALI is actually being used in ALR courses.

Table 6: Technologies Used in ALR Courses



G. Course Evaluation/Measurement Tools (Question 14)

Range of Measurement Tools

On the basis of the feedback, our ALR instructors are busy, and so are their students. ALR instructors typically employ a range of performance measures. Almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ALR courses require a pathfinder, and pathfinders constitute more than 50% of the total grade for $\frac{3}{4}$ of this group. About the same number of courses requires a different kind of major project, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of courses that require major projects weigh them as more than 50% of the grade. Projects range from student presentations to paper trails, research logs/diaries, a library purchasing plan, PowerPoint presentations, and transactional research problems for hypothetical clients.

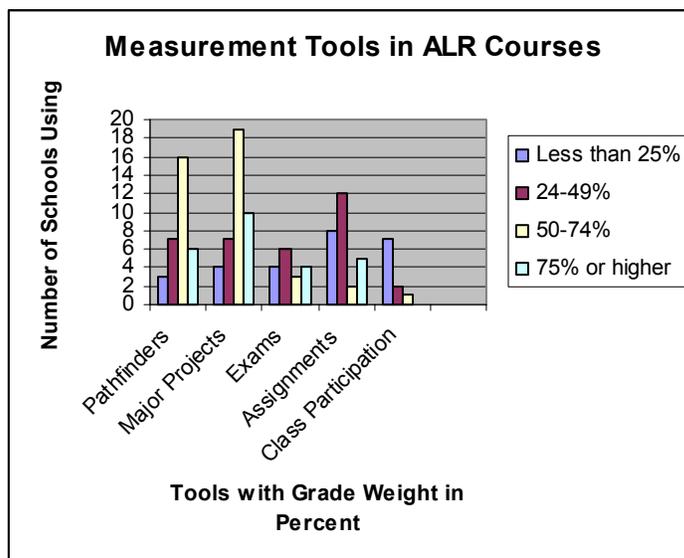
Class participation and homework assignments are elements of measurement in slightly more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ALR courses. Class participation is weighted at 10% or less for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents. For those schools that use assignments, $\frac{3}{4}$ weight these assignments at less than 50% of the total grade.

Quizzes are a measurement tool in only 15% of the courses and weighted at less than 25% of the grade in most courses. Exams are given in approximately 20% of the courses, and $\frac{1}{2}$ of these weigh exams as 50% of the grade or higher.

Table 7: Categories of Course Evaluation/Measurement Tools Used

Categories	Pathfinders	Projects	Exams	Assign.	Partic.	Quizzes
# of Schools Measuring (out of 68)	32	40	17	27	10	11

Table 8: Number of Schools Using Measurement Tools with Grade Weights by Category



H. Suggestions for ALR Web Sourcebook (Question 22)

We received a number of excellent suggestions for sourcebook resources. A clear mandate is to include course materials, syllabi and handouts to share.

Table 9: Selection of Comments and Suggestions for ALR Web Sourcebook

Might be useful to share syllabi, assignments, etc.
Current syllabi; exercise sets; simulation exercises scenarios for in class practice; exams
Perhaps more teaching resources. We've adopted some of the West Power Point presentations which have been very helpful. Outlines for lectures might be useful.
Sample lesson plans and power-point presentations
Recommended readings, assignments, course handouts, tips for success
Comprehensive survey
Would like to see different types of evaluation material, to see how others grade their course. Would also like to see handouts, lecture notes, etc., in different areas of law that others have used, tax, environment, etc.
Many of us have no formal background in teaching. Some of us struggle with basic class management techniques, such as what to do, if anything, about those two students in the back of the class who can't stop talking to each other!? A way to share tips and techniques, in addition to course materials, would be welcome.
Articles and tips, along the line of those in Perspectives, would be useful.
A place where instructors could share teaching and instructional tips or things that have worked well in their courses.
more networking available, including more sharing of class materials and ideas
Up to date exercises that have been tested and work well.
Perhaps a newsgroup or the archives of a discussion group regarding ALR issues: texts
Statistics about status of librarians who teach

I. Questions 15-20: For Those Not Currently Teaching ALR

Some of the survey respondents were confused by this set of questions, drafted to elicit responses from those who are not currently teaching an Advanced Legal Research course. Therefore, data for these questions is not completely accurate, since some of the respondents answered these questions even if they are currently teaching ALR.

