

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

**INTRODUCTION TO LAW & ETHICS
LAW 1000**

Class Hours: 3.0

Credit Hours: 3.0

Laboratory Hours: 0.0

Date Revised: Fall 04

NOTE: This course is not designed for transfer credit.

Catalog Course Description:

Introduction to the work performed by legal assistants, regulation of the profession, legal and paralegal ethics and professional responsibility. Organization of legal institutions, introduction to legal procedure, survey of substantive law areas of practice.

Entry Level Standards:

College-level competencies in logic, reading, and English are required. Students must have completed, or be enrolled in, or be eligible to be enrolled in ENGL 1010. Students must be capable of writing formal English without serious grammatical, spelling or organizational errors.

Corequisite:

ENGL 1010

Textbook(s) and Other Course Materials:

Textbooks:

Miller, Roger LeRoy and Mary M. Urisko, *West's Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work*, 3d. (Thomson Learning, 2004).

Miller, Roger LeRoy and Mary M. Urisko, *Study Guide to Accompany West's Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work*, 2d. (Thomson Learning, 2000).

Other Suggested Reading:

Schneeman, Angela, Paralegal Ethics, (Thomson Learning, 2000)

Tennessee Bar Journal (Library)

Legal Assistant Today (Library)

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

Week	Topic
1	How to Study; Today's Professional Paralegal; Paralegal Associations; CLA and CLAS; Careers in the Legal Community; The Legal Workplace; Structure and Culture of Law Firms
2-5	Ethics and Professional Responsibility
5-6	Sources of American Law; What is Law; U. S. Constitution
6-7	State and Federal Court Systems; Alternative Dispute Resolution
7-8	Substantive Law: Torts, Contracts, Property, Wills and Estates, Family Law
8-9	Agency, Business Organizations, Intellectual Property
9	Administrative Law, Consumer Law, Environmental Law, Employment Law

10-11	Civil Litigation - Before the Trial
11-12	Trial Procedures
12-13	Criminal Law and Procedures
14	Computerized Legal Research; Legal Analysis and Writing
15	Final Examination

II. Course Objectives*:

- A. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. I, III, IV
- B. Begin to develop a professional attitude toward legal assistant training and employment. I, II, III, IV
- C. Demonstrate an adequate understanding of law office organization. II, III
- D. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of state and federal court systems. II, IV
- E. Begin to develop an understanding of legal terminology. I, II, III, IV
- F. Exhibit a basic understanding of differences between civil litigation and criminal proceedings. I, II, III, IV
- G. Understand the nature of the role and responsibilities of legal assistants within the American legal system. I, II, III, IV, V
- H. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of the structure of the legal environment in which the legal assistant will work. I, II
- I. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of the fundamentals of civil and criminal procedure. I, II
- J. Demonstrate an adequate understanding of the basic concepts of primary legal topics. I, II, III

*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the Paralegal Studies program.

III. Instructional Processes*:

Students will:

1. Practice elements of the work ethic such as professionalism, preparedness, punctuality, honesty, cooperation, dependability, contribution, effectiveness, good manners, etc. *Personal Development Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Transitional Strategy*
2. Refine reading skills and build legal vocabularies through completion of weekly guided reading exercises that allows more effective communication with lawyers and legal professionals. *Communication Outcome, Transitional Strategy*
3. Strengthen practical skills through observation of and reporting on a civil court proceeding. *Information Literacy Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
4. Examine ethical issues related to legal representation, unauthorized practice of law, confidentiality, duty of legal professional to provide legal services, etc. *Personal Development Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

5. Participate in simulated law office problem exercises. *Personal Development Outcome, Cultural Diversity and Social Adaptation Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
6. Listen to guest speakers from the legal community to learn the demands for skilled paralegals in the work world. *Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Transitional Strategy*

*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference TBR's goals for strengthening general education knowledge and skills, connecting coursework to experiences beyond the classroom, and encouraging students to take active and responsible roles in the educational process.

