**Course Master Syllabus**

 **INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES - LGLA 1313**

#### I. Course Description / Prerequisites:

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

**II. Course Rationale / Objectives:**

This course is designed to provide the student grounding in the fundamentals of law and the American legal systems. It is also designed to begin the process of teaching the student to think critically and write clearly.

**III. Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes: The student will understand the ethical considerations of the paralegal working in a law office or agency; the range of duties and workplace expectations that paralegals face; various legal terms and concepts; and, various substantive and procedural areas of the law. The student will display effective written communication skills.
2. Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes:
3. To ensure that students understand a broad range of legal concepts and terms.
4. To ensure that students are able to perform legal research and identify and apply the salient holdings of appellate decisions to related fact patterns.
5. To ensure students ability to apply legal concepts to changing fact patterns.
6. To ensure students understanding of the basis for, and ability to draft, the documents used in a broad range of legal environments.
7. To encourage students to develop the initiative and work habits that will make them successful in a broad range of legal environments.
8. Ultimately, to prepare the student to perform well as a paralegal in a broad range of law office / law division environments.
9. SCANS Competencies: The SCANs Competencies that will be developed in this Course are listed on Exhibit A.

 **IV. Required/Recommended Texts:**

1. Required Purchase:
2. Goodrich, The Basics of Paralegal Studies
3. Schulze, Introduction to the American Legal System, and

Texas Courts **(Check with the instructor for current editions or changes)**

 B. Recommended Purchase:

 (1) Black’s Law Dictionary

**IV. Instructional Methodology:**

This course will be taught via a combined lecture and Socratic method format. Students will be expected to have absorbed the assigned material prior to class and to be able to respond to questions on the assigned material. In addition, students will perform “hands on” assignments and prepare written reports (formal themes) containing specified information.

**VIII. Course Evaluation System:**

1. There will be two mid-term exams and a non-comprehensive final examination as well as three written reports, which are required.

The weight accorded to each performance measure follows: (1) mid-term exams – 30 points each; (2) final – 30 points; (3) three statements of activity – 10 points

1. Total course points add to a 100-point system.
2. The final letter grade in the course will be based upon the percentage of total points received as follows:

A – 90-100

B – 80-89

C – 70-79

D – 60-69

F – 0-59

1. Only one make-up examination will be allowed. Make-up exams are given during the first class period after the exam is missed and cover only the material scheduled to be tested. Make-up exams NOT taken at such time will be COMPREHENSIVE and given on the last day of class immediately after the final exam.

**IX. Course Policies:**

1. Preparation for Class/Class Participation/Late Assignments

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of all students. If attendance or

compliance with other course policies is unsatisfactory, the instructor may withdraw students from the class.

The student will be expected to have read and absorbed all of the material assigned for a particular class session and to have any written work that is due that session ready to hand in at the beginning of class. Homework will be accepted late by prior arrangement. Class participation is encouraged. All students can expect to be called upon to answer questions at any time.

1. Attendance.

Class attendance is encouraged. **Absent and tardy students are responsible for obtaining missed notes and revised assignments from their classmates.**

1. Withdrawal.

**NOTE: \*\*\*The student – not the instructor—is responsible for submitting paperwork to withdraw from a class and receive a grade of “W.”** The instructor does, however, reserve the right to drop a student should the instructor feel, in his or her sole opinion, that it is necessary or proper. If a student does not fulfill all course requirements with a passing grade, the student will receive an “F” for the course, unless the student withdraws using the proper procedure within the time the college permits withdrawal.

If a student decides to withdraw, the student should verify that the withdrawal is submitted before the Final Withdrawal Date. The student is also strongly encouraged to retain a copy of the withdrawal form for his or her records. It is also the responsibility of each student to ensure that his or her name is removed from the instructor’s roll should that student decide to withdraw from the class.

State law permits a student to withdraw from no more than six courses during the student’s entire undergraduate career at Texas public colleges or universities. With certain exceptions, all course withdrawals automatically count towards this limit. Details regarding this policy can be found in the ACC college catalog.

