INTRODUCTION TO LAW & ETHICS
LAW 1000

Class Hours: 3.0      Credit Hours: 3.0
Laboratory Hours: 0.0  Revised: Spring 08

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:
Kauffman, Kent D., Legal Ethics, (Thomson-Delmar Learning, 2004).
Tennessee Bar Journal (Library)
Legal Assistant Today (Library)

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How To: Study, read, take notes, prepare outlines, take exams</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Paralegal Profession: Definitions, types of educational programs, paralegal associations, regulation, where paralegals work and what they do, compensation, and future</td>
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<td>3-4</td>
<td>Ethics and Professional Responsibility: Ethics rules for attorneys, for paralegals; duties of competence, integrity, confidentiality, avoidance of conflicts of interest; communication; UPL: giving advice, prohibited activities, permitted activities; reporting misconduct; consequences of unethical behavior</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The American Legal System: sources of law, judicial opinions, constitutions, statutes, branches of government; subject matter jurisdiction, personal jurisdiction and venue; types of law: criminal and civil, substantive and procedural; trial and appellate courts, federal and state courts</td>
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Legal Research and Analysis: primary and secondary authorities, federal and state case law, publication, encyclopedia, periodicals, texts and treatises, restatements, A.L.R., citation systems, Shepard’s, Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, analyzing the law, briefing cases, IRAC

Legal Writing and Communications: Effective legal writing, accuracy, clarity, readability, conciseness; types of writing, methods of writing, planning and finishing steps, common writing errors

Interviewing and Investigation: overview of client and witness interviews, overview of investigation and evidence

Civil Litigation: before and after the complaint is filed, discovery, ADR

What Paralegals Do: Contracts: Elements, performance and breach, remedies; Torts: intentional, negligence, strict liability; Business and Corporate Law: types of businesses, transactions; Real property: ownership, transfers, leases; Estate Planning and Wills: creating valid wills; administering estates; Family Law: marriage, divorce, child custody, support, civil unions; In-house counsel. The Paralegal’s role in a legal environment

Getting and Keeping a Job: resume writing, interviewing, negotiating a salary; performance evaluations, career advancement; quitting a job and getting the next job

The Law Office: structure and organization of firms, types of legal fees, law office procedures

Strategies for Success in the Workplace: Attributes of successful paralegals, skills you must have; how to manage time; PROFESSIONALISM

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. *Active Learning Strategy, 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. *Active Learning Strategy, Communication Outcome, Transitional Outcome*

3. Strengthen practical skills through observation of and reporting on a civil court proceeding. *Communication 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. *Communication 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. *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
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:
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
   - Resume building
   - Paper on paralegal licensing
   - Paper explaining NAFTA
   - Survey of local lawyers re paralegals
   - One-page paper summarizing word-processing software articles
   - Paper on filings in federal court: e-mail, CD-ROM, electronic, tax, what kind of cases may be filed electronically, etc.

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.]

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.
C. Accommodations for disabilities:

If you need accommodations 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. Please see the instructor privately after class or in his/her office. Students must present a current accommodation plan from a staff member in Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Services for Students with Disabilities may be contacted by going to Goins 127 or 131 or by phone: 694-6751(Voice/TTY) or 539-7153.

D. 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.