

Angelina College
Technology and Workforce Division
ON LINE Introduction to Law and the Legal Profession - 1307
Instructional Syllabus

I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

A. Course Description: *(as stated in the bulletin, including necessary pre-requisite courses, credit hours)*
Introduction to Law and the Legal Professions. Three credit hours. This course provides an overview of the law and the legal professions. Topics include legal concepts, systems and terminology; ethical obligations and regulations; professional trends and issues with particular emphasis on the paralegal. Prerequisites: none

B. Intended Audience:
Freshman course level, targeting those students interested in pursuit of a legal or paralegal career

C. Instructor:

Name: J. Dawn Armstrong

Office Location: Room 150, Technology and Workforce Building

Office Hours: By prior appointment

Phone: OFFICE- 936-633-5329 CELL- 936-676-2899 (call or text)

E-mail Address: darmstrong@angelina.edu or you can email me THROUGH THE "COURSE MESSAGES" LINK ON BLACKBOARD, WHICH IS UNDER THE "TOOLS" LINK

II. INTENDED STUDENT OUTCOMES:

A. Core Competencies – (Basic Intellectual Competencies)

1. Reading: Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials – books, articles, and documents. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.

2. Writing: Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Although correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are each a *sine qua non* in any composition, they do not automatically ensure that the composition itself makes sense or that the writer has much of anything to say. Students need to be familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic and how to develop and organize it, how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can be acquired only through practice and reflection.

3. Speaking: Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Developing this competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups, and through the media.

4. Listening: Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.

5. Critical Thinking: Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.

6. Computer Literacy: Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology, and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available. (*The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. ("Report of Subcommittee on Core Curriculum", March 1, 1989).*)

B. Exemplary Objectives – (Found in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Document. Titled: CORE CURRICULUM: ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS Dated: April 1998)
N/A

C. Course Objectives for all sections –

1. Demonstrate acquaintance with the general duties of a paralegal.
2. Develop a legal vocabulary and be able to explain fundamental legal concepts, systems and the ethical obligations of the legal professions with particular emphasis on the paralegal's role.
3. Encourage each student in deciding whether to pursue a paralegal education.

D. Course Objectives as determined by the instructor –

Same as above.

III. ASSESSMENT MEASURES OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

A. Assessments for the Core Intellectual Competencies –

1. Reading – Reading will be measured by the student's demonstration of understanding and interpreting assigned reading material and written instructions.
2. Writing – Writing will be measured by the student's completion of writing assignments in clear, correct, and coherent prose.
3. Speaking – Not emphasized.
4. Listening – As this is an internet based class, listening skills are not practically measurable.
5. Critical Thinking – Critical Thinking will be measured by the student demonstrating an ability to analyze case scenarios and applying case law or statutes to a fact situation through class assignments.
6. Computer Literacy – Computer literacy will be measured by the student's successful completion of assignments using Westlaw or Lexis.

B. Assessments for the Exemplary Objectives–

N/A

C. Assessments for Course Objectives for all sections –

1. Acquire a knowledge of the general duties of a paralegal through examinations and class assignments.
2. Develop a legal vocabulary through embedded questions in examinations, and through class assignments of case briefs.
3. Explain fundamental legal concepts, systems, and the ethical obligations of the legal professions with particular emphasis on the paralegal's role through embedded questions in examinations and through class assignments of case briefs.

NOTE: ALL COURSE OBJECTIVES WILL BE ASSESSED USING A RUBRIC WHICH INCORPORATES THE ANGELINA COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL RUBRIC FOR THE CORRESPONDING COURSE OBJECTIVE.

D. Assessments for the Course Objectives as determined by the instructor –

Same as above.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

A. Methodologies common to all sections

assignments, projects, class discussion (via internet), tests

B. Methodologies determined by the instructor

assignments and online discussion via internet.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:

A. Required Textbooks, Materials, and Equipment –

1. Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work (7TH Edition), Roger LeRoy Miller and Mary Meinzingher Urisko; West Publishing

B. Other Materials

1. Selected materials provided by instructor from various websites.

B. Assignments – *(Appropriate due dates, schedules, deadlines)*

1. Tests: Two tests of equal weight, combining multiple choice, matching, short answer, essay, true/false, and fill in the blanks will be given on the following dates:

a. MIDTERM - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7th at 6:00pm, in my classroom in the Technology and Workforce Building at Angelina College, room 152. Students MUST come to AC campus, OR to the testing center in Jasper, Livingston, or Crockett for the two written tests. If you plan to use the testing center in Jasper, Crockett or Livingston to take your tests, you must clear this with me at least one week in advance. Make ups or re-schedules will ONLY be given at my discretion, and are NOT likely.

b. FINAL EXAM (comprehensive final exam) - WEDNESDAY, MAY 2nd at 6:00pm. in the Technology and Workforce Building, room 152, same place as the midterm. Same instructions as above, if you wish to take the final exam at one of the other testing centers, please let me know at least one week in advance.

