POLI 4030/4040

LOCATING INFORMATION ON U.S. SUPREME COURT CASES

BE SURE OF VISIT THE QUIZ LINK LOCATED AT THE END OF THIS TUTORIAL!

NEXIS UNI

_Nexis Uni_ is available through the Auburn University Libraries homepage: [http://www.lib.auburn.edu](http://www.lib.auburn.edu) > Articles and Databases tab > General Databases > Nexis Uni.

To locate information on U.S. Supreme Court cases, follow the steps below. We will use 866 F. 3d 1 for our example.

1. Click on the Cases link and then the Federal Cases link.

2. To search by citation, type the citation into the text box label “...About” and click on the blue Search button.
3. This brings up a listing of cases. The first case listed corresponds directly to the citation and it provides the **party names** (here, Pereira v Sessions).

4. To locate a historical overview of the cases from lower courts through the U.S. Supreme Court, search by **party names**. Click on Nexis Uni top left side of the screen to return to the first search screen and then click on Cases and then Federal Cases and enter the **party names** (Pereira v Sessions) in the text box label “…About.”
5. Be sure to sort results by date (newest-oldest) to see the historical overview/prior rulings on Pereira v Sessions arranged in reverse chronological order. This allows you to see the progress of the case from lower level courts up through the latest U.S. Supreme Court decision. **Note:** It is also possible to sort results by court (highest-lowest) as well as other options.

6. To find precedent cases, click on the blue link to any case. Scroll down past the Cases Summary and Headnotes to find the Opinion. Precedent cases are highlighted in blue and provide links to the texts of those cases.
7. To locate **briefs**, follow the steps described below.

   a) After conducting a **party names** search (see #4, above) or a search by **legal citation** (see #1, above), click on the **Cases; U.S. Federal** link located in the upper right side of the screen.

   b) Next, check the box next to **Briefs, Pleadings, and Motions** and then click on the blue **Search** button.
c) Briefs appear in relevancy ranked order. Be sure to sort briefs by changing “Relevancy” to “Date (newest – oldest).” Note: it is also possible to sort results by court (highest-lowest) as well as other options.

WESTLAW

Access to Westlaw is available through the Auburn University Libraries homepage: http://www.lib.auburn.edu/ > Articles and Databases tab > databases by Title > Westlaw.

To locate information on U.S. Supreme Court cases, follow the steps below. We will use 866 F. 3d 1 for our example.

1. Click on the Cases link.
2. To search by citation, type the citation into the text box and click on the orange Search button.

3. You will then see the text of this decision. Find the case party names.

**Tips:** Sometimes the party names listing will be unusually long but the first party listed on either side of the versus (“v.”) should be sufficient for doing a party name search. Sometimes just using the party names that appear only in CAPITAL LETTERS works best, and sometimes a shortened form of the party names works dwell too. An example from a different case: Trinity Lutheran Church v Pauley rather than Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Sara Parker Pauley.
4. To locate a historical overview of the case from lower courts through the U.S. Supreme Court, search by **party names**. Click on the Thomson Reuters Westlaw name top left side of the screen and then click on Cases and enter the party names in the text box.

A **party names** search often brings up a large number of results. To **narrow** the list to primarily those decisions concern *Pereira v. Sessions* at all levels, you have some options available on the left side of the screen. For this case, click on the facet for **Party** (lower left side of screen) and enter “**Pereira v Sessions**” including quotation marks.

**Tips:** Normally, including quotation marks around the party names works well to narrow results as it does here. However, sometimes this does not work well, so be prepared to experiment at
times with various combinations of **party names**, for example, if one of the party names is an uncommon name, just type that one party name into the “Party” facet search box.

5. To track the progress of this case from lower level courts up through the latest U.S. Supreme Court decision you will need to change the sorting of results from its default (Relevance) to Date via the drop-down menu. This now brings up the decisions in **reverse chronological order**.

**Tips:** Often, even after narrowing the **party name** search, results will bring up additional cases with different party names, for example, here you will see *Silva-Pereira v Sessions*. Look for the party names that most closely resemble the party names provided by your original search by citation (see #3, above).

6. To find **precedent cases**, click on the blue link to any specific case you see mentioned in the text of a decision. Scroll down past Synopsis and headnotes to find the Opinion. Precedent cases are highlighted in blue and link to the texts of those cases.
7. To find **briefs**, click on the blue Filings link located at the top of the screen in any decision. Results will be returned in **reverse chronological order**.

8. To view the text of a brief, **click on the blue title link of each filing**. **Tips:** clicking on the PDF link will **NOT** provide access to the text. (This is due to database licensing conditions).

   **Click here.**  **NOT here.**
9. A helpful feature of *Westlaw* is the blue History link located at the top of the screen. This provides a useful graphical depiction of the progress of the case from lower to higher courts.
Access to CQ Supreme Court Collection: is available through the Auburn University Libraries homepage: http://www.lib.auburn.edu/ > Articles and Databases tab > databases by Title > CQ Press Supreme Court Collection.

To locate both biographical information and information on a U.S. Supreme Court Justice’s decision-making and positions on Constitutional Law, follow these steps. We will use Clarence Thomas as an example, in relation to the case of Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn.

1. To find biographical information, click on the gold Justices tab and then browse by name, (and then click on the Find button).
2. In addition to helpful biographical information, the screen displays the Justice’s participation in decisions in the grey boxed area on the right side of the screen. Click on the blue numerical link next to the decision action to locate Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn.

3. As it turns out, Thomas joined with the majority in the Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn decision.
4. Clicking on the blue link in Step #3, above, takes you to a summary of the decision and provides information on the Justice’s position on the decision involving the establishment clause and religion. Thomas not only joined with the majority opinion but also joined Antonin Scalia in a concurring opinion.

**LINK TO QUIZ**

**MUST** be submitted prior to 11:59 p.m. Sunday, February 10, 2019!!

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https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2tREWiqLbmV87EF

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