



Garden State CLE
 21 Winthrop Road • Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648
 (609) 895-0046 fax- 609-895-1899
Atty2starz@aol.com

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GARDEN STATE CLE LESSON PLAN

A 1.0 credit course

**FREE DOWNLOAD
LESSON PLAN AND EVALUATION**

ONLINE LEGAL RESEARCH

With

**Robert Ramsey, Esq.
Garden State CLE Senior Instructor**

Program description

The days of hitting the books in the Law Library for legal research are long gone. Modern research techniques are better, faster, more accurate and you don't have to leave your own bedroom! Find out all about it in this 1.0 CLE adventure into the world of legal cyber-space!

I. How to Access the Rules of Court

- www.muni-mail.com – website
- Left-hand column – “New Jersey Law Links”
- Select “Judiciary”
- You will then be brought to the Judiciary website, “New Jersey Courts” – www.judiciary.state.nj.us
- Since the Judiciary is running this website, there are often amendments to the Rules on the website within 48 hours of the amendments being adopted
- Go to left hand column of Judiciary website, at the bottom click “Quick Site Index” – this is a pull down menu
- Scroll down to “Rules of Court” and select it and click “Go”
- You will then be brought to a screen “Rules Governing The Courts of the State of New Jersey”
- The Rules are hyper-links (in blue), meaning that you can point and click on the Chapter of the Rules and then you will “enter” that particular Chapter with a further listing of the individual Rules within that particular Chapter
 - Example: You are looking for R. 1:1-2
 - Click on “Part I – Rules of General Application”
 - This will bring you to a screen entitled “Part I – Rules of General Application”
 - Each section is a hyper-link, meaning you can click on it to open the actual language of the Rule
 - Click “1:1 Applicability, Scope, Construction, Relaxation and Citation of Rules”
 - You will now see that section of the Rules
 - You may cut and paste from this screen into a document, brief
- You can be assured that the information is up to date, although there is no procedural history listed regarding when amendments were made
 - Example: You are looking for R. 7:6-2(a) – Civil Reservations
 - Click on “Part VII – Rules Governing Practice in the Municipal Courts”
 - This will bring you to a screen entitled “Part VII – Rules Governing Practice in the Municipal Courts”

- **You can then select what Rule within Part VII you are looking for, i.e. “7:6 Arraignment, Pleas”**
- **This is a hyperlink and you will be brought directly into that Rule**
- **Scroll down to 7:6-2 and you will see the full language of the Rule**
- **You can then cut and paste relevant portions into a document**
- **When Rules and Statutes are codified, a letter will always follow a number and first letter of the alphabet will always be lower case, then a number and then if there is another letter then upper case.**
 - **Example: You are looking for R. 7:5-2 – Filing a Suppression Motion in Municipal Court**
 - **Click on “Part VII – Rules Governing Practice in the Municipal Courts”**
 - **This will bring you to a screen entitled “Part VII – Rules Governing Practice in the Municipal Courts”**
 - **You can then select what Rule within Part VII you are looking for, i.e. “7:5 Search Warrants; Suppression”**
 - **This is a hyperlink and you will be brought directly into that Rule**
 - **Scroll down to 7:5-2 and you will see the full language of the Rule**
 - **You can then cut and paste relevant portions into a document**
- **Canons of Judicial Conduct are also found in the Court Rules as an Appendix**
 - **Access through the “Rules Governing The Courts of the State of New Jersey” page where the list of the parts of the Court Rules are found**
 - **Code of Judicial conduct and Rules of Professional Conduct are hyperlinks there**
 - **Once you click on these hyperlinks the individuals rules can then be found as a list of hyperlinks for your review**

II. Finding Appellate Division Opinions

- **www.judiciary.state.nj.us – Judiciary Website**
- **Just under the website title “New Jersey Courts” there is a list from right to left of links – close to the end (near the right side of**

- the page) – “Opinions” – by placing your cursor over this link (not clicking) you can see a pull down menu appear
- You can then select what court’s opinions you would like to see
 - Only published opinions will be found in this manner
 - This website can be checked daily for updates

