

Course Master Syllabus

INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES - LGLA 1313

I. Course Description / Prerequisites

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

II. Course Rationale / Objectives

This course is designed to provide the student grounding in the fundamentals of law and the American legal systems. It is also designed to begin the process of teaching the student to think critically and write clearly.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

- A. Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes: The student will understand the ethical considerations of the paralegal working in a law office or agency; the range of duties and workplace expectations that paralegals face; various legal terms and concepts; and, various substantive and procedural areas of the law. The student will display effective written communication skills.
- B. Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes
 - (1) Students will identify relevant legal concepts and apply them to changing fact patterns.
 - (2) Students will draft documents used in a broad range of legal environments.
 - (3) Students will perform as entry-level paralegals in a broad range of legal environments.
 - (4) Students will perform legal research.
- C. SCANS Competencies: The SCANS Competencies that will be developed in this Course are listed on Exhibit A.

IV. Required/Recommended Texts

- A. Required Purchase:
 - (1) Goodrich, The Basics of Paralegal Studies
 - (2) Schulze, Introduction to the American Legal System, and Texas Courts **(Check with the instructor for current editions or changes)**
- B. Recommended Purchase:
 - (1) Black's Law Dictionary

V. Instructional Methodology

This course will be taught via a combined lecture and Socratic method format. Students will be expected to have absorbed the assigned material prior to class and to be able to respond to

questions on the assigned material. In addition, students will perform “hands on” assignments and prepare written reports (formal themes) containing specified information.

VI. Course Evaluation System

- A. There will be two mid-term exams and a non-comprehensive final examination as well as three written reports, which are required.

The weight accorded to each performance measure follows: (1) mid-term exams – 30 points each; (2) final – 30 points; (3) three statements of activity – 10 points

- B. Total course points add to a 100-point system.

- C. The final letter grade in the course will be based upon the percentage of total points received as follows:

A – 90-100

B – 80-89

C – 70-79

D – 60-69

F – 0-59

- D. Only one make-up examination will be allowed. Make-up exams are given during the first class period after the exam is missed and cover only the material scheduled to be tested. Make-up exams NOT taken at such time will be COMPREHENSIVE and given on the last day of class immediately after the final exam.

VII. Course Policies

A. Attendance/Class Participation

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of all students. Online courses require regular and timely class participation in discussions and completion of work. If attendance or compliance with other course policies is unsatisfactory, the instructor may withdraw students from the class.

In the event the college or campus closes due to unforeseen circumstances (for example, severe weather or other emergency), the student is responsible for communicating with their professor during the closure and completing any assignments or other activities designated by their professor as a result of class cancellations.

B. Classroom Policies

Each instructor should clearly express their classroom policies, expectations and procedures addressing a variety of issues addressing, among others, attendance, class participation, classroom behavior, missed or late exams, late homework, written assignments, PowerPoint presentations, field and online research activities and weight assigned to them. Having explicit detail in this section helps to resolve potential student grades issues.

C. Withdrawal Policy

Each student is responsible to ensure that his or her name is removed from the rolls should they decide to withdraw from the class. The instructor does, however, reserve the right to

drop a student should he or she feels it is necessary. If a student decides to withdraw, he or she should also verify that the withdrawal is recorded before the Final Withdrawal Date. The Final Withdrawal Date for this semester is [insert date here]. The student is also strongly encouraged to keep any paperwork in case a problem arises.

Students are responsible for understanding the impact that withdrawal from a course may have on their financial aid, veterans' benefits, and or international student status. Per state law, students enrolling for the first time in Fall 2007 or later at any public Texas college or university may not withdraw (receive a W) from more than six courses during their undergraduate college education. Some exemptions for good cause could allow a student to withdraw from a course without having it count toward this limit. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with an advisor when making decisions about course selection, course loads, and course withdrawals.

D. Missed Exam and Late Work Policies

Each instructor should clearly express their policies with regard to missed exams and or late homework, etc.

E. Incompletes

An "Incomplete" will not be granted in this course unless the student has a grade of "C" or better on the first two exams, and a demonstrable emergency. An incomplete grade cannot be carried beyond the date established by the instructor and cannot in any event be carried later than the last withdrawal date the following semester

F. Course Outline/Calendar

Please note that schedule changes may occur during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted appropriately.

VIII. College Policies & Student Support Services

Important College Policies & Student Support Services can be found at:

<http://www.austincc.edu/offices/academic-outcomes-assessment/master-syllabi/college-policies>

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

Everything that is discussed in the classroom or individually with the instructor is strictly for educational purposes only. The instructor will not and does not provide legal advice to any student. Nor shall any comments from the instructor be considered legal advice.

ATTACHMENT A
SCANS Competencies
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Students in this course will be expected to use or achieve the following competencies:

Resources

- 1.1. Allocates Time: Allocates time between coursework/work/family/ friends.

Interpersonal

- 2.1. Participates as a Member of a Team: Works cooperatively with others where teamwork is appropriate.
- 2.2. Teaches Others: Explains concepts in class.
- 2.3. Negotiates: Works toward an agreement on the validity of exam on the exam questions.
- 2.4. Works with Cultural Diversity: Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds in the context of the class.

Information

- 3.1. Acquires and Evaluates Information: Extracts crucial legal issues from legal hypotheticals and court cases.
- 3.2. Organizes and Maintains Information: Takes notes on assigned material for use in class.
- 3.3. Interprets and Communicates Information: Evaluates assigned material and explains it to the class.
- 3.4. Uses Computers to Process Information: Employs computers to process course notes and to obtain, analyze, and brief court cases.

Technology

- 5.2. Applies Technology to Tasks: Understands the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and using computers and their programs.

Basic Skills

- 6.1. Reading: Locates, understands, and interprets written information in the text and assigned projects.
- 6.2. Writing: Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages effectively in writing.
- 6.3. Listening: Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages during class lectures and discussions.
- 6.4. Speaking: Organizes ideas and effectively communicates thoughts when being questioned in class and during class discussions.

Thinking Skills

- 7.1. Creative Thinking: Uses imagination freely, combines ideas in new ways when discussing hypothetical problems.
- 7.2. Decision Making: Chooses the best alternative in multiple-choice questions.
- 7.3. Problem Solving: Recognizes problems in hypothetical situations and identifies possible solutions.
- 7.4. Knowing How to Learn: Finds the important information in class discussions and texts and consolidates that information into a useable format.
- 7.5. Reasoning: Identifies the crucial issue in hypotheticals and recognizes the potential application of the rule in the case to other cases with similar facts and circumstances.

Personal Qualities

- 8.1. Responsibility: Exerts a high level of effort and perseverance in effectively preparing for class and class discussions.
- 8.2. Self-Management: Motivates self through goal achievement; exhibits self-control and responds to feedback unemotionally and non-defensively; is a "self-starter."
- 8.3. Integrity/Honesty: Can be trusted to accomplish her/his own work without excessive involvement of other students.

This Syllabus was updated 11.7.2022