Legal Research Guide

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Legal Research Guide

Compiled by

Mary Wilson, Librarian

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Kennesaw State University

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770-423-6325
GUIDES TO LEGAL RESEARCH

In addition to the following general guides see the sources that give an overview
of the legislative, judicial and administrative legal process.

- *An Internet Hotlist of Law Guides Organized by Subject* (Richert) Contains links to legal research guides and pathfinders created by American law libraries at [http://lawscout.uakron.edu/](http://lawscout.uakron.edu/)
- *Legal Analysis & Research Strategy* (Harvard Law School Library) Provides a step-by-step framework for legal research and defines basic questions as well as basic types of sources.
INTERNET GUIDES

- AllLaw.com
- American Law Sources Online (ALSO) (LawSource) - Compilation of links to freely accessible on-line sources of law for the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- CataLaw
- FindLaw – Includes LawCrawler, a search engine for law-related information on the Web.
- Hieros Gamos
- Internet Legal Resource Guide
- The Law Engine
- LawGuru.com – Includes “Multiple Resource Legal Research” which allows one to search multiple legal resources from one interface
- Legal Engine
- Legal Information Institute (Cornell Law School)
- Legal Web Site Directory (LexisNexis)
- MegaLaw: Lawyer's Window to the Web
- WashLaw: Your Guide to Legal Information on the Web (Washburn University School of Law)
- WWW Virtual Law Library (Indiana University School of Law)
- Yahoo's Subject Index – Law

LEGAL CITATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Introduction to Basic Legal Citation (Martin—Cornell Law School) Style manual for legal citation that follows The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation at http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/


**ENCYCLOPEDIAS, DICTIONARIES, etc.**

- *Corpus Juris Secundum* (Thomson West Group) with pocket supplements. In REF Stacks *(KF105 .C675)*.
- *Everybody's Legal Glossary* (Nolo) [http://www.nolo.com/glossary.cfm](http://www.nolo.com/glossary.cfm)

**DIRECTORIES**


**INDEXES**

- *List of Law Journals* (Washburn University School of Law) [http://www.washlaw.edu/lawjournal/](http://www.washlaw.edu/lawjournal/)
- *LexisNexis Academic* (LexisNexis). LexisNexis® Academic service is tailored to meet the needs of researchers and students. This service is designed to meet the needs of a specific group, and provides access to specially selected sources that may include CIS's flagship index and abstract access tools, online access to the full text of related government and non-government sources or access to comprehensive news, business, and legal information available on LexisNexis.
- *PAIS International* (CSA Illumina) The PAIS International database from CSA contains references to more than 553,300 journal articles, books, government documents, statistical directories, grey literature, research reports, conference reports, publications of international agencies, microfiche, Internet material, and more. Newspapers and newsletters are not indexed.
PAIS International includes publications from over 120 countries throughout the world. In addition to English, some of the indexed materials are published in French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. In REF Stacks (Z7163 .P672).

FIND FEDERAL CASES

Federal Cases – U.S. Supreme Court

From the LexisNexis source page, use Federal cases choice link to reach U.S. Supreme Court Lawyers' Edition cases,

On the Web, some good sites are:

  Cornell’s Legal Information Institute at http://www.law.cornell.edu/
  Findlaw at http://www.findlaw.com/
  Supreme Court of the United States at http://www.supremecourtus.gov/

In the Sturgis Library, the U.S. Supreme Court decisions are available in the Reference Section on the 1st floor as follows:

  Supreme Court Reporter. (S.Ct.). In REF Stacks (KF101.1 .S8).

Federal Cases – U.S. Court of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts

From the LexisNexis source page, use Federal cases choice link to reach Court of Appeals, District Court, and Bankruptcy court cases.

On the Web, some good sites are:

  Cornell’s Legal Information Institute at http://www.law.cornell.edu/
  Findlaw at http://www.findlaw.com/
In the Sturgis Library, the Federal Court decisions are available online on LexisNexis.

*Federal Reporter. F1st, F2d, F3d.*
Decisions of most cases from the United States Courts of Appeals. Available online on LexisNexis.

*Federal Supplement. FSupp., FSupp 2d.*
Decisions from extremely selective cases of the federal District Courts. Available online on LexisNexis.

**FIND STATE CASES**

State Appellate Cases

On LexisNexis, select the state jurisdiction from the source page and choose Court.

On the Web, select the state on Findlaw or go to the state’s official home page ([http://www.state.GA.us](http://www.state.GA.us)) and look for the judicial pages.


Cases for all 50 states are compiled in the regional reporters (e.g., Atlantic, Northeastern, Northwestern, Pacific, South Eastern, South Western, Southern, etc.). The Sturgis Library has the *South Eastern Reporter. Second Series. SE2d.* In REF Stacks (KF135 .S6 S612).

