

LGLA 1313.271
Introduction to Paralegal Studies Course Syllabus

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents an overview of the paralegal profession, including professional regulation, trends and issues, ethical obligations, and the paralegal's role in the delivery of legal services.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course explores the role of the paralegal within the legal profession and introduces the student to the fundamental skills needed for legal assisting/paralegalism. Students successfully completing this course will understand the role of the paralegal in the legal system and become familiar with on-the-job realities of the paralegal profession, including the rules and regulations governing paralegals, the legal system, legal analysis, interviewing, investigation, legal research and writing, law office administration, administrative advocacy, and will understand basic legal terminology.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

A legal dictionary. NOTE: Bring your legal dictionary to every paralegal class, unless you already know every legal term!

GRADING: Three (3) examinations will be given during the semester. Each examination will count 25% of the final grade. Exams must be taken as scheduled. No makeup exams will be given. Other class assignments (as determined by the instructor) will count 25% of the final grade. Grade equivalents: 90 to 100% = A; 80 to 89% = B; 70 to 79% = C; 60 to 69% = D; Below 60% = F.

ASSIGNMENTS: Late class assignments will not be accepted. All assignments must be typed unless otherwise instructed. Assignments will be due at the beginning of the class on the date assigned unless a different due date deadline is given. Students must maintain academic integrity in all assignments – “copying and pasting” from other sources (e.g. the Internet, other students, etc.) is plagiarism and will be grounds for no grade on the plagiarized assignment and/or dismissal from the course.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes in person in order to be successful in a course. Students will not be permitted to attend virtually. Collaborate will not be available in this course.

Students are expected to arrive at class in a timely manner. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class period. Late arrivals may be counted as absent for that class. A student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive. “Excessive” absences means more than two (2) absences for any reason.

Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have “Never Attended” by the official census date (the 12th class day), as reported by the instructor, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of “X” or “F” as determined by the instructor.

It is the student’s responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: Paralegals are legal professionals, and as such, must maintain a professional attitude and demeanor. Spirited discussion is encouraged, but respect for the opinion of others is required. All students are expected to be prepared for every class. Disruptive or unprofessional behavior in class is grounds for a student to be removed from the classroom and dropped from the course without notice. Students are referred to the SPC Student Guide for more information about the policies and procedures concerning student conduct which are incorporated herein by reference. Student personal conduct must also comply with all Lubbock Center guidelines and all applicable laws.

CELL PHONES: Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom. Texting during class is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in the student being removed from the classroom and dropped from the course. Use of cell phones for class purposes may be permitted with instructor approval.

COMPUTERS: Laptop computers and electronic tablets may be used during class for class-related purposes only and provided speakers are muted. Wireless internet access is provided at SPC for education-related purposes only. Paralegal Studies students also have access to computers available in LBC109, as well as on other SPC campuses. All student work must be saved on a removable storage device, e.g. a flash drive, and not on an SPC computer.

Student-Owned Computer Equipment: Students may choose to use their own computer equipment to complete the assigned coursework. SPC provides Microsoft Office to students for installation and use on their personal computers. It is the sole responsibility of the student to ensure his / her computer system meets the minimum requirements for all required or suggested software. It is also the sole responsibility of the student to insure his / her computer system is in working order, free of malware, and sufficient to complete assigned coursework. The instructor is not responsible for the student’s computer maintenance and cannot troubleshoot or repair issues on student-owned computers. If the student needs computer assistance, he/she can contact the SPC student helpdesk.

For Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please refer to [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](http://southplainscollege.edu).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The following is the tentative schedule for this course. Changes will be made as needed as we progress throughout the semester. Tests and assignments will be scheduled as we progress through the material. Make sure you frequently check Blackboard, announcements, and emails for the due dates of tests and assignments.

Week	Topic to be discussed:
1	Introduction to the course; Syllabus
2	What is a paralegal?
3	Job outlook
4	Paralegal fees; job realities
5	Paralegal associations (local, state, national)
6	Cases: how to read / brief a case
7	State Bar regulation
8	Legal advice vs. legal information
9	Ethics: confidentiality
10	Ethics: attorney / client privilege
11	Federalism
12	Branches of government (powers and duties)
13	What is law?
14	Court procedure
15	Court procedure, continued
16	Types of law practices