Students who enroll for the third or subsequent time in a course taken since fall 2002 may be charged a higher tuition rate for that course.

1. Incompletes

An instructor may award a grade of “I” (Incomplete) if a student fails to complete all of the objectives required for a passing grade in a course. An “Incomplete” will not be granted in this course unless the student has a grade of “C” or better on the first two exams and a demonstrable emergency. An incomplete grade cannot be carried beyond the established date in the following semester. The completion date is determined by the instructor but may not be later than the final deadline for withdrawal in the subsequent semester.

1. Scholastic Dishonesty

A student attending ACC assumes responsibility for conduct compatible with the mission of the college as an educational institution. Students have the responsibility to submit coursework that is the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. Students must follow all instructions given by faculty or designated college representatives when taking examinations, placement assessments, tests, quizzes, and evaluations. Actions constituting scholastic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, collusion, and falsifying documents. Penalties for scholastic dishonesty will depend upon the nature of the violation and may range from lowering a grade on one assignment to an “F” in the course and/or expulsion from the college. See the Student Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Process and other policies at http://www.austincc.edu/current/needtoknow

1. Academic Freedom

Each student is expected to participate in class. In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, there are bound to be differing viewpoints. Students may not only disagree with each other on occasion, but the students and instructor may also find that they have disparate views. It is expected that these differences will enhance the class and create an atmosphere where students and instructor alike will be encouraged to think and learn. Accordingly, rest assured that no student’s grade will be adversely affected by any beliefs or ideas expressed in class.

1. Student Discipline

In the event, a student acts in such a way as to significantly interfere with or disrupt the learning atmosphere of the classroom, the instructor may direct the student to leave the class and may take other measures as appropriate. See the ACC Student Handbook on the web: <http://www.austincc.edu/handbook/>

1. Office of Students with Disabilities

Each ACC campus offers support services for students with documented disabilities.  Students with disabilities who need classroom, academic or other accommodations must request them through the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).   Students are encouraged to request accommodations when they register for courses or at least three weeks before the start of the semester, otherwise the provision of accommodations may be delayed.

Students who have received approval for accommodations from OSD for this course must provide the instructor with the ‘Notice of Approved Accommodations’ from OSD before accommodations will be provided.   Arrangements for academic accommodations can only be made after the instructor receives the ‘Notice of Approved Accommodations’ from the student.

Students with approved accommodations are encouraged to submit the ‘Notice of Approved Accommodations’ to the instructor at the beginning of the semester because a reasonable amount of time may be needed to prepare and arrange for the accommodations.

Additional information about the Office for Students with Disabilities is available at [http://www.austincc.edu/support/osd/](%20http%3A//www.austincc.edu/support/osd/)

1. Course Calendar

The Course Calendar is a separate document which will be provided with this syllabus.

1. Testing Center

General use of the testing center is not available to students in this course; however, students using the Academic Testing Center must govern themselves according to the Student Guide for Use of ACC Testing Centers and should read the entire guide before going to take the exam. To request an exam, one must have:

* [ACC Photo ID](http://www.austincc.edu/support/admissions/student_id.php)
* Course Abbreviation (e.g., LGLA)
* Course Number (e.g.,1311)
* Course Synonym (e.g., 10123)
* Course Section (e.g., 005)
* Instructor's Name

Do NOT bring cell phones to the Testing Center. Having your cell phone in the testing room, **regardless of whether it is on or off**, will revoke your testing privileges for the remainder of the semester. ACC Testing Center policies can be found at http://www.austincc.edu/testctr/

1. Student and Instructional Services

ACC strives to provide exemplary support to its students and offers a broad variety of opportunities and services. Information on these services and support systems is available at:  [http://www.austincc.edu/s4/](http://www.austincc.edu/current/)

Links to many student services and other information can be found at: http://www.austincc.edu/current/

Tutoring is not available for this course; however, ACC Learning Labs do provide free tutoring services to all ACC students currently enrolled in a course that provides tutoring. The tutor schedule for each Learning Lab may be found at: <http://www.autincc.edu/tutor/students/tutoring.php>

For help setting up your ACCeID, ACC Gmail, or ACC Blackboard, see a Learning Lab Technician at any ACC Learning Lab.

