FOREIGN & INTERNATIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

Roy L. Sturgeon 罗义, J.D., M.L.S., LL.M. (Chinese Law)
Foreign & International Law Librarian,
Library Liaison to the Public Advocacy Center, & Library Faculty
Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center, New York, USA

Visiting Professor (OYCF-Gregory C. & Paula K. Chow Teaching Fellow)
May 12-June 2, 2009 (seven dates), 7-9:25pm, Room 217
Wuhan University Law School, Hubei, PRC

SYLLABUS

Objectives:

Due to post-Cold War globalization, law practice increasingly calls on attorneys—particularly those in perhaps the world’s most important country, China—to possess effective skills in researching foreign and international law. With that in mind, this seminar aims to equip students with the basic knowledge and skills needed to conduct such research in English as well as to expose them to differences in legal systems and cultures. In addition, it should reinforce and enhance critical-thinking skills that they may have gained previously from other law school experiences (e.g., taking a substantive foreign or international law course, working as a research assistant or summer clerk, serving on international moot court or law review). This seminar should be helpful for students seeking jobs in various settings: public and private sectors, litigation and transactional, large and small firms, domestically and abroad.

Grading:

Grades will be based on two research exercises, each worth 30%, and an oral presentation, worth 40%. Traditional letter grades (A-F, +/-) will be given. See below for more details.

Attendance:

Students are required to attend the seminar regularly, which I define as 85% of scheduled classes. I may raise or lower a student’s grade by ⅕ of a grade based on attendance/participation. Because we will meet only seven times, you are allowed just one absence without negatively impacting your grade. If you must miss a class, then please notify me beforehand in person or by e-mail (roylsturgeon@yahoo.com).

Office Hours:

I will be in my office (Room 510) May 15 and 22 (2-4pm) to meet with you privately. Also, I can meet with you privately other days and times by appointment. My office phone is 6875-3756. I am staying on campus at the Foreign Guest House, room 8204, phone 6876-2329. Please feel free to speak with me about class, or anything else, during my visit to Wuhan.
Readings:

A list of 38 readings available freely online appears at the end of this Syllabus. The readings are mostly short, easy-to-read pieces and discuss topics we will cover in class. They will help you complete the two research exercises and prepare for the oral presentation.

Exercises:

Two research exercises will be given out in class: one at the end of class 2 and the other at the end of class 4. The first will be due by the start of class 3 and the second by the start of class 5 or 6 (depending on when you present). Each will be worth 30% of your grade. They will be evaluated based on your research strategy and results, completeness of the information you provide, and being turned in on time. (Regarding strategy and results, I am more interested in your strategy than in whatever results you may achieve. So be sure to describe exactly what you do, how you do it, and why you do it. And be sure to discuss potential weaknesses, if any, of your results.) You should try to do as much of them as possible by yourself first and are free to seek help from others—including me—after you run out of ideas. (In “real life,” legal research is sometimes a collaborative effort.) Your answers may be computer printed or handwritten in black or blue ink. If handwritten, then please write legibly.

Oral Presentation:

Up to 20 students will each give an in-class oral presentation about a foreign or international legal system or culture. This presentation shall not exceed 15 minutes in length and will be worth 40% of your grade. Your choice of topic must be approved by me by May 21.

The presentation should discuss the following:

- Your reason(s) for choosing the topic;
- A brief overview of the topic;
- The basic legal materials (e.g., codes/statutes, case reports);
- Anything odd or especially hard about researching the law; and
- A few good research tools (e.g., books, websites).

Submit a computer printed copy of a 1-2 page outline to me the morning before you give your presentation. This outline should include a list of the sources you consulted when preparing for your presentation. I will give copies to your classmates the evening you present.

The presentation is meant to educate all seminar members about your topic and how to research its law. It will be evaluated based on how well you follow the above instructions and how effective a speaker you are. You should dress in a professional way, as if you are an attorney meeting with clients or speaking in court. If you plan to use any information technology (e.g., PowerPoint, internet) during your presentation, then please let me know at least a few days in advance so I can help arrange things—if necessary—with the information technology department. Everyone is required to attend all presentations.
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<tr>
<th>Class/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 [一]</td>
<td>Seminar introduction, American legal research (start)</td>
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<td>TUESDAY</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
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<td>2 [二]</td>
<td>American legal research (end), other common law jurisdictions</td>
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<td>THURSDAY</td>
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<td>May 14</td>
<td>* Do readings 1-19</td>
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<td>* Research exercise 1 given out</td>
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<td>3 [三]</td>
<td>Civil law, religious, &amp; mixed/hybrid jurisdictions</td>
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<td>TUESDAY</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
<td>* Do readings 20-30</td>
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<td>* Research exercise 1 due</td>
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<td>4 [四]</td>
<td>Treaties, IGOs, NGOs, &amp; international courts/tribunals</td>
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<td>THURSDAY</td>
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<td>May 21</td>
<td>* Do readings 31-38</td>
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<td>** Research exercise 2 given out</td>
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<td>*** Sample oral presentation by me</td>
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<td>**** Last date to get my approval for oral presentation topic</td>
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<td>5 [五]</td>
<td>Oral presentations (maximum 10 students)</td>
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<td>MONDAY</td>
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<td>May 25</td>
<td>* Research exercise 2 due for students presenting May 26</td>
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<td>6 [六]</td>
<td>Oral presentations (maximum 10 students)</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td>* Research exercise 2 due for students presenting May 25</td>
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<td>7 [七]</td>
<td>Seminar conclusion, summer is near ☺</td>
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<td>TUESDAY</td>
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<td>June 2</td>
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**READINGS**

Class 2 (May 14):


* All hyperlinks accessed on May 11, 2009, in Wuhan by Roy L. Sturgeon.

15. GPO Access – http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ [don’t read everything here, just browse quickly]

16. THOMAS (Library of Congress) – http://thomas.loc.gov/ [don’t read everything here, just browse quickly]

17. Legal Information Institute (Cornell) – http://www.law.cornell.edu/ [don’t read everything here, just browse quickly]


Class 3 (May 19):


22. Foreign Law Research (GlobaLex) – http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/index.html# [don’t read everything here, just browse quickly]


24. WorldLII – http://www.worldlii.org/ [don’t read everything here, just browse quickly]

25. Guide to Foreign and International Legal Citations (NYU) – http://www.law.nyu.edu/journals/jilp/guidetoforeignandinternationallegalcitation/index.htm [don’t read everything here, just download and browse quickly]


27. Google Translate – http://translate.google.com/ [try it quickly, see if it works]

28. Yahoo! Babel Fish – http://babelfish.yahoo.com/ [try it quickly, see if it works]


**Class 4 (May 21):**


