

McLennan
C O M M U N I T Y
C O L L E G E

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN

INTRODUCTION TO LAW

LGLA 1311.01

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 at <https://www.mclennan.edu/crisis-management/coronavirus-updates/index.html> on any changes to these guidelines.

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.

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: Kristy Turner

MCC E-mail: kturner@mclennan.edu

Phone Number: 254-715-1590 (please no calls after 9 p.m.)

Office Location: Classroom – BTB 223 leave a message with Dorothy Johnson

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work* Author: Roger LeRoy Miller & Mary Meinzinger Urisko
Edition: 7th

Publisher: Delmar

ISBN: 13:978-1-305-50608-4

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

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 law;
2. Be able to define various forms of law and know their sources, including the areas of business organizations, torts, wills and estates, and bankruptcy;
3. Know the jurisdiction and function of administrative agencies;
4. Develop interviewing and investigatory skills.

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

Course Outline or Schedule:

Week 1 Chapter 11	Orientation to the course Introduction to <i>Interviews and Investigations</i> Investigation and the Federal and Texas Rules of Evidence Planning the interview Interviewing skills Interviewing your client Practical exercise: Motor Vehicle accident interviews Interview summaries and follow-up tasks Begin work on individual assignments
Week 2 Chapter 11	Practical exercise: Family law interviews Interviewing witnesses Planning and conduction investigations Creating Investigative plans Accessing Government information (FOIA and Open Records) Individual assignments should be completed for review Begin readings for chapter 13
Week 3 Chapter 13	Quiz on Chapter 11: Interview and Investigations Introduction to <i>Criminal law and procedures</i> Defining criminal acts Civil torts and crimes: distinctions Elements of criminal liability (<i>actus reus and mens rea</i>) Affirmative defenses and statutes of limitation Types of crimes Cybercrimes and prosecution Constitutional Law and citizen safeguards (<i>Miranda</i> , and exclusionary rules) Read <i>Holt v. State</i> and Instructors' brief of the case. Begin work on individual assignments

<p>Week 4</p> <p>Chapter 13</p>	<p>Criminal Procedures prior to prosecution</p> <p>Arrests, detentions, probable cause, and warrants Police investigations</p> <p>Prosecutions; initial appearances, preliminary hearings, and grand juries</p> <p>Arraignment and pretrial motions</p> <p>Motions to suppress</p> <p>Motions to dismiss, change of venue, recusal, and severance Discovery during prosecution and defense preparation</p> <p>Trial, sentencing and pre-trial diversion options Appeal of criminal convictions</p> <p>Individual <u>assignments</u> should be completed for review.</p> <p>Begin readings on Chapter 14</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Chapter 14</p>	<p>Introduction to <i>tort law, product liability, and consumer law</i>.</p> <p>Intentional torts against persons, personal property, and real property Negligence torts and duty of care; breaches of duty</p> <p>Causation and damages (the injury requirement)</p> <p>Defenses to negligence claims, <i>negligence per se</i>, and other negligence statutes</p> <p>Cyber torts</p> <p>Strict liability</p> <p>Work on individual assignments</p> <p>Product liability, theories and defenses</p> <p>Assumption of risks, misuse, comparative negligence, known dangers Class actions</p> <p>Introduction to consumer law Deceptive advertising</p> <p>Consumer Protection: Truth-in-Lending Act</p> <p>Fair Debt Collection Act</p> <p>Garnishment proceedings and Texas exemptions</p> <p>Begin readings on Chapter 15</p>

Week 6 Chapter 15	Test/Quiz on chapter 14 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 7 Chapter 15	Contact 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
Week 8 Chapter 16	Test/Quiz Chapter 15 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 <u>assignments</u> should be completed for review Begin readings on Chapter 17

