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Law Library Newsletters/Blog

Law Library

9-2024

Law Library Blog (September 2024): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

Roger Williams University School of Law

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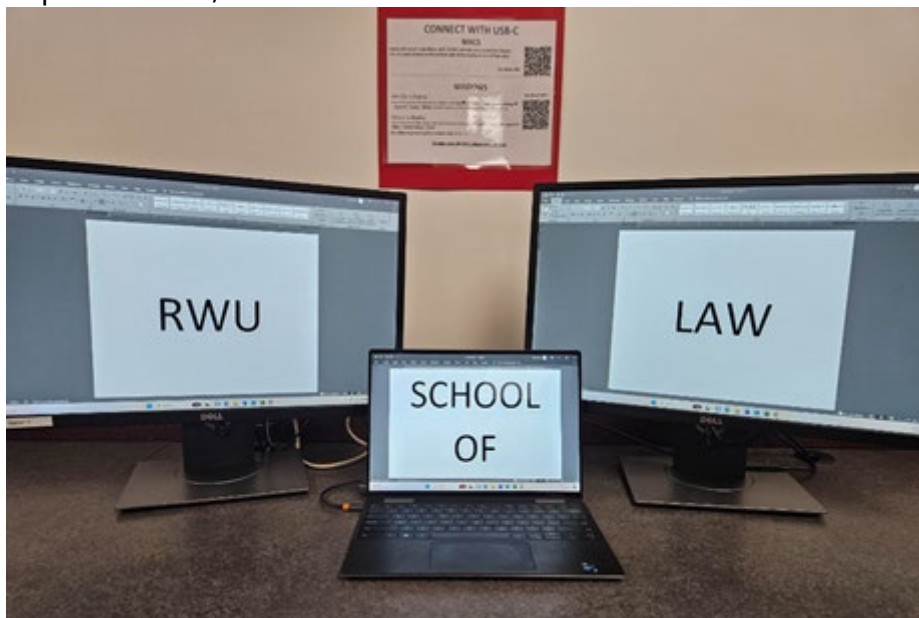
September 2024 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

September 13, 2024

RENOVATE AND INNOVATE!

September 13, 2024



Welcome back! We want to make the library as usable as a space as possible for you. We always try to find new ways to improve our spaces and provide innovative services. Here are some changes this year that you want to know about!

Textbooks and other materials on reserve can now be checked out for 3 hours. You can also check out new rolling whiteboards for 3 hours. Whiteboards may be used anywhere in the law school building.

The university updated HawkPrint this summer. Laptop printing must be sent through the [HawkPrint site](#); laptop drivers are not currently working. You can still print from library desktops. In addition, the new HawkPrint only prints PDF documents, but you can now select page ranges. Since this is a new system, you may experience some quirks, but the Law Library staff members are always happy to help. We may not have a solution because it is new, but we will report the issue to the IT department.

Docking stations are now available in computer classroom 2! If your laptop has a USB-C port

(preferably with a little lightning bolt), you can connect to our docking station to use the extra monitors. Macs can use one external monitor; Windows computers can use two. This setup facilitates work with multiple documents or browser tabs visible at once.

We now offer evening extensions for room reservations after 6pm during the fall and spring semesters, except during the reading period and finals. After 6pm, you may ask employees at the desk for up to three more hours in a study room, even if you were already in one earlier in the day. These extensions are first-come-first-served and cannot be requested before 6pm. You must still present your ID to get the room key. It is also important to note that daytime reservations until 6pm must be made [online](#) and you can only be part of one reservation (whether you or your friend makes it). These limitations during the day are due to the high demand for study rooms.

We are so excited to have you here. Contact us at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu or come to the desk if you have questions or need assistance.

September 26, 2024

DOING A DIRECTED RESEARCH PAPER? THESE TIPS ARE FOR YOU!

September 26, 2024



To graduate from RWU Law, each student must complete the school's [writing requirement](#) “under the direct supervision of a professor or director of an institute” during which

the student “must write an individually authored paper that reflects substantial legal research; presents a legal argument that is well-developed, organized, and supported; is at least 5500 words long; and is of sufficient quality to earn a grade of “C” or higher.” students can meet this requirement by writing a research paper under the direction of a supervisor.

If you decide to do a directed research paper, here are some tips that will hopefully make the process go as smoothly as possible.

Tip 1. Find a supervisor early. This paper is an excellent opportunity to work closely with a faculty member or legal professional with expertise in an area of law that you find interesting. Reach out to potential supervisors early in the process with the subject of your paper and your timeline. Everyone appreciates it when someone is considerate of their time and obligations.

Tip 2. Select a topic that is interesting to you. A directed research paper will represent a large investment of your time. In your future job search, you may need to discuss it during interviews or use it as a writing sample. But just as important, your passion, as an author, is likely to shine through your writing and make your work more engaging to readers.

Tip 3. Your topic should represent a legally significant issue that is arguable—from multiple, defensible perspectives—and is demonstrably relevant or timely. There are various ways to go about finding a suitable topic. Your supervisor or other mentor, with subject matter expertise, can provide you with guidance. You can also search news sources for issues of legal controversy. Likewise, articles in law journals and bar publications can be excellent sources of information on the developments, issues, and trends in various areas of law. Things to look out for may include cases of first impression, where an appellate court reverses a lower court decision, or issues that involve federal circuit court splits. Databases such as Westlaw Precision, Lexis+, and Fastcase give you the capability of searching caselaw for such controversies (this [video](#)—produced by Lexis—will help you get started).

For legal news, try browsing the [Lexis Legal News Hub](#), [Westlaw Today](#), or [Law.com](#) for up-to-date legal news and the cutting-edge issues facing lawyers and legal scholars today. If you want something a bit more off the beaten path, you can peruse Thomson Reuters’s [Legally Weird blog](#), a great source for legal questions presented in emerging and unique areas of the law.

Tips 4. Check out the helpful guides that your super smart law librarians created for you. Selecting a topic and conducting your research is exciting and work intensive. These guides are intended to help you at all stages of the writing process.

[TimeSaver: Selecting a Topic](#) (basic information on selecting a topic)

[TimeSaver: Legal Research & Writing](#) (information on legal research & writing)

[LawGuide for Law Review](#) (information on topic development and preemption)

Tip 5. Know the Policy on Using Generative Artificial Intelligence. It is prohibited (see the [student handbook](#)) unless you are expressly granted permission by your instructor or supervisor in writing. The prohibited conduct includes “using generative artificial intelligence,

text generated by research databases, large language model chatbots, or similar tools to produce, derive, or assist in creating any materials or content for any course or program, at or under the auspices of the law school. Notwithstanding the foregoing, students are permitted to use AI tools to identify documents in research databases or to review student-created materials or content for spelling and grammar.”

Tip 6. Ask for help when you need it. Regardless of where you are in your topic selection and research process, meeting with a research librarian is an invaluable step to help formalize your thesis and research trajectory. The library provides individualized research consultations for students to assist in the development of research strategies based on individual needs. To schedule a research consultation with a law librarian, contact us via [Ask a Librarian](#), or by email at LawLibraryHelp@rwu.edu.

Furthermore, the writing center and [Justin Kishbaugh, PhD](#), the Associate Director of Academic Success & Professor of Writing, can assist you with your writing. If you are interested in scheduling a writing consultation with Dr. Kishbaugh, he can be reached at jkishbaugh@rwu.edu. Happy writing!