2.WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be given a weekly assignment each Monday. You will be able to see the weekly assignment or by going under the 'ASSIGNMENTS' link. Each weekly assignment will be due no later than 8:00 p.m. Thursday OF THAT SAME WEEK. Please submit to me, through Black Board, the completed assignment no later than 8:00 p.m. Thursday each week (or earlier if completed). Submit the assignments through Blackboard, either through the assignments link. Do not email it or send it through course messages, that makes it too hard for me to keep up with. The weekly assignments will consist of reading a chapter, answering certain questions, using certain internet resources, and participating in class discussions via the discussion link through Blackboard. The weekly assignments are extremely important because the majority of the test questions will be based on questions from the weekly assignments. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR GRADES UNDER THE "MY GRADES" LINK. EACH WEEK, I WILL GRADE THE ASSIGNMENTS, AND GIVE YOU FEEDBACK. I WILL ALSO SEND YOU, THROUGH COURSE MESSAGES, THE MODEL ANSWERS FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW THE MODEL ANSWER, BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF THE TEST QUESTIONS WILL COME FROM THE WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS.

NOTE: PLEASE WORK ON SCHEDULE OR NO MORE THAN ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE BECAUSE THE WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

3. THERE WILL BE TWO PROJECTS FOR THIS CLASS. THE GRADES FROM THE TWO PROJECTS WILL BE AVERAGED AND COUNT FOR 25% OF YOUR GRADE.

A. The first project will be to interview a paralegal or attorney in your community, and turn in a summary of that interview. You will receive specific instructions on the interview as the time gets closer,

B. The second project will be a case brief. I will also give you very specific instructions on how to do the case brief when the time gets closer. Both projects will be assigned after the midterm. The grades from the two projects will be averaged and that average will make up 25% of your grade.

C. Course Policies – (This course conforms to the policies of Angelina College as stated in the Angelina College Handbook.)

Academic Assistance – If you have a disability (as cited in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) that may affect your participation in this class, you should see Karen Bowser, Room 208 of the Student Center. At a post-secondary institution, you must self-identify as a person with a disability; Ms. Bowser will assist you with the necessary information to do so.

Attendance – Attendance, in the traditional sense of the word, is not applicable to an internet-based class; however, students must work in a diligent and timely manner so that all work assignments are completed by the assigned deadlines.

Additional Policies Established by the Individual Instructor – Assignments turned in after 8:00 p.m. of the date they are due, will have ten points deducted from the grade for that assignment. Assignments turned in after the corresponding Sunday at noon will result in a zero. Make up tests are given only as permitted by the instructor.

VI. COURSE CONTENT:

A. Required Content/ Topics – *(common to all sections)*

The course content will contain three units.

Unit One: The Paralegal Profession

Unit Two: Introduction to Law

Unit Three: Legal Procedures and Paralegal Skills

B. Additional Content *(as required by the individual Instructor)*

N/A

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING:

A. Grading Criteria *(percents, extra credit, etc.)*

1. The following four (4) grades will be of equal weight and averaged for a final grade:

- a. Test One - 25%
- b. Test Two (final exam) - 25%
- c. Average of the two Projects - 25%
- d. Average of Weekly Assignments - 25%

B. Determination of Grade *(assignment of letter grades)*

1. Each assignment given in conjunction with a particular chapter will be graded on a completion basis as follows:

1. Each weekly assignment will be given a grade of 0-100, based on the effort presented, the number of correct answers, and the timeliness of when the assignment is turned in. Assignments turned in after Sunday at noon of the week the assignment was given will result in a grade of zero.

2. Two tests of equal weight will be given. The second test, however, the final, is comprehensive. The grade from the two projects will be averaged, and that grade will make up 25% of your grade.

Letter Grades will be calculated as follows:

- A. 90 or above
- B. 80-89
- C. 70-79
- D. 60-69
- F. 59 or below

VIII. SYLLABUS MODIFICATION:

The instructor may modify the provisions of the syllabus to meet individual class needs by informing the class in advance as to the changes being made.