



WACO, TEXAS

---

**COURSE SYLLABUS AND  
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**INTRODUCTION TO LAW  
LGLA 1311 50**

**CHARLES L. NEEDHAM**

**NOTE: This a 16-week course.**

**Course Description:**

Presents legal terminology relating to substantive areas of law and the federal and state judicial systems. Emphasizes the paralegals role in the legal system. Topics include: legal terminology, categorizing substantive areas of law and the federal and state judicial system, and identifying ethical considerations of the paralegal relating to the legal profession. Offered only in spring semester.

1. Introduces the roles and overlapping functions of lawyers, legal assistants, legal secretaries and other legal support staff;
2. Covers certain specializations within the practice of law, the structure of law firms which perform legal services in these specialties, and the role of the paralegal in each area of specialization;
3. Discussed legal professionalism;
4. Teaches the primary ethics governing the practice of law and outlines the duties a legal assistant may perform, under adequate supervision of an attorney, and the avoidance of unauthorized practice of law;
5. Introduces and review sources of American law, the court system, alternative dispute resolution, fundamental legal concepts, federal and state law, and administrative rules and regulations;
6. Introduces a systemic approach to paralegal performance, incorporating awareness of the inter-relationships between and among various areas of legal specialization.

**Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:**

None.

**Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:**

Success will depend upon the student acquisition and development of analytical, communication, reading, and speaking skills. Good writing skills are essential. The student must strive to follow the rules of English grammar and punctuation in the drafting of a variety of legal documents, such as legal briefs, motions, and pleadings.

**Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: Charles L. Needham

MCC E-mail: Cneedham@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: 299-8238 to leave a message

Office Location: Classroom – MAC 302

---

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: Tuesdays at  
5:15 – 6:30 PM in MAC 302 – Any questions or  
concerns can be addressed during the conference  
period. Personal concerns should be not be  
discussed during class. The conference period is  
the appropriate time.

**Required Text & Materials:**

Title: *Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work*

Author: Roger LeRoy Miller & Mary Meinzinger Urisko

Edition: 6th

Publisher: Delmar

ISBN: 13:978-4390-5701-8

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

**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, we encourage you to contact a success coach by calling (254) 299-8226. Students can visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to meet with a success coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) is open 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, without an appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

**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 contacted/notified through 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.

\* [Click Here for the Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace](http://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements)  
([www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements](http://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements))  
Click on the link above for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

**Methods of Teaching and Learning:**

Lecture, discussion groups, group projects, computer lab exercises, projects, student performances/presentations, written reports/papers, exams and quizzes.

---

---

**Course Objectives and/or Competencies:**

1. Develop a productive approach to the study of substantive and procedural areas of the law;
2. How to prepare and conduct client and witness interviews, as well as knowing how to formulate strategies and techniques for the planning and conducting of investigations;
3. How to work, under attorney supervision, in the area of criminal law and procedures, with an emphasis on constitutional safeguards;
4. How to perform paralegal tasks in matters related to tort law, product liability, and consumer law;
5. How to provide paralegal services in the areas of contracts, and in the increasingly important areas of intellectual property law, such as patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets;
6. How to perform legal services related to the acquisition, holding, and transfers of real property, as well as risk management involving insurance contracts;
7. How to assist attorneys and other legal professionals in resolving issues related to the legal rights of parents and children, division of marital property, and the various devices that are used in estate planning and probate;
8. How to work with people in the business environment and to understand the forms of business organization, agency relationships, the significance of agency law for business operations, and how the government, both state and federal, regulates employer-employee relationships;
9. How to assist clients in navigating the procedures involved in bankruptcy proceedings under the federal bankruptcy code;
10. How to work with legal professionals to prevent, or to resolve, disputes in the increasingly complex area of civil rights law; and
11. Know and be able to apply the standards for determining unethical attorney and paralegal practices.

This schedule is subject to change and students will be notified about any changes by announcement in class.

