

LGLA 1313.271

Introduction to Paralegal Studies

Course Syllabus

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CLASS TIME: Monday/Wednesday; 9:30-10:45 a.m.
CLASSROOM: LBC121

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents an overview of the paralegal profession, including professional regulation, trends and issues, ethical obligations, and the paralegal's role in the delivery of legal services.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course explores the role of the paralegal within the legal profession and introduces the student to the fundamental skills needed for legal assisting/paralegalism. Students successfully completing this course will understand the role of the paralegal in the legal system and become familiar with on-the-job realities of the paralegal profession, including the rules and regulations governing paralegals, the legal system, legal analysis, interviewing, investigation, legal research and writing, law office administration, administrative advocacy, and will understand basic legal terminology.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Title: Introduction to Paralegalism: Perspectives, Problems and Skills, 8th Ed.
Author: William P. Statsky
ISBN-10: 1-285-44905-3
ISBN-13: 978-1-285-44905-0
Publisher: Cengage

Title: Legal Terminology, 6th Ed. (2014 Update)
Author: Brown, Gordon
Publisher: Prentice Hall
ISBN-13: 978-0133766974

Title: Black's Law Dictionary, 5th Pocket Edition*
Author: Garner, Bryan A.
Publisher: Thomson Reuters
ISBN-13: 978-0314844897
ISBN-10: 0314844899

*A legal dictionary should be brought to every paralegal class, unless you already know every legal term!

GRADING: Two (2) examinations (mid-term and final) will be given during the semester. Each examination will count 30% of the final grade. Weekly legal terminology quizzes will count 30% of the final grade. No makeup exams or quizzes will be given; however, students who notify the instructor of an anticipated absence may make arrangements to take a quiz or exam *in advance*. Other class assignments (as determined by the instructor) will count 10% of the final grade. Grade equivalents: 90 to 100% = A; 80 to 89% = B; 70 to 79% = C; 60 to 69% = D; Below 60% = F.

ASSIGNMENTS: Late class assignments will not be accepted without prior approval (before the due date). Assignments will not be accepted by e-mail, fax, or carrier pigeon unless otherwise stated. All assignments must be typed unless otherwise instructed. Assignments will be due at the beginning of the class on the date assigned. Students must maintain academic integrity in all assignments – “copying and pasting” from other sources (e.g. the Internet, other students, etc.) is plagiarism and will be grounds for dismissal from the course.

EXTRA CREDIT: Students may take advantage of “extra credit” opportunities throughout the semester. Extra credit points earned by a student (one point per activity) will be added to the student’s final grade point average for the class. Grade point averages will be calculated to the 100th of a point and will not be rounded up.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. Students are expected to arrive at class in a timely manner. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class period. Late arrivals must sit in the designated seat for late arrivals in order not to disrupt the class. Late arrivals may be counted as absent for that class.

A student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive. Excessive absences means more than two (2) absences for any reason.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the student’s responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have “Never Attended” by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of “X” or “F” as determined by the instructor.

It is the student’s responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: Paralegals are legal professionals, and as such, must maintain a professional attitude and demeanor. Spirited discussion is encouraged, but respect for the opinion of others is required. All students are expected to be prepared for every class. Disruptive or unprofessional behavior in class is grounds for a student to be removed from the classroom and dropped from the course without notice. Students are referred to the SPC Student Guide for more information about the policies and procedures concerning student conduct which are incorporated herein by reference. Student personal conduct must also comply with all Lubbock Center guidelines.

CELL PHONES: Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom. The professor reserves the right to answer any cell phone (on speaker) that rings during class time. “Texting” (text messaging) during class is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in the student being removed from the classroom and dropped from the course. Use of cell phones for class purposes may be permitted with instructor approval.

COMPUTERS: Laptop computers may be used during class for class-related purposes only and provided computer speakers are muted. Wireless internet access is provided at SPC for education-related purposes only. Paralegal Studies students also have access to computers available in the Learning Center. All student work must be saved on a removable storage device, e.g. a flash drive, and not on an SPC computer.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS: In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

ADA STATEMENT: Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at the Lubbock Center, the Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

SCANS [Secretary’s [of Labor] Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills]¹

Competencies: C1, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C18, C19;
Foundation Skills: F1, F2, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15, F16, F17.

Explanations of the codes are posted in the classroom for those who really care.

¹ Will the learning never end?