

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
**LAW 1000**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 0.0**

**Date Revised: Spring  
00**

**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 ENG 1010. Students must be capable of writing formal English without serious grammatical, spelling or organizational errors.

**Corequisite:**

LAW 1005

**Textbook(s) and Other Reference Materials Basic to the Course:**

Miller, Roger LeRoy and Mary S. Urisko, *West's Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work*, West, 2000.

Other Suggested Reading:

Orlik, Deborah K., *Ethics for the Legal Assistant*  
Harbrace College Handbook (Writing Text)  
Tennessee Bar Journal (Library)  
Legal Assistant Today (Library)

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

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Today's Professional Paralegal
2	Careers in the Legal Community
3	The Legal Workplace
4	Sources of American Law
5-6	The Court System and Alternative Dispute Resol
7	Civil Litigation - Before the Trial
8	Trial Procedures

9	Criminal Law and Procedures
10-11	Conducting Interviews and Investigations
12	Legal Research
13	Legal Analysis and Writing
14-15	Ethics and Professional Responsibility
16	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. Exhibit a basic understanding of civil procedure. I, II, III, IV, V

\*Roman numerals after course objectives reference goals of the Business and Computer Technologies department.

## 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, 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, Transitional 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*
5. Participate in simulated law office problem exercises. *Personal Development 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, Transitional Strategy*

\*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference Pellissippi State'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

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

**V. Evaluation:**

- A. Testing Procedures:

Students are evaluated primarily on the basis of tests.

**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
Networking plan	Resume building
Paper on paralegal licensing	Drafting employment manual
Paper explaining NAFTA	One-page paper summarizing word-processing software articles
Brief United States v. McVeigh, 918 F.Supp. 1467 (1996)	Paper on filings in federal court: e-mail, CD-ROM, electronic, tax, what kind of cases may be filed electronically, etc.
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. Attendance is absolutely essential to perform well in this course. Absenteeism is recorded, not excused. Twelve (12) hours of absences will result in an automatic F for the course.

**B. Academic Dishonesty:**

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated and will become an automatic zero on that paper or test. Repetition of cheating will result in an F for the final grade.

**C. Other Policies:**

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