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**COURSE TITLE: LEGAL METHOD II**

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**SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW**

Secondary sources of law are background resources. They explain, interpret and analyze. They include encyclopedias, law, reviews, treaties, restatements. Secondary sources are a good way to start research and often have citations to primary sources. Secondary source are legal research, textbooks, legal encyclopedias and periodical articles which provide restatements of law, often with associated commentary. Secondary sources are contrasted with the primary sources of the law (cases and legislation)

Secondary sources of law are derived from primary sources of law and offer commentary on those sources Secondary sources offer analysis, commentary, or a restatement of primary law. Secondary sources may influence a legal decision but do not have the controlling or binding authority of primary sources.

Secondary law consists of sources that explain, criticize, discuss, or help locate primary law. Secondary sources are materials that discuss, explain, analyze and critique the law. They discuss the law, but are not the law itself. Secondary sources, such as **Law journals, Law Encyclopedias and Treaties.**

**Law Journals (or Reviews or Periodicals) -** Law journals are scholarly publications covering the legal field. They publish articles that are comprehensive studies of current topics in law, generally written by law professionals and practitioners. The articles generally contain substantial citations to primary and secondary sources on the topic, which may lead you to additional information on the subject.

Paper Versions: In **NYU** Law library, all law reviews, journals and other periodicals (‘’Journals”) are shelved by call number, not alphabetically. To get the call number and location, search the JULIUS catalog by the journal title, for e.g. ‘’Yale Law Journal,’’ not by the title of the article.

Electronic Journals: Electronic version of journals may be reached through JULIUS using ‘’Find journals & Articles.’’ For a complete alphabetical list of electronic journals available, leave the box next to ‘’Journal title” blank and click on submit.

Indexes: Indexes give access to multidisciplinary sources.

Legal periodicals are very helpful in locating cases and statues in a particular subject area. Periodicals are also an excellent method of locating current information. Subjects that are new or too specialized to be covered in books can often be found in periodicals. Articles in periodicals describe, analyze and comment on the current state of the law. There are numerous types of legal practitioners available, including law school journals and law reviews, bar association journals, legal newspapers and legal newspapers and legal newsletters.

[Virginia Law review, Seattle university law review, Yale Law Journal]

**Law Encyclopedias (or Dictionaries)** - a Legal Encyclopedia is a comprehensive set of brief articles on legal topics. It is arranged in alphabetical order with an index generally included in the final volume. Legal encyclopedias are a great place to start your research on a new topic since they offer a general introduction to a legal topic and often include citations to cases and additional materials.

Legal Encyclopedias offer broad and general commentary on a full range of federal and state law. Most of the articles in encyclopedias focus on case law and do not contain extensive citations to statues or other secondary sources.

Legal encyclopedia are multi volume sets that provide information on many topics of law. The topics are arranged alphabetically. The Legal encyclopedia is very similar to a traditional encyclopedia, but focused on legal topics. Encyclopedias are a great place to begin research in an unfamiliar area of law, because the citations following the encyclopedia entry will direct you to the seminal law on the subject.

The Legal dictionaries provide definitions of words in their legal sense or use. These publications provide a short definition of foreign and Latin legal words and phrases, refer to cases and other legal sources for authority.

**Legal Treaties (Horn books and Nutshells) -** This provides a scholarly and in-depth treatment of a legal subject. They often clarify significant concepts in the area of the law covered by the treatise and provide citations to pertinent cases and other primary materials. The law Library maintains treatises covering a wide variety of subjects in both print and electronic formats which can be located through a search JULIUS.

Legal Treaties are publications that present a highly-organized and detailed explanation of a specific area of law (for example, contract, tort, criminal, or property law). Treaties are published as single- volume or multivolume sets. Most treaties are updated by the use of supplements or pocket parts.

Horn books are a type of treatise that provide basics of a given legal topic. They are usually one-volume publications related to subjects covered in law school courses.