INTRODUCTION
Introduction to the Law provides an examination of the American legal system, court procedures, appeals procedures, and the use of legal reference materials with selected cases. Most related print sources (such as books, periodicals) are located on 4th floor & 10th floor in Houston Cole Library (HCL), electronic sources (such as databases) can be accessed via computer stations on each floor.

PRINT SOURCES
Books and print journals are the main pint sources in the HCL providing a foundation for research. Books and journal articles may also contain useful bibliographies which may lead to additional sources of research. When looking for print materials, consult the Library of Congress Subject Headings to select the proper term(s) to use as subjects under “Library Catalog”. Some possible subject headings can be: Law—United States, Law—United States—Cases, Law—United States—History, Law—United States—Periodicals, Constitutional law—United States, Judicial process, Legislation, and etc. “Keyword Anywhere” & “Title” searches can also be conducted under the “Library Catalog” (http://library.jsu.edu/). The following table shows law in the Library of Congress System:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>General; Comparative and uniform law; Jurisprudence</th>
<th>KD</th>
<th>United Kingdom and Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KDZ</td>
<td>America, North America</td>
<td>KE</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 560-720</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>KF 801-1241</td>
<td>Family law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 1246-1327</td>
<td>Torts</td>
<td>KF 1384-1480</td>
<td>Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 1501-1548</td>
<td>Bankruptcy</td>
<td>KF 1601-1666</td>
<td>Trade regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 1971-3192</td>
<td>Intellectual property</td>
<td>KF 3301-3580</td>
<td>Labor law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 4501-5130</td>
<td>Constitutional Law</td>
<td>KF 8700-9075</td>
<td>Courts; Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF 9201-9760</td>
<td>Criminal law and procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JSU students can also use ALLIES (Alabama Libraries Exchange Services, http://library.jsu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?PAGE=dbPage) to borrow circulating books from UAB Sterne Library, University of Alabama, Auburn University, Auburn University at Montgomery, either on-site with the student ID or by requesting the items through the library catalog.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES
Electronic Databases are the main electronic sources in the HCL providing indexes, full textbooks (via netLibrary), articles, statutes, and legal cases, etc. To access the HCL subscribed databases off-campus, your student ID and your Last name are required for log-in at: http://www.jsu.edu/library/resources/. The following table lists some commonly used databases for your research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Full Text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Search Elite</td>
<td>Journal articles in all subject areas.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Academic ASAP</td>
<td>Scholarly journals, news magazines, and newspapers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GPO Access
U.S. Congressional and government publications. Yes

### LegalTrac
Articles in all major law reviews, law journals, specialty law and bar association journals and legal newspapers. Yes

### Omini File
Full text articles, page images, article abstracts, and citations from over 4,000 journals. Yes

### ProQuest Databases
U.S. and international news sources. Yes

### Westlaw Campus Research
Federal and state statutes, administrative codes, cases, encyclopedias, law reviews. Yes

Some Core Electronic Journals are:
- *Denver University Law Review* (Call Number: K4.E5)
- *ABA Journal* (Call Number: K1.M385)
- *Alabama Law Review* (Call Number: K1.A47)
- *The Alabama Lawyer* (Call Number: K1.L2)
- *Duke Law Journal* (Call Number: K4.U5)
- *Yale Law Journal* (Call Number: k29.Y25)

### CASES
Cases are published in volumes called "case reports", "report(s)" or "reporter(s)". Every reported (published) case has a unique citation. As long as you have the citation, you can find any case published in a standard case reporter. A case citation usually contains the case name, the name of the reporter(s) where the case is published, the volume number(s) of the reporter(s), the page number, and the year the case was decided. The following is an example of a case citation:

**Miranda v. Arizona**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case name</th>
<th>Vol. No.</th>
<th>Abbreviated name of reporter</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
<th>Year of the decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miranda</strong></td>
<td>384</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>(1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arizona</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ways to Locate the Citation:

1. **Citations in the encyclopedias**
   Encyclopedias are a good place to start to get case information on a specific topic. Includes general legal encyclopedias:
   - *Guide to American Law* (Call Number: REF/KF156. G77)
   - *Corpus Juris Secundum* (abbreviated C.J.S.) (Call Number: REF/KF105.C6 1936)
   - *West's Encyclopedia of American Law* (Call Number: REF/KF154,W47)
   The citations of the cases are given under the relevant entry (most of them in footnote form). These encyclopedias are compiled in an alphabetical order; you may start searching with the index and remember to try terms under different synonyms.

2. **Case notes that follow statutes**
   If you are searching a case that has interpreted a relevant statute, summaries which contain a case citation are given at the end of the entry of the state's code (*Code of Alabama 1975*; Call Number: REF KFA 30 1975) or the United States Code annotated version (*United State Annotated*: Call Number: REF KF62 1927 W65).

