Course Outline for Paralegal Studies 30

INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES

**Catalog Description:**

PLGL 30 - Introduction to Paralegal Studies 3.00 units

This course will introduce students to the responsibilities and duties of a paralegal. It will provide an overview of the paralegal profession, including the paralegal's role in the delivery of legal services.

**Strongly Recommended:** ADMJ 50 (completed with a grade of "C" or higher)

**Grading Option:** Optional

**Discipline:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Inside of Class Hours</th>
<th>Outside of Class Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>108.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Exp (Non-Paid)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Exp (Paid)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Unit Value Lab</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>108.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prerequisite Skills:**

None

**Measurable Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. define the role of the paralegal within the legal profession;
2. identify and explain the fundamental skills needed for legal assisting/paralegalism;
3. explain and analyze the development, implementation, and enforcement processes of the American legal system;
4. explain and analyze the development, implementation, and enforcement processes of public policy at the state and local level;
5. describe the jurisdiction of various courts in the American judicial system, including state, federal and appellate courts;
6. explain how the civil process works;
7. explain how the criminal process works;
8. identify and explain the meaning and relative importance in the American legal system of constitutional law, statutory law, administrative law, and case law;
9. explain the requirements that must be met before a lawsuit can be brought in a particular court by a specific party;
10. discuss and analyze basic matters of substantive law;
11. identify and explain how to conduct valid, timely and relevant legal research;
12. identify and describe the elements of successful investigation and interviews of clients and witnesses;
13. identify and describe the career prospects and job options for paralegals.

**Course Content:**

1. History and development of paralegals
2. The study of law and the paralegal profession
3. Paralegals in the legal system
   A. Basic qualifications
   B. Education
   C. Training
   D. Paralegal organizations
   E. Job options and career prospects
4. The American legal system
   A. Sources
   B. Functions
   C. Classification of the law
5. Structure of the court system
   A. Supreme court
   B. Appellate courts
   C. Superior and district courts
   D. Judicial selection,
E. Judicial bureaucracy
6. Structure of local government
   A. Executive branch
   B. Legislative branch
   C. Judicial branch
7. Litigation
   A. Civil
   B. Criminal
8. Conducting research
   A. Statutory law
   B. Court opinions/case law
9. Technology
   A. The role of computers in the law office
   B. Case management systems
   C. Technology in the court room
10. Conducting interviews
    A. Distinguishing between witnesses and clients
    B. The paralegal’s role and function
    C. Process

Methods of Presentation
1. Lecture/Discussion
2. Handouts and rule interpretations.
3. Guest speakers
4. Class and group discussions
5. Textbook reading assignments

Assignments and Methods of Evaluating Student Progress
1. Typical Assignments
   A. Draft intake questions for a mock client based on a provided fact pattern.
   B. Draft interview questions for a mock witness based on a provided fact pattern.
   C. Identify statutory law and case law in legal documents and how to conduct additional research.
   D. Use the Alameda and neighboring counties’ court websites, including the local rules, to research the individual courts requirements regarding tentative rulings, hearings, and discovery.
   E. Use the Alameda and neighboring counties’ court websites, including the local rules, to research the requirements regarding exhibits and technology during trials.

2. Methods of Evaluating Student Progress
   A. Attendance
   B. Final Examination
   C. Class Participation
   D. Written assignments
   E. Quizzes
   F. Midterm Examination

3. Student Learning Outcomes
   Upon the completion of this course, the student should be able to:
   A. Ability to summarize, compare and analyze the basics of paralegal work, the civil and criminal court system and understand relevant legal terminology.
   B. Research, interpret and analyze various sources of law, different types of evidence, and apply to legal investigations, interviews, and pleading documents.
   C. Understand billing, timekeeping and other law office procedures, as well as overall office management.

Textbooks (Typical):

Special Student Materials
Abbreviated Class Schedule Description:

This course will introduce students to the responsibilities and duties of a paralegal. It will provide an overview of the paralegal profession, including the paralegal’s role in the delivery of legal services.

Strongly Recommended: ADMJ 50 (completed with a grade of "C" or higher)