

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MASTER SYLLABUS

PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN LAW
LAW 1005

Class Hours: 3.0

Credit Hours: 3.0

Laboratory Hours: 0.0

**Date Revised: Spring
00**

Catalog Course Description:

Introduction to the American legal system=s organization and operation. Survey of major areas of substantive law, including torts, contracts, property, business organizations, criminal, domestic, administrative, probate and constitutional. Introduction to reading and briefing court opinions.

Entry Level Standards:

College-level competencies in logic, reading, and English are required.

Corequisite:

LAW 1000

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

Walston-Dunham, Beth, *Introduction to Law*, 3d. West, 1999

I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:

Week	Topic
1	Historical Basis and Current Structure of American Legal System
2	Judicial Branch: The Courts
3	Legislative Branch
4	Executive Branch and Administrative Authori
5	Substantive and Procedural Issues
6	Jurisdiction
7	Contracts
8	Property
9	Torts
10	Business
11	Estates and Probate

- 12 Criminal Law and Procedure
- 13 Family Law
- 14-15 Legal Professional's Role and Ethical Obligations
- 16 Final Examination

II. Course Objectives*:

- A. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of legal ethics. I, III, V
- B. Demonstrate a professional attitude toward legal assistant training and employment. I, II, III, IV
- C. Understand the nature of the role and responsibilities of legal assistants within the American legal system. I, II, III, IV, V
- D. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of the structure of the legal environment in which the legal assistant will work. I, II
- E. Demonstrate a complete and thorough understanding of the fundamentals of civil and criminal procedure. I, II
- F. Demonstrate an adequate understanding of the basic concepts of primary legal topics. I, II, III
- G. Develop and use a basic legal vocabulary. 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 expand 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 analytical skills by locating court cases and statutes in the Educational Resources Center and on Westlaw to determine the application of the rules of law to specific facts. *Information Literacy Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Technological Literacy 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. Listen to guest speakers from the legal community to learn the demands for legal assistants who possess basic knowledge of legal topics in the work world. *Personal Development Outcome, Transitional Strategy*

6. Develop investigative skills using the Internet, library, and governmental agency resources to find relevant information. *Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Information Literacy Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Active Learning 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 how law firms organize and structure their businesses. B, C, D
5. Identify by proper name the federal and state courts having civil jurisdiction. B, E
6. Identify by proper name the federal and state courts having criminal jurisdiction. B, E
7. Discuss the paralegal's role in various legal environments in the United States. A, C, D, G
8. Differentiate between a tort and a crime. B, E, F, G
9. Identify the elements of an enforceable contract. B, F, G
10. Identify the elements of intentional torts. B, F, G
11. Identify the elements of negligence. B, F, G
12. Discuss the scope of Article 2 of the U. C. C. B, F, G
13. Identify the forms of property ownership. B, F, G
14. Differentiate between a sole proprietorship, a partnership and a corporation. B, F, G
15. Explain how a security interest in property is acquired. B, 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:

Students will complete several out-of-class skills projects. These may include:

Legal writing exercises

Writing paper setting out Tennessee's requirements for valid marriage

Writing paper setting out grounds for divorce in Tennessee

Reading and briefing *Miranda v. State of Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966)

Writing paper on status of Miranda rights now

Reading and briefing *McIntyre v. Ballentine*, 833 S.W.2d 52 (Tenn. 1992)

Writing a paper detailing adverse possession in Tennessee

In a paper, list ten specific types of conduct anyone is entitled to engage based on the Bill of Rights, and describe each one

Write a paper describing how a bill becomes law in Tennessee

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.