

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

SECTION I**SUBJECT AREA AND COURSE NUMBER:** Legal Assistant 100A**COURSE TITLE:** Introduction to Paralegalism**Units: 1**
Grade Only**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Students entering the legal assistant program learn about the paralegal's role in the work place and legal system. Topics include the following: introduction to the professional associations, history of the profession, regulation and licensing of paralegals, legal ethics, an overview of the court structure, legal terminology, legal analysis, and an introduction to the legal specialties offered in the program.

REQUISITES:**Limitation on Enrollment:**

This course is not open to students with previous credit for LEGL 100 or ADJU 105 or BUSE 180

FIELD TRIP REQUIREMENTS: May be required**TRANSFER APPLICABILITY:** Associate Degree Credit & transfer to CSU and/or private colleges and universities**TOTAL LECTURE HOURS:** 16 - 18**TOTAL LAB HOURS:****STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

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

1. Describe their understanding of the American legal system
2. Express knowledge regarding the paralegal's role in the legal system
3. Compare and contrast ethical rules for attorneys vs. paralegals
4. Debate the differences and similarities among the various paralegal organizations
5. Demonstrate effective communication skills
6. Explain how to analyze statutes and court rules
7. Comprehend legal terms
8. Describe personal analysis of various legal specialties.

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. The paralegal field
 - A. History of the profession
 - B. Paralegal names used in the profession
 - C. Professional publications
 - D. Associations and their functions
 - E. Controversies and topics of the paralegal profession
 - F. Regulation, registration, certification, licensing, and limited licensure
 - G. Legal technician, independent and freelance
 - H. California issues re: legal technicians
 - I. Paralegal school options, ABA approved, other options
 - J. On the job training and relation to formal training
 - K. Overtime/exempt issue
- II. Ethics/professional responsibility
 - A. Understanding the Code of Ethics
 - B. Unauthorized practice of law (UPL)
 - C. Confidentiality in the profession
 - D. Conflicts of interest issues
 - E. Pro bono publico services
 - F. Continuing education requirements
 - G. Solicitation/advertising for lawyers
 - H. Various fees & client funds
 - I. Ethical standards in other para-professions and professions overview and similarities.
- III. Introduction to the American legal system
 - A. Federal Court System
 - B. State Court System
 - C. Understanding legal terms
- IV. Four (4) Sources of Law
 - A. Constitution
 - B. Statutes
 - C. Administrative law
 - D. Case law
 - E. How to analyze laws to facts presented
 - F. What is Jurisdiction and how it is obtained
 - G. Subject matter jurisdiction
 - H. Personal jurisdiction
 - I. Venue
- V. Specialty classes offered in the paralegal program
 - A. Introduction to criminal law
 - B. Torts and contracts
 - C. Family law
 - D. Estates, trusts & wills
 - E. Corporate & business law
 - F. Bankruptcy and collections
 - G. Civil Litigation
- VI. Legal research
 - A. Research Techniques
 - B. Locating materials by citation
 - C. Subject searching
 - D. Differentiating among publications

B. Reading Assignments:

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

- I. 1. Reading articles from journals and magazines relative to the role of the paralegal in today's legal environment.
- II. 2. Supplemental readings of current materials and handouts provided in class
- III. 3. Reading chapters/cases assigned from textbooks and casebooks

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 and evaluating the paralegal's role in the legal field
- II. 2. Comparing and contrasting case law decisions.
- III. 3. Explaining, both in writing and verbally the student's understanding of getting a complaint through the legal system.

D. Appropriate Outside Assignments:

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

- I. 1. Visiting the local courthouse.
- II. 2. Interviewing an attorney or paralegal.
- III. 3. Researching information in law libraries.
- IV. 4. Attending a San Diego Paralegal Association meeting.

E. Writing Assignments:

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

- I. 1. Writing essays on the role of the paralegal in the American legal system
- II. 2. Writing personal analyses of various legal specialties
- III. 3. Writing articles for local paralegal publication
- IV. 4. Preparing a brief on an assigned case

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:

- I. Objective quizzes and examinations following lectures and discussions
- Out of class writing assignments that survey the paralegal's role in the legal system and the ethical rules that govern legal assistants.
- Interview a local attorney or paralegal and prepare an outline of the interview.

3. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

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

- * Lecture
- * Lecture Discussion
- * Computer Assisted Instruction
- * Audio-Visual
- * Distance Education
- * Other (Specify)
- * Distance Education
- * Guest speakers.

4. REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES:

Textbooks may include, but are not limited to:

TEXTBOOKS:

1. Miller & Urisko. West's Paralegal Today, Comprehensive ed. West Publ. Co., 2000,
2. Statsky. Introduction to Paralegalism, 5th ed. West Publ. Co., 1997,

MANUALS:

PERIODICALS:

SOFTWARE:

SUPPLIES:

PROPOSAL ORIGINATOR: Helen Webb
CO-CONTRIBUTOR(S)
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