**Course Outline or Schedule:**

# Introduction to Law

LGLA 1311 50

Week 1 Chapter 11	<p>Orientation to the course</p> <p>Introduction to <i>Interviews and Investigations</i></p> <p>Investigation and the <b>Federal and</b> Texas Rules of Evidence</p> <p>Planning the interview</p> <p>Interviewing skills</p> <p>Interviewing <b>your client</b></p> <p>Practical exercise: Motor Vehicle accident interviews</p> <p>Interview summaries and follow-up tasks</p> <p>Begin work on individual assignments</p>
Week 2 Chapter 11	<p>Practical exercises:</p> <p>interviews Interviewing <b>witnesses</b></p> <p>Planning and conducting investigations</p> <p>Creating Investigative plans</p> <p>Accessing Government information (FOIA and Open Records)</p> <p>Individual <u>assignments</u> should be <b>completed</b> for review</p> <p>Begin readings for chapter 13</p>
Week 3 Chapter 13	<p><b>Exam on Chapter 11:</b> Interview and Investigations Introduction to <i>Criminal law and procedures</i> Defining criminal acts</p> <p>Civil torts and crimes: distinctions</p> <p>Elements of criminal liability (<i>actus reus and mens rea</i>)</p> <p>Affirmative defenses and statutes of limitation</p> <p>Types of crimes</p> <p>Cybercrimes and prosecution</p> <p>Constitutional Law and citizen safeguards (<i>Miranda</i>, and exclusionary rules)</p> <p>Read <i>Holt v. State</i> and Instructors' brief of the case. Begin work on individual assignments</p>
Week 4 Chapter 13	<p>Criminal Procedures prior to prosecution</p> <p>Arrests, detentions, probable cause, and warrants</p> <p>Police investigations</p> <p>Prosecutions; initial appearances, preliminary hearings, and grand juries Arraignment and pretrial motions</p> <p>Motions to suppress</p> <p>Motions to dismiss, change of venue, recusal, and severance</p> <p>Discovery during prosecution and defense preparation</p> <p>Trial, sentencing and pre-trial diversion options</p> <p>Appeal of criminal convictions</p> <p>Individual <u>assignments</u> should be <b>completed</b> for review.</p> <p>Begin readings on Chapter 14</p>

# Introduction to Law

LGLA 1311 50

Week 5 Chapter 14	<b>Exam on Chapter 13:</b> Introduction to <i>tort law, product liability, and consumer law</i> The basis of tort law Intentional torts against persons, personal property, and real property Negligence torts and duty of care; breaches of duty Causation and damages (the injury requirement) Defenses to negligence claims, <i>negligence per se</i> , and other negligence statutes Cyber torts Strict liability Work on individual assignments
Week 6 Chapter 14	Product liability, theories and defenses Assumption of risks, misuse, comparative negligence, known dangers Class actions Introduction to consumer law Deceptive advertising Consumer Protection: Truth-in-Lending Act
	Fair Debt Collection Act Garnishment proceedings and Texas exemptions Individual <b>assignments</b> should be <b>completed</b> for review. Begin readings on Chapter 15
Week 7 Chapter 15	<b>Exam on chapter 14</b> Introduction to <i>Contracts and Intellectual Property Law</i> Requirements of a valid contract: agreement, consideration, capacity, legality Defenses to contracts or clauses Statute of Frauds Sales contracts, warranties, and UCC Continue to work on individual assignments for this chapter
Week 8 Chapter 15	Contract performance and remedies Damages; compensatory, consequential, liquidated, and punitive Rescission, restitution, and reformation Electronic contracting Intellectual property law Patent, trademarks, copyrights Trademarks and related property Infringement and dilution Trade secrets and misappropriation Individual assignments should be completed for review. Begin readings on Chapter 16