Five respondents indicated that no ALR course had ever been taught at their law schools. Jim Heller reported that the three credit ALR course at William & Mary had been abandoned in favor of 1 credit mini-courses

Table 10: Reasons for discontinuing ALR Courses

Reason	Law Schools	Comments
Lack of enrollment	0	
Lack of faculty	1	
Other	2	Too much work by librarians for too few students.
		Due to staffing issues ALR will be offered only once a year in the future.

Questions 17 – 21 did not result in meaningful data because respondents who are currently offering the course answered these questions or because those who are not currently teaching an ALR course have not yet determined course details.

III. Conclusion and Issues

Advanced Legal Research courses are alive and well in our law schools. A significant number of schools offer ALR more than once each year. It would be interesting to discover how many of the same instructors are involved in the first year legal research and writing course as well, and to ascertain how many hours per week librarian-instructors devote to formal legal research instruction.

ALR instructors are comfortable with the traditional legal research texts, but many appear to supplement text readings with materials that they select or prepare for the course. Overriding factors among those who require a text are cost, currency, and brevity or conciseness.

Law librarians work closely with Lexis and Westlaw trainers, with almost 1/3 of the respondents indicating a team approach to online training. Loislaw training is a component of about ½ of those surveyed, but CD-ROM training is offered by only a few schools, a relief to IT departments everywhere!

Law librarians are employing educational technologies to enhance the classroom environment, with PowerPoint almost ubiquitous. Perhaps the ALR Web Sourcebook should include articles and links on how to maximize the use of PowerPoint and other educational technologies? The fact that large numbers of instructors use web courseware is significant because, among other reasons, these sites are generally password protected and no longer available to colleagues seeking ideas and input for their own courses. Perhaps the ALR Web Sourcebook Subcommittee should work with instructors who use web courseware to establish a portal for guest access to their sites – by agreeing upon a common guest access password, for example.

Although ALR instructors exploit new technologies, most continue to emphasize hands-on skills building through a variety of graded activities, including pathfinders, practical projects and assignments.

Issues: Survey Instrument

Issue 1:

The survey instrument was reviewed by all members of the committee and edited a number of times to achieve an accurate and meaningful data result. Unfortunately, after reviewing the initial results, it became obvious that the section of the survey for those not currently teaching ALR confused respondents.

Recommendation:

Remove questions 15 – 20 from the survey. Perhaps submit a separate survey to those not currently teaching ALR.

Issue 2:

There are a number of issues not addressed in the survey that were brought to our attention by the survey respondents. For example, we posed no questions about the status of instructor-librarians who teach or the numbers of students in ALR courses. I will work with sub-committee members and Beth DeFelice on an approach for incorporating additional questions into the survey.

Issue 3:

I would like to have additional survey data for the current instrument. Before the survey is amended, I will work with sub-committee members to encourage members who have not yet responded to complete the survey.

IV. Plan of Action

A. Plan of Action: Survey

1. Contact new subcommittee members and review progress to date
2. Move survey instrument from ASU to ALL-SIS web site
3. Encourage members to complete current survey if they haven't already done so
4. Post survey results on the ALL-SIS web site for members' review
5. Amend survey instrument to incorporate additional questions for 2004
6. Maintain an archive of annual survey results and prepare comparative analysis

B. Plan of Action: ALR Web Sourcebook

In addition to working with new subcommittee members on the survey plan of action:

1. Devise a methodology for obtaining course proposals, course descriptions and course documents from those survey respondents who indicated a willingness to share their materials with the organization.
2. With the assistance of the ALL-SIS web manager, create a searchable database for various categories of course materials to reside on the site.
3. Collect documents in electronic form from respondents for entry into the database. We may want to start with a single document category and build from there.
4. I would also like someone on the subcommittee to identify existing 'free' course materials on the Internet (such as the West PowerPoint) that could be posted to the sourcebook for common use. It might be helpful to develop a 'boutique' of such tools by topic, integrated with materials gleaned from our survey respondents. For example, under 'Case Research,' we could link to the West PowerPoint, Westlaw and Lexis handouts and tutorials, and any case research related guides, lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, etc., culled from our membership.