IV. Expectations for Student Performance*:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and avoid acts that constitute the unauthorized practice of law. A
2. Recognize and avoid acts that constitute the breach of client confidentiality. A
3. Recognize potential and actual conflict of interest situations. A
4. Explain the Canons of ethical conduct as set out in the Code of Professional Responsibility. A
5. Explain the various types of employment for paralegals. B, C, F, G
6. Identify typical responsibilities of the paralegal. A, B, C, D, E, F, G
7. Identify the characteristics of an effective paralegal. A, B, C, D, E, F, G
8. Appreciate the critical importance of honesty and integrity in the legal environment. A, B
9. Explain the role of bar associations and legal assistant organizations in developing professional standards for paralegals: A, B
10. Locate and visit state and federal courthouses in Knox County. B, D
11. Identify by proper name and describe the functions of trial and appellate level courts in the federal and state judicial systems. A, B, D, E
12. Differentiate between the functions of the three levels and three branches of government. B, D, E
13. Explain and apply the doctrine of respondeat superior. A, B, E
14. Describe the basic steps by which a civil claim is processed through pretrial, trial and appellate stages. D, E, F, G
15. Describe the basic steps by which a criminal charge is processed through arrest, indictment, trial, and appellate stages. D, E, F, G
16. Prepare written reports based upon courtroom observations. A, B, D, E, F, G
17. Discuss the paralegal's role in various legal environments in the United States. G, H, I, J
18. Differentiate between a tort and a crime. B, E, G, I, J
19. Identify the elements of an enforceable contract. B, E, G, J
20. Identify the elements of intentional torts. B, E, G, J
21. Identify the elements of negligence. B, E, G, J

- 22. Discuss the scope of Article 2 of the U. C. C. B, E, G, J
- 23. Identify the forms of property ownership. B, E, G, J
- 24. Differentiate between a sole proprietorship, a partnership and a corporation. B, E, G, J
- 25. Explain how a security interest in property is acquired. B, E, G, J

*Letters after performance expectations reference the course objectives listed above.

V. Evaluation:

A. Testing Procedures:

Students are evaluated primarily on the basis of tests. The instructor will provide full details the first week of class via a syllabus supplement.

B. Laboratory Expectations:

N/A

C. Field Work:

- 1. Students will submit a typed report of 3-4 pages after observing a public judicial hearing or trial.
- 2. Students will complete several out-of-class skills projects. These may include:

Legal writing exercises	Survey of local lawyers re paralegals
Resume building	One-page paper summarizing word-processing software articles
Paper on paralegal licensing	Paper on filings in federal court: e-mail, CD-ROM, electronic, tax, what kind of cases may be filed electronically, etc.
Paper explaining NAFTA	
Brief <i>United States v. McVeigh</i> , 918 F.Supp. 1467 (1996)	
Either 2a. or 2b. on page 381 of Miller/Urisko text	

D. Other Evaluation Methods:

Class participation, group work, and homework will also comprise the final grade for the course. The instructor will provide full details the first week of class via a syllabus supplement. All tests and papers will be graded for spelling and English usage in addition to content and format. Any student encountering academic difficulty during the term is strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss options and solutions.

E. Grading Scale:

A	93-100
B+	88- 92
B	83- 87
C+	78- 82
C	73- 77
D	65- 72
F	64 and below

VI. Policies:

A. Attendance Policy:

Pellissippi State Technical Community College expects students to attend all scheduled instructional activities. As a minimum, students in all courses must be present for at least 75 percent of their scheduled class and laboratory meetings in order to receive credit for the course.

[NOTE: No differentiation is noted for excused/unexcused absences. These will be treated as an absence.] (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, page 83)

B. Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular Pellissippi State procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero for the exercise or examination or to assign an F in the course. (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, pages 62-63)

C. Other Policies:

Late papers will not be accepted nor will make-up tests be given without specific approval of the instructor.

Computer Usage Guidelines:

College-owned or –operated computing resources are provided for use by students of Pellissippi State. All students are responsible for the usage of Pellissippi State’s computing resources in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner. (Pellissippi State, 2004-2006 Catalog, pages 67-70)

Accommodations for disabilities:

If you need accommodation because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform the instructor immediately. Privately after class or in the instructor's office. To request accommodations students must register with Services for Students with Disabilities: Goins 127 or 131, Phone: (865) 539-7153 or (865) 694-6751 Voice/TDD.