

McLennan
C O M M U N I T Y
COLLEGE

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

AND

INSTRUCTOR PLAN

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

LGLA - 2307 - 50

KRISTY TURNER

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

COVID 19 Notice:

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID 19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website on any changes to these guidelines.

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

2307.50

Course Description:

Presents fundamental principles and structure of management, administrative and substantive systems in the law office. Includes law practice technology as applied to paralegals.

Offered only in the fall semester.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites: None.

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

Recommended: Passing score on the TSI Assessment or concurrent enrollment in READ 0302.

Semester Hours 3 (3 lec)

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Kristy Turner

MCC E-mail: kturner@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: 254-715-1590—Please no calls after 9 p.m.

Other Instruction Information: Please leave a message with Dorothy Johnson at 299-8238.

Required Text & Materials:

Title: Practical Law Office Management

Author: Traina

Edition: 4th

Publisher: Cengage Learning

ISBN-13: 9781305577923

MCC Bookstore Website: <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Lecture, discussion groups, group projects, lab exercises, projects, written reports/papers, exams, quizzes, and/or tutorial software.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

1. Introduce the student to the “behind the scenes” workings and management of a law office.
2. Prepare the student on what a legal assistant is expected to accomplish administratively once on-the-job.

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

2307.50

3. Review the types of law offices, staff positions, and possible office structures in different types of law offices.
4. Educate the student on common ethical and malpractice problems for attorneys and legal assistants and how to avoid or handle the concerns/problems.
5. Explain the importance of timekeeping, billing, types of legal fee agreements, and use of client funds in a law office.
6. Introduce the concept of total quality management and the importance of providing quality legal services to clients.
7. Explain the importance of docket control and its relationship to malpractice, ethics, and providing quality services to clients.
8. Introduce the student to law library management, file management, and law office equipment and space management/leases.
9. Educate the student on many law offices; increased use of technology in providing legal services to clients and administratively.
10. Introduce and explain the fundamental aspects of management.

Explain law office marketing concepts and techniques.

Chapter 1

Discuss the titles and duties of each member of legal team.

Explain the trends in paralegal's salaries and fringe benefits.

Identify alternate law office organization structures.

Identify the functions of law office management.

Explain the "systems view" of management.

Chapter 2

Discuss what a staff manual is and why it is important.

Differentiate between a policy and a procedure.

Discuss total quality management philosophies.

Explain marketing and various marketing options that are available.

Identify ethical problems that may arise in carrying out a marketing plan.

Define "mission statement".

Explain the planning process.

Chapter 3

Define what the unauthorized practice of law is and list factors that are used to determine whether a paralegal is "practicing law".

Discuss the voluntary ethical codes established by national legal assistant associations.

Explain the attorney-client privilege and to whom it applies.

List guidelines that will prevent legal assistant from accidentally revealing confidential client information.

Explain what a conflict of interest is and what a law office can do to limit conflict of interest problems.

Discuss what the “Chinese Wall” is and when it applies.

List the most common types of ethical complaints filed against law firms or attorneys.

Chapter 4

Discuss factors that will promote effective client relationships.

Discuss ways to communicate effectively.

Identify communication barriers.

Explain the importance of good listening skills.

Identify the pros and cons of using groups to make decisions.

Discuss the characteristics of a leader.

Chapter 5

Differentiate between timekeeping and billing.

Recognize major types of legal agreements.

Know the difference between billable and nonbillable time.

Explain the concept of leveraging.

Explain how to set an hourly billing rate using the Rule of Three.

Discuss how the billing process works and what it entails.

Differentiate between an earned and an unearned retainer.

Chapter 6

Understand the importance of trust/escrow accounts.

Differentiate between gross income and net income.

Discuss the importance of cash flow.

Define income, gross income, and net income.

Explain the budgeting process.

Discuss what internal controls are.

Chapter 7

Explain how to make docketing entries.

Discuss how to calculate court deadlines.

Explain why a poor docket system is harmful to a law office.

Differentiate between manual and computerized docket systems.

Discuss how a computerized docketing cycle process works.

Explain how a poor docket control system leads to ethical and malpractice claims.

Chapter 8

Define and discuss the term employment–at-will.

Discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Define what sexually harassing conduct is.

List questions that cannot lawfully be asked in an employment interview.

List questions that should be covered when performing reference checks.

Explain the coaching technique.

Discuss when terminating an employee is appropriate.

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

2307.50

Explain what positive discipline is.

Chapter 9

Discuss alphabetic and numeric filing systems.

Explain centralized and decentralized filing systems.

