

PELLISSIPPI STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES & ETHICS
LEGL 1300 (formerly LAW 1000)

Class Hours: 3.0

Credit Hours: 3.0

Laboratory Hours: .0

Revised: Fall 2015

Catalog Course Description:

An introduction to the work performed by paralegals, regulation of the profession, legal and paralegal ethics, structure of the court systems and survey of substantive areas of law.

Entry Level Standards:

College-level competencies in reading and English are required. Students must have completed, or be enrolled in, or be eligible to be enrolled in ENGL 1010.

Prerequisites:

ENGL 1010

Textbook(s) and Other Course Materials:

Bouchoux, Deborah E., *A Practical Introduction to Paralegal Studies, 2nd Edition* (Aspen Publishers, 2009) – ISBN: 9780735569478

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. *Paralegal Today* (Library)

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

Week	Chapter(s)	Topic
1	1	How to be a Successful Paralegal Student: Study, read, take notes, prepare outlines, take exams. How to be a Successful Paralegal: professionalism
2	2; App. A-B	Ethics and Professional Responsibility: Ethics rules for Paralegal Profession: Definitions, types of educational programs, paralegal associations, regulation, where paralegals work and what they do, compensation, and future
3-4	3; App. C-F	Ethics and professional responsibility: Ethics rules for attorneys, 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	4	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	5; App. 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, Shepard's, Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, analyzing the law, briefing cases, IRAC
7	6; App. 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	7	Interviewing and Investigation: overview of client and witness interviews, overview of investigation and evidence
9	8	Civil Litigation: before and after the complaint is filed, discovery, ADR
10-11	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	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	11	The Law Office: structure and organization of firms, types of legal fees, law office procedures
14	12	Strategies for Success in the Workplace: Attributes of successful paralegals, skills you must have; how to manage time; PROFESSIONALISM
15		Final Examination

II. Course Goals*:

The course will

- A. Expand student understanding of legal ethics. I, III, IV
- B. Encourage students to develop a professional attitude toward paralegal 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. Expand student understanding of the role and responsibilities of legal professionals within the American legal system. I, II, III, IV, V

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

III. Expected Student Learning Outcomes*:

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the legal process and the nature of law practice, emphasizing the role of the paralegal in the delivery of legal services. (A,B,D,E,F)
2. Identify the professional associations that serve and promote the paralegal profession. (B,F)
3. Understand the legal and ethical principles that guide paralegal conduct. (A,B,E)
4. Understand the organization of the state and federal trial and appellate court systems and the different functions of those courts. (D,F)
5. Determine which area of law is relevant to a particular situation. (D,E,F)
6. Analyze the various types of employment for paralegals. (B, C, F)

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

IV. Evaluation:

A. Testing Procedures: 50%

Students are evaluated partly 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: 25%

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 on assigned topics.

D. Other Evaluation Methods: 25%

1. 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 supplementary syllabus.
2. All tests and papers will be graded for spelling and English usage in addition to content and format.
3. 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 Academic Affairs, 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 Academic Affairs.

B. Academic Dishonesty:

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.

Please see the Pellissippi State Policies and Procedures Manual, Policy 04:02:00 Academic/Classroom Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions for the complete policy.

C. Accommodations for disabilities:

Students that 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 Disability Services (DS) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Disability Services may be contacted by sending email to disabilityservices@pstcc.edu, or by visiting Alexander 130. More information is available at <http://www.pstcc.edu/sswd/>.