

Updated 08/03/2023



WACO, TEXAS

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**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**AND**  
**INSTRUCTOR PLAN**  
  
**INTRODUCTION TO LAW**  
  
**LGLA 1311.001**  
  
**DONNA K. DENDY**

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

**NOTE: This is a Face-to-Face course.**

## INTRODUCTION TO LAW

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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. Discusses 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 Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:**

*None.*

### **Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:**

*None.*

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### **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: Donna K. Dendy

MCC E-mail: ddendy@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: (254) 299-8238 (leave a message)

Office Location: BTB 224

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: Mondays - 30 minutes before and after class period

Other Instruction Information:

### **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.

### **Required Text & Materials:**

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

Author: Roger LeRoy Miller & Mary Meinzingher Urisko

Edition: 8th

Publisher: Delmar

ISBN-13: 9780357454053

**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; and
4. Develop interviewing and investigatory skills.

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This schedule is subject to change and students will be notified about any changes by announcement in class. Insert course objectives or competencies here

### **Course Attendance/Participation Guidelines:**

If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.

To be counted as attending class BEFORE the census date, a student must complete and submit at least ONE assignment by the due date. Discussion boards, syllabus quizzes, the first set of homework, etc. are considered as meeting the criteria for an assignment. An email to the instructor does NOT count as completing and submitting an assignment. Logging into Brightspace and accessing content does NOT count as completing and submitting an assignment. Any student who fails to complete and submit at least one assignment by the due date prior to the census date will be dropped from the course.

After the census date, students who fail to submit two consecutive modules of work without notification of an excused absence as per MCC policy prior to the 60% point of the term will be withdrawn from the course. If a student fails to submit two consecutive modules of work without notification of an excused absence as per MCC policy and the class is past the 60% point of the term, the instructor will NOT withdraw the student. The student will be assigned the grade earned at the end of the term.

Absences are excused in accordance with MCC policy which includes (1) authorized participation in official College functions, (2) personal illness, (3) an illness or a death in the immediate family, (4) Pregnant or Parenting Protections under Title IX and/or Texas State Education Code Chapter 51, Subchapter Z, Section 51.982 or (5) any excused absences as outlined in Section IV of this policy. <https://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/B-II.pdf>

Students are required to file a written or electronic request with each instructor for an excused absence in a timely manner.

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## 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 Types of witnesses <b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 11 Questions for Review; due 1/17/24
Week 2 Chapter 11	Interviewing witnesses Locating witnesses Planning and conduction investigations Creating Investigative plans Investigation and Rules of Evidence Accessing Government information (FOIA and Open Records) Telephone Etiquette <b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter
Week 3 Chapter 13	<b>Quiz on Chapter 11: Interview and Investigations</b> 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) <b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 13 Questions for Review; due 1/31/24

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Week 4 Chapter 13	<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</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><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 14</p>
Week 5 Chapter 14	<p><b>Quiz on Chapter 13: Criminal Law &amp; Procedure</b></p> <p>Introduction to <i>tort law, product liability, and consumer law</i>.</p> <p>Intentional torts against persons, personal property, and real property</p> <p>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><b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 14 Questions for Review; due 2/14/23</p>
Week 6 Chapter 14	<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><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 15</p>
Week 7 Chapter 15	<p><b>Quiz on Chapter 14: Tort Law, Product Liability, and Consumer Law</b></p> <p>Introduction to Contracts and Intellectual Property Law</p> <p>Requirements of a valid contract: agreement, consideration, capacity, legality</p> <p>Defenses to contracts or clauses</p> <p>Statute of Frauds</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 15 Questions for Review; due 2/28/23</p>

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Week 8 Chapter 15	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. <b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 16
Week 9 Chapter 16	<b>Quiz on Chapter 15: Contracts &amp; Intellectual Property</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 assignments should be completed for review <b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 16 Questions for Review; due 3/18/24; read Chapter 17
Week 10 Chapter 17	<b>Quiz on Chapter 16: Real Property and Insurance Law</b> Introduction to <i>Family law and Estates</i> Marriage requirements and (Texas) common law marriage Marital duties <b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 17 Questions for Review; due 3/27/24

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Week 11 Chapter 17	<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><b>Assignment:</b> Real Chapter 18</p>
Week 12 Chapter 18	<p><b>Quiz on Chapter 17: Family Law &amp; Estates</b></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> <p><b>Assignments:</b> Ch. 18 Questions for Review; due 4/10/24</p>
Week 13 Chapter 18	<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><b>Assignment:</b> Read Chapter 19</p>
Week 14 Chapter 19	<p><b>Quiz on Chapter 18: Business Organizations &amp; Employment Law</b></p> <p>Introduction to Bankruptcy law</p> <p>The Bankruptcy Code and 2005 Reform</p> <p>Goals of bankruptcy law and Bankruptcy Courts</p> <p>Types of Bankruptcy: Title 11 U.S. Code: Chapters 7, 11, and 13</p> <p>Voluntary bankruptcy</p> <p>Chapter 7 schedules and “the Matrix” Means testing</p> <p>Dismissals and grounds for relies Involuntary bankruptcy The “automatic stay” and exceptions</p>