3. **Case Digest**
Digest is a publication reprinting in a subject arrangement. The summaries are grouped under alphabetically arranged topics and the topic-related case(s) and the citations are given. Several digests are available in our library:

- **West's Federal Practice Digest**, 2d, 3d, & 4th editions (REF KF 127.W48)
- **Southern Digest** (REF.KF 135.S81S64)
- **West's Alabama Digest**, 2d edition (REF KFA47.1A2)
- **Campus Research Database** (http://www.jsu.edu/depart/library/graphic/articles.htm)

4. **Shepard's Case Citators**

Shepard's case citators are often used by researchers to study and verify the current authority of decisions relevant to their research. Citations to the case may look like this:

-473- ---------------------------  Page Number

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In re Pierce v. Alabama-----------------  Case Name

-----

1974-----------------------------------  Year of the decision

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(296So2d218)------------------------  Parallel Citation

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419US1130
42LE830-----------------------------  History references and citations

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95SC816
292Ala467
293Ala776
294Ala664
294Ala671---------------------------  Other treatment citations by the Alabama

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Cir. 10
649FS1018--------------------------  Other treatment citations by the federal courts

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36Law55
64VaL408---------------------------  Citations in legal periodicals

**Case Sources**

You can find cases in print or in electronic format in our library; you can also find cases through the Library subscribed database (Campus Research), or Internet. Details of the print/electric sources and the URLs of the case finding web sites are given below.

1) **United States Reports** (U.S.)


2) **United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyer's Edition** (L.Ed.)

Commercial Supreme Court reports. Covers all Supreme Court decisions since the court's inception in 1790. Print Access: Vol. 1- Vol. 67 (Call Number: REF KF101.U52, Location: 10th Floor, Reference
Section)
Electronic Access: Campus Research database; Internet Access: Findlaw.com
3) United States Supreme Court Reporter (S.Ct.)
Commercial Supreme Court reports. Covers Supreme Court cases since 1882.
Print Access: Vol.52-Vol.110A (Call Number: REF KF 101.S9, Location: 10th Floor, Reference Section)
Electronic Access: Campus Research database; Internet Access: Findlaw.com
4) Federal Supplement (F. Supp.)
U.S. District Court cases and decisions. Includes decisions of the U.S. Court of International Trades cases.
Print Access: Vol. 176-Vol.949 (Call Number: REF KF 120. F4, Location: 10th Floor, Reference Section)
Electronic Access: Campus Research database
5) Federal Reporter Second Series/Third Series (F.2d/F3d)
Lower federal cases and decisions of the U.S. Courts of Appeals from 1880. More emphasis on the U.S. temporary emergency at present. Compiled chronologically under each circuit court.
6) Alabama Reporter (Ala.)
Report cases argued and determined in the Supreme Court of Alabama. Compiled chronologically.
Print Access: Vol. 97-Vol. 687 (Call Number: REF KFA 45.A22, Location: 10th Floor, Reference Section)
Electronic Access: Campus Research database
7) Alabama Appellate Court Reports (Ala. App.)
Report cases argued and determined in the court of appeals of Alabama. Compiled chronologically.
Print Access: Vol. 16-Vol. 57(Call Number: REF KFA 47. A2, Location: 10th Floor, Reference Section)
Electronic Access: Campus Research database

THE OPINION OF A COURT
When a judge hears a case and arrives at a judgment, an explanation or analysis of the reasoning behind the decision is frequently written. The analysis, called an opinion, is then published in the “Reporter” for the court. Significant decisions are published also in other Reporters.

When several judges are sitting on the court that hears the case, the decision of the court can be unanimous, split, or determined by a simple majority. A judge is assigned to write the opinion if the court, but any participating judge may write a separate opinion of his own. He may agree with the majority on the most points but disagree on others, elaborating on points of agreement and disagreement. He may agree with the majority decisions for reasons other than those given in the majority opinion. He may disagree with the court’s decision and write a dissenting opinion of his own, or he may disagree without writing an opinion. Dissent in the courts appears to have increased over the years. Frequently, the reader will have to glean the relevant facts, issues, and holding from the body of the opinion. To facilitate this, Reporters generally print a brief summary of the case, called “Headnotes”, prior to the actual text of the court’s opinion. These headnotes are not authoritative, but merely reader aids.
A case opinion appearing in a Reporter will usually contain the following general categories of information: title, facts, issue, decision, decree.

- **Title**: Usually the title includes name of litigants. The full citation contains the volume and the page of the volume in a book of law or a Reporter. If there was an appeal, the preface to the case will usually report the court from which the appeal came and the dates the case was argued and decided. The attorneys who argued the case, and others who assisted in preparing the briefs are noted. The justice delivering the opinion is also reported.

- **Facts**: Facts include the circumstances, events, or occurrences as they actually took place and can also be physical objects as they actually exist or existed. A fact is an actual and absolute reality as distinguished from fiction or error. It is an event. The parties may have disputed the facts, as well as the law, so the “facts” given in the opinion are the facts as determined in a hearing or trial. If the facts are not in disputes, the court will usually say so.

- **Issue**: An issue is the disputed point or question of law to which the parties in an action have narrowed their claims or allegations, and upon which they are desirous of obtaining the decision of the proper tribunal. When the plaintiff and defendant have arrived at some specific point or matter affirmed on the one side and denied on the other, they are said to be “at issue”.

- **Decision**: The court makes a judgment or decree in settlement of a controversy submitted to it; it is an authoritative answer to the questions raised before it. A decision of the court is its judgment; an opinion is the reason given for that judgment.

- **Decree**: A decree is the resolution for the actual litigants which is pronounced on hearing and understanding all the points in an issue, and determining the right of all the parties to the suit, according to equity and good conscience. Decrees in equity are either final or interlocutory: a final decree fully and finally disposes of the whole litigation leaving nothing that requires further judicial action; an interlocutory decree is provisional or preliminary decree which is not final and does not determined the suit but directs some further procedures preparatory to the final result. The interlocutory decree is pronounced by the court for the purpose of ascertaining matter of law of fact preparatory to a final decree.