

PELLISSIPPI STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**INTRODUCTION TO LAW & ETHICS  
LAW 1000**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 0.0**

**Revised: Spring 2011**

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:**

Bouchoux, Deborah E., *The Practical Paralegal Today: Strategies for Success, Second Edition* (Aspen Publishers, 2009) – ISBN # 978-0-7355-6947-8

**Other Suggested Reading:**

1. Cannon, Therese, *Concise Guide to Paralegal Ethics*, (Aspen Law, 2009)
2. *Tennessee Bar Journal* (Library)
3. *American Bar Journal* (Library)
4. *Legal Assistant Today* (Library)

**I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Chapter 1	How to be a Successful Paralegal Student: Study, read, take notes, prepare outlines, take exams. How to be a Successful Paralegal: professionalism
2	Chapter 2; Appendices A-B	Paralegal Profession: Definitions, types of educational programs, paralegal associations, regulation, where paralegals work and what they do, compensation, and future
3-4	Chapter 3; Appendices C-F	Ethics and Professional Responsibility: Ethics rules for attorneys, for paralegals; duties of competence, integrity, confidentiality, avoidance of conflicts of interest; communication; UPL: giving legal advice, prohibited activities, permitted activities; reporting misconduct;

		consequences of unethical behavior
5	Chapter 4 Court Systems Handout	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
6	Chapter 5; Appendix G	Legal Research and Analysis: primary and secondary authorities, federal and state statutes, federal and state case law, publication, encyclopedia, periodicals, texts and treatises, restatements, A.L.R., citation systems, <i>Shepard's</i> , Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, analyzing the law, briefing cases, IRAC
7	Chapter 6; Appendix H	Legal Writing and Communications: Effective legal writing, accuracy, clarity, readability, conciseness; types of writing, methods of writing, planning and finishing steps, common writing errors
8	Chapter 7	Interviewing and Investigation: overview of client and witness interviews, overview of investigation and evidence
9	Chapter 8	Civil Litigation: before and after the complaint is filed, discovery, ADR
10-11	Chapter 9	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
12	Chapter 10	Getting and Keeping a Job: resume writing, interviewing, negotiating a salary; performance evaluations, career advancement; quitting a job and getting the next job
13	Chapter 11	The Law Office: structure and organization of firms, types of legal fees, law office procedures
14	Chapter 12	Strategies for Success in the Workplace: Attributes of successful paralegals, skills you must have; how to management time; PROFESSIONALISM
15		Final Examination

## II. Course Goals\*:

- A. Expand student understanding of legal ethics. I, III, IV
- B. Encourage students to develop a professional attitude toward legal assistant training and employment. I, II, III, IV

- C. Guide students to understand law office organization. II, III
- D. Guide students to understand the purpose of state and federal court systems. II, IV
- E. Enhance student understanding of legal terminology. I, II, III, IV
- F. Guide students to understand the differences between civil litigation and criminal proceedings. I, II, III, IV
- G. Expand student understanding of the role and responsibilities of legal assistants within the American legal system. I, II, III, IV, V

\*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the Paralegal program (Career Program Goals and General Education Goals are listed

[http://www.pstcc.edu/departments/curriculum\\_and\\_instruction/syllabi/](http://www.pstcc.edu/departments/curriculum_and_instruction/syllabi/)

### **III. Expected Student Learning Outcomes\*:**

The student will 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 and apply Tennessee's rules of ethics. (A)
5. Analyze 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. (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)

\* Capital letters after Expected Student Learning Outcomes reference the course goals listed above.

#### **IV. 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
  - Resume building
  - Paper on paralegal certification
  - Survey of local lawyers re paralegals
  - Paper explaining paralegal work, tasks, future of profession
  - One-page paper summarizing word-processing software articles

##### 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

#### **V. Policies:**

##### A. Attendance Policy:

Pellissippi State expects students to attend all scheduled instructional activities. As a minimum, students in all courses (excluding distance learning courses) must be present for at least 75 percent of their scheduled class and laboratory meetings in order to receive credit for the course. Individual departments/programs/disciplines, with the approval of the vice president of Learning, may have requirements that are more stringent. In very specific circumstances, an

appeal of the policy may be addressed to the head of the department in which the course was taken. If further action is warranted, the appeal may be addressed to the vice president of Learning.

#### B. Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct committed either directly or indirectly by an individual or group is subject to disciplinary action. Prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following practices:

- Cheating, including but not limited to unauthorized assistance from material, people, or devices when taking a test, quiz, or examination; writing papers or reports; solving problems; or completing academic assignments.
- Plagiarism, including but not limited to paraphrasing, summarizing, or directly quoting published or unpublished work of another person, including online or computerized services, without proper documentation of the original source.
- Purchasing or otherwise obtaining prewritten essays, research papers, or materials prepared by another person or agency that sells term papers or other academic materials to be presented as one's own work.
- Taking an exam for another student.
- Providing others with information and/or answers regarding exams, quizzes, homework or other classroom assignments unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Any of the above occurring within the Web or distance learning environment.

#### C. Accommodations for Disabilities:

Students who need accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information to share, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated should inform the instructor immediately, privately after class or in her or his 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, 132, 134, 135, 131 or by phone: 539-7153 or TTY 694-6429. More information is available at [www.pstcc.edu/departments/swd/](http://www.pstcc.edu/departments/swd/).

#### D. Other Policies:

##### 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 Online Catalog*)

##### Late Work:

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