1. Use of ACC email

All College e-mail communication to students will be sent solely to the student’s ACCmail account, with the expectation that such communications will be read in a timely fashion. ACC will send important information and will notify you of any college related emergencies using this account. Students should only expect to receive email communication from their instructor using this account. Likewise, students should use their ACCmail account when communicating with instructors and staff. Instructions for activating an ACCmail account can be found at <http://www.austincc.edu/accmail/index.php>

1. Safety Statement

Austin Community College is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. You are expected to learn and comply with ACC environmental, health and safety procedures and agree to follow ACC safety policies. Additional information on these can be found at http://www.austincc.edu/ehs. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the Emergency Procedures poster and Campus Safety Plan map in each classroom. Additional information about emergency procedures and how to sign up for ACC Emergency Alerts to be notified in the event of a serious emergency can be found at http://www.austincc.edu/emergency/.

Please note, you are expected to conduct yourself professionally with respect and courtesy to all. Anyone who thoughtlessly or intentionally jeopardizes the health or safety of another individual will be dismissed from the day’s activity, may be withdrawn from the class, and/or barred from attending future activities.

**LEGAL DISCLAIMER**

Everything that is discussed in the classroom or individually with the instructor is strictly for educational purposes only. The instructor will not and does not provide legal advice to any student. Nor shall any comments from the instructor be considered legal advice.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**SCANS Competencies**

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**Students in this course will be expected to use or achieve the following competencies:**

**Resources**

1.1. Allocates Time: Allocates time between coursework/work/family/ friends.

**Interpersonal**

2.1. Participates as a Member of a Team: Works cooperatively with others where teamwork is appropriate.

* 1. Teaches Others: Explains concepts in class.

2.3. Negotiates: Works toward an agreement on the validity of exam on the exam questions.

2.4. Works with Cultural Diversity: Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds in the context of the class.

**Information**

3.1. Acquires and Evaluates Information: Extracts crucial legal issues from legal hypotheticals and court cases.

3.2. Organizes and Maintains Information: Takes notes on assigned material for use in class.

3.3. Interprets and Communicates Information: Evaluates assigned material and explains it to the class.

3.4. Uses Computers to Process Information: Employs computers to process course notes and to obtain, analyze, and brief court cases.

**Technology**

5.2. Applies Technology to Tasks: Understands the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and using computers and their programs.

**Basic Skills**

* 1. Reading: Locates, understands, and interprets written information in the text and assigned projects.

6.2. Writing: Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages effectively in writing.

6.3. Listening: Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages during class lectures and discussions.

6.4. Speaking: Organizes ideas and effectively communicates thoughts when being questioned in class and during class discussions.

**Thinking Skills**

7.1. Creative Thinking: Uses imagination freely, combines ideas in new ways when discussing hypothetical problems.

7.2. Decision Making: Chooses the best alternative in multiple-choice questions.

7.3. Problem Solving: Recognizes problems in hypothetical situations and identifies possible solutions.

7.4 Knowing How to Learn: Finds the important information in class discussions and texts and consolidates that information into a useable format.

7.5. Reasoning: Identifies the crucial issue in hypotheticals and recognizes the potential application of the rule in the case to other cases with similar facts and circumstances.

**Personal Qualities**

8.1. Responsibility: Exerts a high level of effort and perseverance in effectively preparing for class and class discussions.

8.2. Self-Management: Motivates self through goal achievement; exhibits self-control and responds to feedback unemotionally and non-defensively; is a "self-starter."

8.3. Integrity/Honesty: Can be trusted to accomplish her/his own work without excessive involvement of other students.