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	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>Assignments:</b> Ch. 19 Questions for Review, due 4/24/24
Week 15	<b>Quiz on Chapter 19: Bankruptcy &amp; Environmental Law</b> 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.
Week 16 Final Exam	<b>Final Exam on all chapters from this semester.</b>

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

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### Tests/Quizzes and Final Exam

There will be chapter tests/quizzes.

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. Assignments - You will have chapter assignments. They are to be submitted in Word format.

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.

2. Tests/Quizzes and Finals – Quizzes/final exam will be available on Brightspace during class. See below regarding mark-up work policies.
3. Professional Grade (10%) –
  1. Cell phone 5 points deducted for use of phone during class.
  2. Interruptions to class:
    - a. Leaving class & returning – 5 points deducted (please go to the restroom before class). Leaving class early without discussing the reason for leaving with the instructor will be counted as one-half (1/2) absence in the class.
    - b. Arriving late – 5 points deducted for each occurrence
    - c. Unexcused absence – 10 points deducted for each occurrence.
  3. Laptops/IPads – May only be used for notetaking and research conducted by the instructor. If a student is found on email or surfing the Web, the student will lose the privilege of using the computer.

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

Homework assigned during one class period will be due **at the beginning of the next class period**. Reading assignments are given on the Tentative Schedule. You will need to be sure to read these

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assignments before coming to class in order to get the maximum information from each class period. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the appropriate class (see Tentative Schedule). Weekly assignments will not be accepted if they are more than **one and one-half (1 ½) week late**.

If a student misses one of the tests, the final test grade will be used as the grade for the missed test as well as the final test grade. No makeup tests or finals are allowed. If the student makes below 70 on any major test, the student must meet with the instructor 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.

**If you are absent when an assignment is done in class, you will need to see the Instructor immediately. You will have 1 ½ weeks to complete missed assignments or exams. Ten points will be deducted from the grade when taken late. No work will be accepted after 1 ½ week from the return from the absence.**

If you fail to appear for face-to-face sessions in the period prior to the census date, I will drop you for failure to attend even if you complete the accessible assignments in Brightspace.

Past census date, if you remain in a face-to-face course, you must regularly attend class. If you miss more than 25% of class meetings prior to the 60% point of the term, I will withdraw you from the course. If you miss more than 25% of class meetings and the class is past the 60% point for the term, I will NOT withdraw you. You will be assigned the grade earned for the course.

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

The following are the behavioral expectations which will provide a more conclusive learning environment for all students in the classroom and will provide opportunities for successful completion of this course.

- All cell phones are to be turned off and put out of sight. If you are expecting an emergency call, the phone needs to be placed on the Instructor's table at the front of the room. Using the cell phone in class will result in 5 points being deducted from the attendance (professional) grade.
- All other electronic devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. If the student does not turn off the device, the student will be asked to leave the classroom and 5 points will be deducted from the attendance grade.

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- The use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products is not allowed in the classroom.
- Student should not attend class with the smell of or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Take care of your personal business before class starts. Leaving and entering the classroom disrupts the learning environment.
- Expression of opinions and questions on classroom discussions are encouraged.
- Mutual respect of others' opinions is expected.
- Loud, raucous behavior in the classroom is not acceptable. If after being asked to be quiet the student does not, he/she will be asked to leave the room. Repeated occurrences will require visits to Student Development for disciplinary action.
- Major exams will be returned to students for review after being graded. These exams must be returned to the Instructor by the end of the class period. **Ten (10) points will be deducted from the student's final exam grade for each day that the exam is not returned (including the date that the exam was not turned in). After four (4) days, the student will receive an "F" in the course.**

### **Course Attendance/Participation Guidelines:**

If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.

**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.

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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.

10/09/2023



## **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 Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@mclennan.edu](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Accommodations/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 may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>

Additionally, Title IX provides rights and protections for pregnant and newly parenting students. 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. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom or email ([ast@mclennan.edu](mailto:ast@mclennan.edu)) by going to our website (<https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-support-and-tutoring/>)

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

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to <https://calendly.com/paulannespantry-mcc/15min>.

The CREW, Success Coaches, and Paulanne's Pantry are all located on the second floor of the Student Services building in Success Coaching Services.

**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:**

Please view our [Academic integrity statement](#) for more information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) for classwork can be a violation of the College's General Conduct Policy. Whether AI is authorized in a course and the parameters in which AI can be used in a course will be outlined by each instructor.

**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. 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](#) 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.