

Curricular Component: (X) Course Exclusive () Common Axis () Universal Axis		
Course: Law		Thematic Nucleus: Technical-Juridical
Name of the Curricular Component: Methodology of Legal Research		Code of the Curricular Component:
Workload: 2 hour-class	(X) Classroom () Laboratory () Distance Learning	Stage: 2th stage
<p>Summary:</p> <p>This course introduces students to the fundamental concepts, techniques, and ethical principles of legal research. The primary objective is to equip students with the skills necessary to develop qualified and rigorous academic research in law, with special emphasis on the use of primary sources and empirical research methods.</p> <p>Throughout the course, students will learn how to identify research problems, construct research questions, build theoretical frameworks, and select appropriate methodologies. The course also covers essential tools for legal research, including doctrinal analysis, archival research, case-law examination, and basic empirical techniques used in contemporary legal studies.</p> <p>All activities and discussions will be structured around the preparation and development of an individual research project. By the end of the semester, each student is expected to present a coherent, well-designed research proposal that demonstrates methodological consistency and academic relevance.</p> <p>The course aims to foster analytical thinking, academic rigor, and autonomy in the research process, preparing students to engage with legal scholarship at an advanced level and to contribute meaningfully to the production of legal knowledge.</p>		
<p>Goals:</p> <p><u>Conceptual Goals</u></p> <p>By the end of the course, students will be able to understand how legal research is structured from a theoretical and methodological perspective. They will be familiar with the key concepts of academic legal research, including research problems, hypotheses, research questions, theoretical frameworks, methodological choices, and ethical considerations in law. The course will introduce students to different approaches to legal inquiry, including doctrinal, historical, comparative, and empirical research methods.</p> <p><u>Procedural Goals and Skills</u></p> <p>Students will develop core research skills necessary for producing qualified legal scholarship. These include the ability to design a research project, write a clear and coherent research proposal, critically evaluate existing literature, and assess the adequacy of research strategies. By the end of the course, students will be able to formulate research questions, structure legal arguments, justify methodological choices, and outline the steps of a complete legal research plan.</p> <p><u>Attitudinal Goals and Values</u></p> <p>The course encourages the development of intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and academic rigor. Students will be guided to approach legal research with ethical responsibility, methodological transparency, and interdisciplinary openness. They will also be encouraged to reflect on the social impact of legal scholarship and the importance of contributing to the advancement of knowledge with responsibility and integrity.</p>		

Methodology

The course adopts an active, student-centered approach to teaching and learning. Grounded in the understanding that research methodology is best acquired through practice, the course is designed to develop research skills through experiential learning. Students are treated as active participants in the learning process, not passive recipients of knowledge.

Interactive classes will combine short lectures with hands-on workshops, guided exercises, peer review activities, and group discussions. A strong emphasis is placed on learning by doing students will be required to construct, critique, and revise their own research projects throughout the semester. Activities such as the development of research questions, the construction of theoretical frameworks, the selection of research strategies, and the simulation of ethical review processes will form part of regular classroom tasks.

Collaborative learning will be encouraged through group work, case study analysis, and structured debates. Students will be asked to present preliminary research proposals and offer feedback on the work of their peers, fostering a classroom environment of mutual support and collective learning.

By integrating problem-based learning, peer feedback, and practical workshops, the course aims to equip students not only with theoretical knowledge, but with the ability to apply that knowledge in the design, critique, and execution of high-quality legal research.

Teaching and Learning Approach

The course adopts an active, student-centered pedagogy, emphasizing that legal research methodology is a skill best learned through practice. Students are seen as active agents in their learning journey, responsible for constructing knowledge through critical engagement and application.

Classes will integrate:

Interactive lectures (brief theoretical overviews)

Workshops focused on hands-on research tasks

Peer review sessions for feedback and refinement

Group discussions and collaborative projects

Problem-based learning centered around real legal research questions

Throughout the course, students will work progressively on the design of an original legal research project, applying key methodological steps such as problem formulation, literature review, definition of objectives, research design, and ethical considerations. This project will be revised in stages based on feedback from both peers and instructors.

Evaluation Criteria

We strongly encourage that all exams be answered in English. However, there will be no reduction in the grades if answers are in Portuguese.

Assessment will be continuous, formative, and summative, aiming to monitor and support student progress. Key components include:

Weekly Assignments and Exercises (40%)

Engagement in class discussions, quality of feedback, peers, and participation in activities.

Midterm Project Proposal Presentation (20%)

Oral presentation of a preliminary research design, including topic, research problem, objectives, and methodology.

Final Written Research Proposal (40%)

Submission of a structured research proposal demonstrating the integration of all methodological components.

Substitute Assessment:

This assessment will only be conducted for students who were absent during one of the evaluation events thereby replacing the missing grade.

The Substitute Assessment will take place **according to the University calendar**, during the regular class schedule.

Final Assessment:

The Final Assessment must be taken by students who do not achieve a Semester Average of 6 or higher. In this case, the result of the Final Assessment will be added to the Semester Average.

The Final Assessment will take place **according to the University calendar**, during the regular class schedule.

Format of Substitute and Final Assessments:

Both the Substitute Assessment and the Final Assessment will be conducted in writing, in person, and will cover the entire syllabus of the course.

Final Approval:

A student will be considered approved if they achieve a Final Average (calculated as the arithmetic mean of the Semester Average and the Final Assessment) of 6 or higher.

Basic bibliography

DUVE, Thomas; HERZOG, Tamar (ed.). **The Cambridge history of Latin American law in global perspective**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024.

YIN, Robert K. **Case study research and applications: design and methods**. 6. ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2017.

SIQUEIRA, Gustavo Silveira. **The little book of legal research methodology: or research guide for law students**. London: Independently Published, 2024.

Additional Bibliography:

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY RESEARCH SERVICES. **Legal research strategy: a step-by-step guide to legal research for beginners**. [S.l.]: Harvard Law School, [202-?]. Disponível em: <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/law/researchstrategy>. Acesso em: 30 out. 2025

LANGBROEK, Philip; VAN DEN BOS, Kees; THOMAS, Marc Simon; MILO, Michael; VAN ROSSUM, Wibo. Methodology of legal research: challenges and opportunities. **Utrecht Law Review**, Utrecht, v. 13, n. 3, p. 1-11, 2017. Disponível em: <https://utrechtlawreview.org/articles/411/files/submission/proof/411-1-1108-3-10-20180122.pdf>. Acesso em: 29 out. 2025. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18352/ulr.411>.

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. **Journal of Legal Research Methodology**. [S.l.]: Northumbria University Library, [s.d.]. ISSN 2752-3403. Disponível em:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/university-library/journals/journal-of-legal-research-methodology/>.
Acesso em: 10 out. 2025.

SIMON, Perrine; DONKEODAVONG, Latdavanh; XAYYAVONG, Pangthong; CHANTAVONG, Sypha; SISOUK, Boulaphiane. Guidelines on academic legal research methodology. Vientiane: Faculty of Law and Political Science, National University of Laos, out. 2022. Disponível em: https://cooperationlaos.uni.lu/wp-content/uploads/sites/170/2022/12/Guidelines-on-Legal-Research-29.09.2022-1_compressed.pdf. Acesso em: 13 out. 2025.