# Introduction to Law

LGLA 1311 50

Week 9 Chapter 16	<b>Exam on chapter 15</b> Introduction to Real Property and Insurance Law Ownership rights: fee simple, joint tenancy, and tenancy in common Life estates and future interests Transfer and sale of real property Contract formation and escrow Disclosure, inspection, title insurance, and closing Leases Insurance law: terminology, insurable interest, and insurance contracts Coinsurance, indemnity, and subrogation Good & bad faith in insurance law Individual <b>assignments</b> should be <b>completed</b> for review Begin readings on Chapter 17
Week 10 Chapter 17	<b>Exam on Chapter 16</b> Introduction to <i>Family law and Estates</i> Marriage requirements and (Texas) common law marriage Marital duties
	Parental rights and obligations Adoptions Termination of marriages; divorce, child conservatorship, and possession Spousal support and (Texas) factors for consideration Property division: separate and community Prenuptial agreements and "QUADROS" Introduction to wills, trusts, and estates Requirements of a valid will and the probate process Trusts and estate planning Individual <b>assignments</b> should be <b>completed</b> for review Begin work on <b>major assignment</b> on Chapter 18 (business torts) Begin readings for Chapter 18
Week 11 Chapter 18	<b>Exam on Chapter 17</b> <i>Business Organizations and Employment Law</i> Forms of Business organization Sole proprietorships Partnership, Corporations. Assumed names Classifications of corporations; private, public, publically held, close Directors, officers, shareholders, taxation, and termination Limited liability companies: LLPs and PCs



## Introduction to Law

LGLA 1311 50

Week 12 Chapter 18	Introduction to employment law, Texas and Federal Employment at will Wrongful discharge Labor laws, to include FLSA Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Workers' Compensation Employment Discrimination Title VII, also Age Discrimination and the ADA Act Sexual harassment and Title VII protection The EEOC and Texas Workforce Commission (HRD) Individual assignments for Chapter 18 should be completed for review. Begin readings for chapter 19.
Week 13 Chapter 19	<b>Exam on Chapter 18</b> Introduction to Bankruptcy law The Bankruptcy Code and 2005 Reform Goals of bankruptcy law and Bankruptcy Courts Types of Bankruptcy: Title 11 U.S. Code: Chapters 7, 11, and 13
	Voluntary bankruptcy Chapter 7 schedules and "the Matrix" Means testing Dismissals and grounds for relies Involuntary bankruptcy The "automatic stay" and exceptions Creditors' meeting and proofs of claim Exemptions: Federal and State Trustees and distribution to secured and unsecured creditors Exception to discharge Chapter 13 filings Chapter 11 filing and reorganization plans (Debtor in Possession) <b>Exam on Chapter 19</b>

## Introduction to Law

LGLA 1311 50

Week 14 Review	<p>Individual <b>assignments</b> for chapter 19 should be completed for review</p> <p>The class will begin a Review of all chapters in preparation for the FINAL EXAM. Questions on Chapter 19 will be included in the Final Exam. The Final Exam will be comprehensive of all chapters.</p> <p>All individual, class, and major assignments, to include make-up work and extra-credit work, must be submitted this week.</p> <p>Events and assignments are subject to change. Students will be informed in class at the earliest possible time of any changes.</p> <p>Please consult Class Syllabus for attendance and grading policies.</p> <p>Class Participation: The study of law is a systemic process involving the paralegal as a member of a team. Participation in class discussions is an indicator of interest in the subject matter. Participation also indicates a willingness to share insights, and to help clarify the issues being presented.</p>
----------------	---

### **Course Grading Information:**

The system of grading will be based on the following objective standards (no “curve” methods will be used):

A=90-100

B=80-89

C=70-79

D=60-69

F=Below 60

The activities used to determine the grade will be weighted as follows:

Tests and Final	65%
Reading quizzes	25%
<b>Final Grade for Course</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Tests and Final Exam**

The course grades will be calculated as follows:

There will be at least five major tests and one comprehensive final. If a student misses one of the five tests, the final test grade will be used as the grade for the missed test as well as the final test grade. If a student misses any additional tests, these missed test grades will be zero.

If the student takes all five tests, the final test grade can count not only as the final test grade, but may also be substituted for the lowest major test grade, if such is to the student's advantage. No makeup tests or finals are allowed. If the student makes below 70 on any major test, the student must meet

---

with me to discuss the score; it is the student's responsibility to schedule a time for that meeting. The student will be informed of the necessity of such conferences by notation on the test paper returned to the student.