Discuss the importance of closing and purging files.

Explain why library ordering should be centralized.

Give examples of how library costs can be reduced.

Course Outline or Schedule:

This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in the classroom.

Week 1

Orientation and brief introduction to class

Week 2

The Legal Team, Law Practices, and Law Firm Governance

Week 3

Legal Administration and Technology

Week 4

Test over Weeks 1-3

Week 5

Ethics and Malpractice

Week 6

Client Relations and Communication Skills

Week 7

Test over Weeks 5-6

Week 8

Legal Fees, Timekeeping, and Billing

Week 9

Legal Fees, Timekeeping, and Billing

Week 10

Test over Weeks 8-9

Week 11

Client Trust Funds and Law Office Accounting

Week 12

Calendaring, Docket Control, and Case Management

Week 13

Test over Weeks 11-12

Week 14

Legal Marketing

Week 15

File and Law Library Management

Week 16

Final exam

Course Grading Information:

Grading will be based on the following standard:

- A = 90 – 100
- B = 80 - 89
- C = 70 - 79
- D = 60 - 69
- F = Below 60

1. Tests

There will be nine major tests. If you take all nine tests, your final project grade can count not only as your final grade but also be substituted for your lowest test grade, if that is to your advantage. If you fail to turn in the final project, that grade will be zero. No makeup tests or final projects are allowed. If you make below a 70 on any of your major tests, you must meet with me to discuss your score; it is your responsibility to schedule a time for that meeting.

2. Quizzes

Reading quizzes may be given covering your reading assignments.

3. Assignments

You will have chapter assignments and one major final project assignment due during the semester. Assignment details will be distributed separately.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, because all assignments are considered necessary to your success in preparation for your career, it is within the instructor's discretion to require that all assignments be completed for you to receive a final grade in the course; if an assignment remains undone, the instructor may assign a final grade of "incomplete", which over time automatically changes to an "F" if the assignment remains uncompleted.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Ch. 1 Quiz	100 points
Ch. 2 Quiz	100 points
Ch. 3 Quiz	100 points
Chs. 4 & 5 Quiz	200 points
Ch. 6 Quiz	100 points
Ch. 7 Quiz	100 points
Ch. 8 Quiz	100 points
Ch. 9 Quiz	100 points
Final Project	950

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

2307.50

A = 1850-1665
B = 1664-1480
C = 1479-1295
D = 1294-1110
F = Below 1110

A grade of C or better in all required LGLA courses is a prerequisite to graduation with a Legal Assistant degree.

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

All assignments must be completed on time. **No assignments will be accepted after the due date.** Any variance from this policy is within the instructor's discretion.

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

In general, students are expected to maintain classroom decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular attendance, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the education opportunity.

Students should demonstrate courtesy and respect to all instructors, guests, and fellow learners. While honest discussion and debate of topics is expected and encouraged, such interactions should not involve aggressive, derogatory, or hostile behaviors (verbal or otherwise). The instructor reserves the right to act to protect the decorum of the learning environment and the image of MCC.

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY POLICIES:

1. Please turn your cell phones to silent vibrate (no sound to emit at all). No use of iPods, pagers, electronic devices, etc. is allowed during class. Do not make calls, text message, or use electronic devices during class. If you have an emergency and need to take a call, let your instructor know and gain approval.
2. Electronic hand-held schedulers may not be used during class, i.e., Palm Pilot, Blackberry, Blackjack, iPhone, etc. You can write the information in your handwritten notes and transfer it to the scheduler outside of class.
3. Use of a laptop requires prior permission and adherence to laptop use policies.
4. If you violate any of the above-listed policies, your final grade will be reduced by three (3) points per occurrence at the end of the semester. The instructor may collect the device used in the violation and take it to her desk during that class period. This policy is subject to change.

The determination of student conduct as unacceptable is in the sole discretion of the instructor and the consequences of unacceptable conduct is in the instructor's sole discretion and can

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

2307.50

include removal from the classroom on a temporary or permanent basis and withdrawal of the student from the course by the instructor, possibly with a grade of “F”.

[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

(<https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html>)

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have additional guidelines specific to this course.

McLennan

C O M M U N I T Y

COLLEGE

ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu. Students may visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to schedule a meeting with a Success Coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff based on household size. Text (254) 870-7573 to schedule a pantry appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html> to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf.

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html> for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (<http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

Accommodations/ADA Statement:

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit www.mclennan.edu/disability.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu

254-299-8122

Room 319, Student Services Center

Title IX:

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Chief of Staff for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>.

Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at www.mclennan.edu/titleix/. It contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.