State Trial Court Cases

The cases from the lowest level of trial courts are not generally reported, although some states do selectively report them.
FIND FEDERAL STATUTES

United States Code, Statutes at Large, and Public Laws

Codes


  http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/uscode.html


Constitutions


- *The U.S. Constitution With the Declaration of Independence* (S. Doc. 105-11) [Text](#) | [PDF](#)

* The U.S. Constitution as Amended, with Unratified Amendments & Analytical Index June 20, 2003 (H. Doc. 108-95) [Text](#) | [PDF](#)
Jan. 31, 2000 (H. Doc. 106-214) [Text](#) | [PDF](#)

* Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence, Pocket Edition

**Statutes - Statutes at Large**

The *United States Statutes at Large*, commonly referred to as the *Statutes at Large*, is the official source for the laws and resolutions passed by Congress.


**FIND STATE STATUTES**

**Code**

Laws for Georgia are located in the Sturgis Library in Reference Stacks (1st floor) and on the 2nd floor, as well as online on LexisNexis. Look for a subject index at the end of the set that refers to section numbers in the multivolume code or subject arrangement of current state laws. Updates, additions, and repealed statutes are generally found in a “pocket part” supplement found in the back cover of the volume.

On the Web, select the state on Findlaw or from Cornell’s Legal Information Institute. Or go to the state’s official home page (http://www.state.GA.us) and look for the legislature’s page.

Municipal codes

The Codes of Ordinances for local governments includes original codification, and updating for more than 1,500 local governments. The Codes of Ordinances are found online at  http://www.municode.com/index.asp

**FIND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW**

Administrative Law

The third source of primary law is Administrative Law.

Regulations

The *Federal Register* (FR) and the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) are located in the Sturgis Library in the Government Documents on the 3rd floor, and they are also available online on LexisNexis, GPO Access (federal only), and Findlaw, among other online sources.

*Federal Register* (FR) is available in the Sturgis Library on the 3rd floor in GovDocPrtnt at  AE 2.106:

And online at the following Web site address:  
http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html

*Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) is available in the Sturgis Library on the 3rd floor in  GovDocPrtnt at  AE 2.106/3:

And the CFR is online at the following Web site address:  

*List of CFR Sections Affected* (LSA) is available online at the following Web site address:  
http://www.gpoaccess.gov/lsa/about.html
State Regulations

Georgia Regulations are found online at http://www.sos.state.ga.us/rules_regs.htm

SHEPARD’S

Shepard’s Citations is a complete citation system showing citations by federal and state courts. Shepard’s U.S. Supreme Court Cases on LexisNexis® Academic is available online in the Sturgis Library

SHEPARDIZING

Shepardizing is a technique developed by Shepard’s (LexisNexis) where the validity of case law can be checked by looking at the treatment of the case in subsequent decisions.

SHEPARDIZING ONLINE USING LexisNexis

Use Shepard's for the following legal research tasks:

- Ensuring that a case has not been overturned, criticized, or distinguished by subsequent court decisions.
- Finding additional cases that stand for the same legal principle, or address similar legal issues. Shepard’s helps you add relevant cases to your legal bibliography.
- Verifying that a legal citation is formatted properly.

Use Shepard's on LexisNexis® Academic for:

- Shepardizing U.S. Supreme Court Cases

PRIMARY RESOURCES

Primary law is mandatory authority. The legal system consists of three parallel systems – federal law, state law, and administrative law – operating under the authority of the United States Constitution and state constitutions. The primary law of each system is:
* Statute: A law or legislative enactment that has been codified and made a rule of law.
* Cases: Court decisions, at both trial and appellate levels.
* Regulations: Rules promulgated by government.

SECONDARY RESOURCES

Secondary resources are materials that explain, analyze, critique or help find the primary sources of the law. These resources include some of the following:

- Legal dictionaries and legal thesauri
  - *Everybody’s Legal Dictionary* (Nolo) contains plain English definitions for more than one thousand legal terms.
  - *FindLaw Legal Dictionary* (FindLaw).

- Legal encyclopedias


- American Law Reports (ALR)

  The Sturgis Library has the following series:


- Restatements of the Law


- Treatises

Treatises are books that provide an in-depth overview of a particular legal subject. The Sturgis Library has several treatises and hornbooks. These titles include some of the following subject areas:

Administrative Law
Antitrust & Trade Regulation
Banks & Banking
Civil Procedure
Constitutional Law
Consumer Credit
Copyright
Creditor's Rights
Criminal Procedure
Domestic Relations
Environmental Law
Estate & Gift Taxation
Evidence
History, Legal
Income Tax
Intellectual Property
Labor Law
Military Law
Negotiable Instruments
Patents and Trademarks
Agency
Bankruptcy
Business Law
Conflict of Laws
Corporation Law
Contracts
Corporations
Criminal Law
Damages
Education
Equity
Estate Planning
Family Law
Immigration
Insurance
Jurisprudence
Legal Research/Writing
Negligence
Partnership
Products Liability
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Property (Real and Personal)</th>
<th>Remedies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Secured Transactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securities Regulation</td>
<td>Supreme Court, U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>Torts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Regulation</td>
<td>Trial Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusts &amp; Trustees</td>
<td>Wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workmen's Compensation</td>
<td>Zoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIND BOOKS & DOCUMENTS IN THE ONLINE CATALOG**

**ONLINE CATALOG**

GIL is the online catalog for the Horace W. Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University. It contains the majority of the Library's collection, including all classified treatises, periodicals, Reserve and Reference materials, state codes, and reporters. GIL access is available on computer workstations located in the Reference section on the first floor and on the second and third floors of the Library.

**GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS**

The Library is a depository for United States Government Documents. The documents collection in print is located on the 3rd floor and in microform on the 1st floor. Document titles are included in the online catalog.

**LEGAL JOURNALS – CURRENT, PRINT, MICROFILM, AND ONLINE SUBSCRIPTIONS IN THE HORACE W. STURGIS LIBRARY**


*Affirmative Action Register (AARJEEO)*. Current year only. Current Periodicals.


*American Criminal Law Review*. Sum 1988 to Fall 1999 only


*Berkeley Journal of International Law*. Available online on EBSCO; 2000 to date.


*Berkeley la Raza Law Journal*. Available online on EBSCO: 2000 to date.
Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review. Available online on EBSCO: 1990 to date.

Brigham Young University Law Review. Available online on EBSCO: 1990 to date.

California Law Review. Available online on EBSCO: 1912 to date.


Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law. Available online on EBSCO: 1990 to date.

Case Western Reserve Law Review. Available online on EBSCO: 1990 to date.

Chinese Journal of International Law. Available online on EBSCO: 2002 to date.

Chinese Law & Government. Available online on EBSCO: 2001 to date.

Columbia Journal of Asian Law. Available online on EBSCO: 2002 to date.


Common Law World Review. Available online on EBSCO: 2003 to date.


European Journal of Law & Economics. Available online on EBSCO: 1999 to date.


European Public Law. Available online on EBSCO: 2003 to date.


Family Law. Available online on EBSCO: 2003 to date.

First Amendment. Available online on EBSCO: 2003 to date.


Journal of International Economic Law. Available online on ProQuest: 1999 to date (delayed 1 year).


Journal of Law Economics & Organization. Available online on ProQuest: 1999 to date (delayed 1 year)


Legal Resources on the Internet

Internet Legal Resources is a list of sites that provide legal information and materials (including laws, bills, court opinions, and related documents) and/or links to legal material. Only the most important Georgia State and U.S. sites have been selected. Some sites are official, some are not. Includes links to legal meta-indexes and general search engines. A few of these resources are as follows:

General

- [www.gpoaccess.gov/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/), from the Government Printing Office. A collection of major sources, full text, including the budget; Code of Federal Regulations and Federal Register; Commerce Business Daily; congressional bills, calendars, directories, hearings, prints, reports, the Congressional Record, and other materials; Economic Indicators and President’s Economic Report; General Accounting Office reports; selected administrative agency decisions; Supreme Court opinions; and U.S. Code and session laws.
• Find Law, find information on any legal subject. [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)
• [FirstGov](http://www.firstgov.gov/): a portal to U.S. government information.
• [Federal Government Resources on the Web](http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/federal.html) from University of Michigan Documents Center.
• Law.com, first in legal news and information. [www.law.com](http://www.law.com)

Courts

• [Federal Court Locator](http://www.law.vill.edu/library/researchandstudyguides/federalcourtlocator.asp): from Villanova University: links to sites that contain recent opinions from the federal courts.
• [Federal Courts Finder](http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDCTS/) from Emory Law Library.
• [U.S. Courts](http://www.uscourts.gov/allinks/html) from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts: a directory of federal courts and pretrial services and probation offices.

Executive Branch and General U.S. Government

• [Federal Agencies Directory](http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov.html) from Louisiana State University librarians.
• [Federal Web Locator](http://www.infoctr.edu/fwl/) from the Chicago-Kent College of Law.
• [Federal Government Agencies Database](http://www.lib.duke.edu/texis/uslinks) and government agency [Acronyms Index](http://www.lib.duke.edu/texis/uslinks/uslinks/acronyms.html) from Duke University librarians.

Legislative Branch:

**U.S. Congress – The House of Representatives**
U.S. Congress – The Senate

http://www.senate.gov

State Courts

http://thomas.loc.gov/home/state.htm

State of Georgia Government – Executive, Judicial & Legislative

http://www.georgia.gov/00/channel_title/0,2094,4802_5021,00.html

*More sites to be added as they are reviewed

For further assistance, visit the Reference Desk in the Horace W. Sturgis Library or call the Reference Librarians at (770) 423-6325.