Week 9 Chapter 17	<p>Test/Quiz on Chapter 16</p> <p>Introduction to <i>Family law and Estates</i></p> <p>Marriage requirements and (Texas) common law marriage</p> <p>Marital duties</p> <p>Parental rights and obligations Adoptions</p> <p>Termination of marriages; divorce, child conservatorship, and possession Spousal support and (Texas) factors for consideration</p> <p>Property division: separate and community Prenuptial agreements and “QUADROS” Introduction to wills, trusts, and estates</p> <p>Requirements of a valid will and the probate process Trusts and estate planning</p> <p>Individual <u>assignments</u> should be completed for review</p> <p>Begin work on major assignment on Chapter 18 (business torts)</p> <p>Begin readings for Chapter 18</p>
Week 10 Chapter 18	<p><i>Business Organizations and Employment Law</i></p> <p>Forms of Business organization Sole proprietorships Partnership, Corporations.</p> <p>Assumed names</p> <p>Classifications of corporations; private, public, publically held, close Directors, officers, shareholders, taxation, and termination</p> <p>Limited liability companies: LLPs and PCs</p>
Week 11 Chapter 18	<p>Test/Quiz Chapter 17</p> <p>Introduction to employment law Employment at will</p> <p>Wrongful discharge</p> <p>Labor laws, to include FLSA Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)</p> <p>Workers’ Compensation Employment Discrimination</p> <p>Title VII, also Age Discrimination and the ADA Act Sexual harassment and Title VII protection</p> <p>The EEOC and Texas Workforce Commission (HRD)</p> <p>Individual assignments for Chapter 18 should be completed for review.</p> <p>Begin readings for chapter 19.</p>

Week 12 Chapter 19	Test/Quiz on Chapter 18 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 relief 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)
Week 13 Review	All individual, class, and major assignments must be submitted this week. Events and assignments are subject to change. Students will be informed in class at the earliest possible time of any changes. Please consult Class Syllabus for attendance and grading policies. 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.
Final Exam 5/5	Final Exam covering Chapter 19

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/Quizzes and Final	65%
Class Assignments	25%
Professionalism	10%
Final Grade for Course	100%

Tests/Quizzes and Final Exam

There will be chapter tests/quizzes.

No makeup tests 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.

Tests will cover information presented in lectures, assignments, as well as any information contained in your required textbook.

1. Quizzes

Reading quizzes may be given covering your reading assignments. These quizzes will be available on Brightspace. No make-ups are allowed on these quizzes and deadlines will not be extended.

2. Assignments

You will have chapter assignments.

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.

All assignments must be completed on time. **No late work will be accepted! Do NOT ask!**

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

Work not completed on time will not be accepted. See Course Grading Information for more details.

Attendance

Absence from 25 percent of scheduled lecture and/or laboratory meetings results in withdrawal from the course. Students can accomplish their own withdrawal with a “W” until the 60% point of the course. Students not dropped by that point will receive the grade as calculated in accordance with the basis described in this document.

Students are expected to arrive at class on time and to remain for the entire class period. Arriving after the roll has been checked or leaving prior to the end of the class period will affect the student’s grade. **Two (2) late arrivals or 2 early departures equal one (1) absence.** It is the student’s responsibility to ask the instructor to change an “absent” to a “tardy” if he/she arrives after the roll has been taken. Leaving early without prior explanation to the instructor equals an absence.

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: Electronic devices should be off or silenced and put away during class and exams. Laptops used for note-taking purposes will be permitted. However, if I find that laptops in the room turn out to be more of a distraction (for example, Facebook, twitter, email, etc.) than as a learning tool, this policy may change. **If your electronic device makes noise and interrupts class, you will have 10 points deducted from that day’s grade.** Please do not bring in food or drinks. Only water in a re-sealable container is allowed.

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 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”.

The Highlander Guide describes the rights, privileges, and obligations of students affiliated with MCC. The complete guide may be accessed by clicking here: [Highlander Guide](#)

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*** [Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)**

(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](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

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.

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.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.