

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

WACO, TEXAS

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## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**AND**

## **INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION TO LAW**

**LGLA 1311.50**

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

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### **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.*

### **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: Kristy Turner  
MCC E-mail: kturner@mclennan.edu  
Phone Number: 254-299-8261  
Office Location: Classroom – BTB 220

### **Communication Policy:**

Emails are returned within 24 hours of receipt except when received over the weekend or during holidays. Those will be returned the first business day the College is open.

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## **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/>

## **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 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 Planning the interview Interviewing skills Interviewing your client Interview summaries and follow-up tasks
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Week 2 Chapter 11	Interviewing witnesses Planning and conduction investigations Creating Investigative plans Accessing Government information (FOIA and Open Records)
Week 3	<b>Quiz on Chapter 11: Interview and Investigations</b> Introduction to <i>Criminal law and procedures</i> Begin readings for chapter 13 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)
Week 4 Chapter 13	Criminal Procedures prior to prosecution Arrests, detentions, probable cause, and warrants Police investigations Prosecutions; initial appearances, preliminary hearings, and grand juries Arraignment and pretrial motions Motions to suppress Motions to dismiss, change of venue, recusal, and severance Discovery during prosecution and defense preparation Trial, sentencing and pre-trial diversion options Appeal of criminal convictions
Week 5	<b>Quiz on Chapter 13</b> Begin readings on Chapter 14 Introduction to <i>tort law, product liability, and consumer law</i> . Intentional torts against persons, personal property, and real property

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Week 6 Chapter 14	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
Week 7 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
Week 8 Chapter 15	Introduction to Contracts and Intellectual Property Law 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 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 Quizzes over Chapter 14 & 15 DUE

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Week 9 Chapter 16	<p>Introduction to Real Property and Insurance Law</p> <p>Ownership rights: fee simple, joint tenancy, and tenancy in common Life estates and future interests</p> <p>Transfer and sale of real property Contract formation and escrow</p> <p>Disclosure, inspection, title insurance, and closing Leases</p> <p>Insurance law: terminology, insurable interest, and insurance contracts</p> <p>Coinurance, indemnity, and subrogation</p> <p>Good &amp; bad faith in insurance law</p> <p>Individual assignments should be completed for review</p> <p>Begin readings on Chapter 17</p>
Week 10 Chapter 17	<p><b>Test/Quiz</b> on Chapter 16</p> <p>Introduction to <i>Family law and Estates</i></p> <p>Begin reading Chapter 17</p>
Week 11 Chapter 17	<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>
Week 12 Chapter 18	<p><b>Test/Quiz</b> Chapter 17</p> <p>Begin readings for Chapter 18</p> <p><i>Business Organizations and Employment Law</i></p> <p>Forms of Business organization Sole proprietorships Partnership, Corporations. 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>

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Week 13 Chapter 18	Introduction to employment law 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 14 Chapter 19	<b>Test/Quiz</b> 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 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)
Week 15	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 5/2	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):

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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%
<b>Final Grade for Course</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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.



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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.

### **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](#)

**\* [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.

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**\* [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.

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Updated 11/04/2022

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## **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](http://www.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

### **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 acting Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@mclennan.edu](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465. MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center 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/](http://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/>

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom from 7:30 am - 6:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 7:30 am - 5:00 pm on Friday. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom (<https://mclennan.zoom.us/j/2542998500>) or email ([ast@mclennan.edu](mailto:ast@mclennan.edu)) during the above mentioned times.

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 either MCC CREW – Campus Resources Education Web by calling (254) 299-8561 or by emailing [crew@mclennan.edu](mailto:crew@mclennan.edu) or a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing [SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu](mailto:SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu). Both are located in the Completion Center located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC) which is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to [https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_07byXd7eB8iTqJg](https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_07byXd7eB8iTqJg). Both the Completion Center and Paulanne's 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](https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf).

**MCC Academic Integrity Statement:**

Go to [www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity](http://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-andStaffCommons/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. For more information about your student email account, go to [www.mclennan.edu/studentemail](http://www.mclennan.edu/studentemail).

**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](mailto:Helpdesk@mclennan.edu) for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- [Email Setup for iPhones and iPads](#)
- [Email Setup for Androids](#)

**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.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to [MCC's Tech Support Cheat Sheet](#) or email [helpdesk@mclennan.edu](mailto:helpdesk@mclennan.edu).

**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.