APPENDIX I:

ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONS

This is a text version of the web survey found at <http://aallsurvey.law.asu.edu>.

- (1) Law Library Name
Name of Person Completing Survey
Title
E-Mail Address
Phone
Contact Person for Additional Information if different from above
- (2) Does your school offer a course in Advanced Legal Research as part of its established curriculum?
Y N
([If you answered "No" click here to question 15](#))
- (3) Who teaches this course? [Check all that apply]
- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Adjunct Faculty | Library Director | Librarian(s) | Law Faculty |
| Team [* give details] | Other [* give details] | | |
- (4a) How many credits are given for the course?
- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 Credit | 2 Credits | 3 Credits |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
- (4b) Is the duration of the course:
- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|---------|
| Full semester | Less than semester | Other * |
|---------------|--------------------|---------|
- *If less than a semester, please specify
- (5) How often is the course offered?
- At least once a year (Please mark all that apply below)
- | | | | |
|------|--------|--------|-------------------------|
| Fall | Spring | Summer | Other [* give details] |
|------|--------|--------|-------------------------|
- Less than once a year (give details)
- (6a) Do you have a required text? Y N
- (6b) If yes, what text is used for the course?
- (6c) Why was this text selected?
- (6d) If you do not use a text, why not?

(7) Will you share: (Y & N choices for each of the following)

- (a) Your syllabus?
- (b) Course materials and/or handouts?
- (c) Assignments
- (d) Answer keys / Model Answers

(8) Is Internet instruction included in the course? Y N

(9) Is instruction in Westlaw included as part of the course? Y N

If Yes, who teaches Westlaw? (Check all that apply)

Company Representatives Student Representatives
Course Instructors Other [* give details]

(10) Is instruction in Lexis included as part of the course? Y N

If Yes, who teaches Lexis? (Check all that apply)

Company Representatives Student Representatives
Course Instructors Other [* give details]

(11) Is instruction in LoisLaw included as part of the course? Y N

If Yes, who teaches LoisLaw? (Check all that apply)

Company Representatives Student Representatives
Course Instructors Other [* give details]

(12) Is instruction in CD-ROM products included as part of the course? Y N

(13) What technology is used in teaching the course? [check all that apply]

Video Tapes Audio Tapes PowerPoint Presentations
TWEN Virtual Classroom Blackboard
Listservs Real-time Chat Other [* give details]

(14) How are students evaluated? [Indicate percent used to compute grade]

Quizzes [% of grade] Pathfinders [% of grade]
Exams [% of grade] Class Participation [% of grade]
Homework [% of grade] Projects * [% of grade]

- Projects Description
- Other Description

Questions 15-21 are for those not currently offering an Advanced Legal Research course. All others, jump to question 22.

(15) Has your school ever offered an Advanced Legal Research course? Y N

[\(If you answered "No" click here to question 17\)](#)

If Yes, when was the course offered?
[Indicate academic period & date, i.e. fall 1998, spring 1999 etc.]

(16) Why was the course discontinued?

Lack of enrollment Lack of Faculty Other [* give details]

(17) Have you ever, or are you now considering offering an Advanced Legal Research course?
 Y N

(18) If Yes, when might such a course be offered?

(19) Who would teach such a course?

(20) How would the course be graded?

(21) How many credits?

(22) What specific information or features would you like to see on the ALL-SIS web site for
Advanced Legal Research instructors?

(23) Other comments?