

**SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
CITY, AND MIRAMAR COLLEGES  
ASSOCIATE DEGREE COURSE OUTLINE**

**SECTION I****SUBJECT AREA AND COURSE NUMBER:** Legal Assistant 140**COURSE TITLE:** Law Office Management**Units: 3**  
Grade Only**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces a legal specialty elective in the Legal Assistant program. Students study systems and procedures for administration and management of a law office. Course emphasizes file management, personnel issues, law library maintenance, computer systems, ordering supplies, financial analysis and billing, risk management, and legal ethics.

**REQUISITES:**

**Advisory: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in:**  
LEGL 100B with a grade of "C" or better, or equivalent

**Limitation on Enrollment:**

This course is not open to students with previous credit for ADJU 111 or BUSE 185

**FIELD TRIP REQUIREMENTS:** May be required**TRANSFER APPLICABILITY:** Associate Degree Credit & transfer to CSU and/or private colleges and universities**TOTAL LECTURE HOURS:** 48 - 54**TOTAL LAB HOURS:****STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Develop strategies for maintaining a positive working environment (interpersonal skills stressed) and methods for managing personality conflicts
2. Organize regular training programs for employees and develop a plan for training of new employees
3. Analyze systems for conflict of interest research, regarding new clients and new employees, possess awareness of penalties for violations
4. Develop cost-effective plan for retention of records
5. Destroy records according to legal requirements
6. Calculate employee time records
7. Demonstrate knowledge of billable and non-billable hours
8. Calculate employee productivity
9. Use courtesy collection techniques
10. Adhere to strict legal requirements relative to division of legal fees and finder's fees
11. Forecast income and expenses
12. Analyze and investigate budget waste, areas of potential abuses, and possible cost-saving options

13. Calculate attorney/paralegal/support staff productivity versus need, locate areas of concern, and prepare internal memorandums regarding such topics
14. Maintain client trust accounts
15. Apply ethical rules regarding client trust accounts
16. Evaluate different types of fee structures (i.e., contingent, fixed, statutory)
17. Analyze various financial statements.

## **SECTION II**

### **1. COURSE OUTLINE AND SCOPE:**

#### **A. Outline Of Topics:**

The following topics are included in the framework of the course but are not intended as limits on content. The order of presentation and relative emphasis will vary with each instructor.

- I. Overview
  - A. Management objectives
  - B. Role of the administrator
- II. Personnel management
  - A. Techniques and organization
  - B. Systems, policies and procedures
  - C. Hiring, training, and termination
  - D. Calculating employee billing time
  - E. Measuring employee productivity
- III. Computers and technology
  - A. Law office equipment and technology
  - B. Purchasing equipment and supplies
- IV. Financial data and record keeping
  - A. Time keeping and billing systems
  - B. Banking and client trust funds
  - C. Collecting unpaid invoices
  - D. Analyzing financial records
  - E. Budget Accounting
  - F. Retention and destruction of firm records
- V. Facilities management
  - A. Library and records management
  - B. Space planning
  - C. Waste and risk management
- VI. Ethics and malpractice
  - A. Importance of ethics and malpractice
  - B. The unauthorized practice of law
  - C. Conflicts of interest
  - D. Clients trust accounts
- VII. Client and communications
  - A. Client relationships
  - B. Ethical duty to communicate with clients.

#### **B. Reading Assignments:**

Reading assignments are required and may include but, are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1. Selected readings from Law Office Economics, Management Manual, and the Manual for Managing the Law Office (a Loose-leaf Service by Prentice-Hall, Inc.)
- II. 2. Supplemental Readings in Legal Economics, published by the American Bar Association (Economics of Law Practice section)

#### **C. Appropriate Assignments that Demonstrate Critical Thinking:**

Critical thinking assignments are required and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1. Analyzing cases involving personnel issues

- II. 2. Identifying and applying statutory law
- III. 3. Preparing legal reports on staffing and office procedures.
- IV. 4. Differentiating ethics and malpractice

**D. Appropriate Outside Assignments:**

Outside assignments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1. Visiting a local law office
- II. 2. Interviewing a legal administrator
- III. 3. Meeting with team members to discuss law office procedure manual

**E. Writing Assignments:**

Writing assignments are required and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- I. 1. Preparation of an office procedures manual addressing the administrative burden, financial management, and client-lawyer relationships
- II. 2. Midterm paper
- III. 3. Essay exam

**2. METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

A student's grade will be based on multiple measures of performance unless the course requires no grade. Multiple measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Midterm and Final essay exam  
Classroom assessment techniques  
Mock interview reviews  
Peer evaluation  
Appraise and grade reports and other assignments.

**3. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

Methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- \* Lecture
- \* Distance Education
- \* Distance Education

**4. REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES:**

Textbooks may include, but are not limited to:

**TEXTBOOKS:**

- 1. Everett. Fundamentals of Law Office Management, 2nd ed. West Legal Studies, 2002,
- 2. Helewitz. Financial Documents and Accounting for Legal Professionals, West Publ., 2000,
- 3. Morton. Legal Office Procedures, 4th ed. Prentice-Hall, 1998,

**MANUALS:**

**PERIODICALS:**

**SOFTWARE:**

**SUPPLIES:**

**ORIGINATOR:** Darrel Harrison

**CO-CONTRIBUTOR(S)**

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