III. Information about the NJ Supreme Court

- www.judiciary.state.nj.us – Judiciary Website
- Left side of home page under “Essential Links”, click “About NJ Courts”
- This will bring you to a list of hyperlinks – click “Supreme Court”
- A wealth of information is on this part of the website, including the Justices, oral argument schedule, and appeals
- To check what cases are currently pending before the NJ Supreme Court or cases where they have granted *cert* or there is a split in the Appellate Division and the Supreme Court has had to take the case
 - Access this information near the bottom of the Supreme Court page – there is a hyperlink “Track Supreme Court Appeals”
- This should be checked regularly because you may have a case that will be effected by an upcoming NJ Supreme Court case – you can then track the case
- Everything pending before the Supreme Court you can look here to check the status, when argued, when decided, and a brief summary of the issues presented
- All arguments before the Supreme Court are streamed live and also recorded and you can watch them live on the internet but you can also go to an archive through Rutgers and watch the Supreme Court’s previous arguments
 - This can be accessed from the www.judiciary.state.nj.us – Judiciary Website homepage
 - On the right side near the bottom of the page there is a box “NJ Supreme Court webcast” – click on the box
 - From this link you can access the previous NJ Supreme Court arguments

IV. Using the Search option on the Judiciary website

- From the home page www.judiciary.state.nj.us

- **Across the screen under the “New Jersey Courts” title is a list of links/subjects, at the end is the “Search” option**
- **If you are looking for something in particular, just click on the “Search” option, then type in what exactly you are looking for**
 - **Example: Looking for a particular Supreme Court directive**
 - **Go to “Search” option and you will be brought to a Google search page with a box at the top**
 - **Type in “directives”**
 - **You will receive a number of sources for directives**
 - **Select “Compilation of Administrative Directives” and you will be brought to a particular page on the website that contains that information**
 - **Select “Administrative Directives in Chronological Order”**
 - **A list of Directives will appear in order, from oldest (1960s) to newest**
 - **This is useful so that you can cut and paste the language of a Directive into a document/brief**

V. Legislature research

- **Begin at www.muni-mail.com**
- **On the left side of the home page, under the heading “New Jersey Law Links”, there is a link for “Legislature” – this is a hyperlink so you can just click on it**
- **Very useful website: www.njleg.state.nj.us**
- **From this site you can obtain the Constitution, statues, and chapter laws**
- **NJ Constitution – the complete text, search the text, or you can get the actual minutes of the convention**
 - **On the right side of the website, under “Laws and Constitution” there is a link to “Constitution” – click here**
 - **To search the text of the NJ Constitution, there is a link “Search the Text of the New Jersey State Constitution” – click here**
 - **Example: Searching for “victim’s rights” as the issue**
 - **Click “Article I Rights and Privileges” – hyperlink**
 - **You can scroll through the document to locate this information**
 - **For this example, the information is located in Article I, Paragraph 22**

- **Entire State Constitution is on this website and can be accessed by these links**
- **You can also access the complete text to the NJ Constitution**
- **New Jersey Statutes – access from the www.njleg.state.nj.us home page, under “Laws and Constitution”, there is a link “Statutes” – click here**
 - **There is a search box at the bottom and you can enter key words or a statute number and see where in the statutes the particular keyword, statute number, etc., is referenced in other statutes – every time it is mentioned**
 - **Use quotation marks to search for the actual statute itself**
- **Chapter laws – access from the www.njleg.state.nj.us home page, under “Laws and Constitution”, there is a link “Chapter Laws” – click here**
 - **Chronological listing of new statutes that were passed in a particular session of the Legislature**
 - **You can get a PDF or HTML copy of the the particular law**
 - **HTML allows you to work the language into your document by copy and paste; PDF is not as easy to work with although copy and paste is possible**
- **This website allows you to look up bills either in the Senate or the Assembly - access from the www.njleg.state.nj.us home page, under “Bills”, there are hyper links for Bills passed during each session**
 - **Example: Looking for Bill A3261**
 - **“A” means Assembly**
 - **Click on “Bill number” link**
 - **At the top of the screen is a search box where you can input the bill number, then click “find”**
 - **The bill will appear, including a Senate number as well**
 - **You can read the full history of the Bill by clicking on the Bill number, which is a hyperlink**
 - **This will take you to a screen where you can obtain a PDF or HTML format of the Bill itself**
 - **Example: amendment to drunk driving penalties are pending a vote**
 - **From “Bills” link**
 - **Click on “Keyword(s)” for a key word search**