### **Production of Legal Documents**

The production of legal documents, such as Motions, Pleadings, Briefs, and related materials. These documents will be reviewed by the instructor, and he will identify corrections as necessary. The students will revise the work, print out the document, and hand in to the instructor. All documents will be placed in the student's personal Litigation Binder for review at all class sessions.

### **Professionalism Grade**

The Professional Grade is 100 at the beginning of the semester. Each time the student does not follow the rules of the class, 5 to 10 points will be deducted from the Professionalism grade. 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.

1. Seating Chart – Each student will be assigned a seat. For each class, each student needs to go to his/her assigned seat.

2. Roll Call – The attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If you are not present at the beginning of the class, you will be counted absent. Anyone entering the classroom 10 minutes late, will continue to be counted absent for that class. When you are late, please enter the classroom quietly. 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. Please tell the instructor your reasons for being late during office hours or breaks from class.

a. MCC has a 25% absence rate policy which is four absences for this class.

b. When you reach 25% absences in the class (reach your 5th absence), you will be dropped from the class.

c. If a student leaves class before class is dismissed, that student will be counted absent for the class. Individual cases will be handled privately.

a. MCC has a 25% absence rate policy which is four absences for this class.

b. When you reach 25% absences in the class (reach your 5th absence), you will be dropped from the class.

## Introduction to Law

### LGLA 1311 50

---

c. If a student leaves class before class is dismissed, that student will be counted absent for the class. Individual cases will be handled privately.

3. Show courtesy to your fellow students.

a. You may not carry on a nonessential conversations with your neighbor during class. Other students want to hear what the instructor has to say. The instructor will ask the students to stop these conversations. If these students do not stop, the instructor will ask the students to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class. The students will be counted absent from the class and 10 points will be deducted from your Professionalism grade.

b. Assignments are a part of the course. Please listen to the assignment and accept the assignment as part of what you need to do for the class.

c. You may ask questions during the lecture, but the questions must be pertinent to the topic being discussed. If you need to visit with the instructor regarding other topics, he is available at his conference time at 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. the day of the class.

4. All work turned in for grading must be keyed into a word processor and printed out.

5. Please sign out of your computer each night.

6. Computers are to be used only for official classroom work. Do not print while the instructor is lecturing. If you are found doing other work than what is assigned or on any other site than instructed, your professionalism grade will be deducted 10 points.

7 Cell phones are to be kept out of sight in your book bag. You may not text or receive texts or use the phone in class. Ten points will be deducted for each infraction of this rule.

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

**MCC Academic Integrity Statement and Course Specific Academic Integrity Statement.**

### **Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:**

Late or untimely submission of work can have severe consequences in the profession of law. Therefore, all class assignments must be completed on time. For each week that an assignment is turned in past its due date, ten points will be deducted from the grade. In any event, assignments must be submitted within two weeks of the due date; after that time, the assignment grade is zero.

Requests for deviation or exception to late work policies, make-up policies, and other work policies must be addressed to the instructor, with a clear explanation of the reason(s) for the proposed exception to the policies concerning timely submission, and any proposals for remedies must not prejudice the interests of other students, nor offend fundamental standards of fairness.

### **Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:**

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.

\* **[Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement](#)**

([www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity))

The link above will provide you with information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

\* **[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](#)**

([www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies](http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies))

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

### **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. Instructors should not provide accommodations unless approved by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit [mclennan.edu/disability](http://mclennan.edu/disability).

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

[disabilities@mclennan.edu](mailto:disabilities@mclennan.edu)

254-299-8122

Room 319, Student Services Center

\* **[Click Here for more information about Title IX](http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix)**  
(**[www.mclennan.edu/titleix](http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix)**)

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](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Vice President for Student Success) at 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC by calling 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students.

McLennan's Title IX webpage (<http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/>) 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.

\* *You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Chrome, or Safari) to print each link's information.*