- There will be a search box at the top of the next page “Search by Keyword in Synopsis”
- Enter “drunk driving”
- You will then see a list of bills that refer to drunk driving
- Scroll down and the particular bill we are discussing is “A2832” – click on the Bill number
- Then you can select either a PDF or HTML format to view
- Underlined part is proposed language, bracketed language would be deleted if the bill were passed

VI. Attorney General Information

- From www.muni-mail.com, under “New Jersey Law Links”, click “Attorney General”
- This will take you to www.state.nj.us/lps
- From left side of website, there is a link “Division of Criminal Justice” – click here
 - Good resources from here: Attorney General Directives and Guidelines – this can be accessed from the right side of the webpage there are links to resources, click “Directives/Guidelines”
 - Once on this page, you can access “Legal Resources” – this has the names of all the police departments around the state, every law enforcement agency and who the chief is for each department – “Law Enforcement Directory” in the middle of the page
 - You can also access “Directives” by clicking on the link
 - These have the force of a law, governing how law enforcement operates in NJ
 - You can also access “Guidelines” by clicking on the link – bind police on what they are supposed to do – chronological order from newest to oldest

VII. Governor’s website

- From www.muni-mail.com, under “New Jersey Law Links”, click “Governor”
- Along top of webpage under the heading “State of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie” you will see a list of links, “Newsroom” provides a great deal of information

- **This link will provide the status of bills that the Governor has signed that day into law or bills that he has vetoed or conditionally vetoed**
 - **With this information you can get the bill number (leaving out the dash) and then plug that into the Legislature website to search for the language of the law itself**

VIII. US Supreme Court

- **From www.muni-mail.com, under “Legal Research Links”, click “US Supreme Court Opinions”**
- **On left side of the home page there is a list of links – locate “Opinions” – the opinions are immediately available online after the Justices read the opinions into the record**
 - **Latest slip opinions are listed for the term**
 - **The case names are hyperlinks and you can click on the case and get the opinion**
 - **Can access prior years’ opinions**

IX. Rutgers Newark Law School online resources

- **Link can be obtained from judiciary website (www.judiciary.state.nj.us) through the “Opinions” pull down menu at the top, and selecting “Appellate Published”**
- **There is a link in the first paragraph, in blue, for “Rutgers Newark Law School”**
- **Opinions are available beginning 10 days after opinions are published**
- **Only published opinions are available from the law school website and only since 1984**
- **Once on the website you can scroll down and find a search box to enter a search query**
- **Highlighted search term will not appear in the case**
- **Searches can be done a number of ways**
 - **Example: You want to locate the case State v. Berezansky**
 - **In the search box type “Berezansky” using single quotes**
 - **This will search the database for references to Berezansky and the case itself**
 - **A list of cases or cases mentioning/cross references will come up**

- **No key numbers, no publishing additions that you would get through Westlaw or Lexis – just the case itself**
- **Cannot give pinpoint cite because the page numbers for the reporter are not listed**
- **Example: Want to research arson**
 - **If you input “arson” into the search box, then you will get a listing of every case that references the word “arson”**
- **Example: key word search from the opinion – can search that keyword, i.e. “sacrosanct”**
 - **Put the keyword in the search box, then cases using that word in the opinion will be listed with the general cite, but no internal page numbers**

X. Google

- **Numerous free forms available through search**
- **Get more information off this search engine than anything else**

XI. Garden State CLE website

- **All free**
- **www.gardenstatecle.com**
- **Click the “on demand” banner and you will come to a list of different areas of law**
- **Click on the particular area of law and you will come to a list of specific CLE classes that are available**
- **You can watch the videos for free – only pay if you want the credits**
- **Can do research and utilize the information**