

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: PARA 210

Year: 2023-2024

Course Title: Real Estate/Property Law

Credit Hours: 3

I. Course Description: Students develop an understanding of real estate and property law in general and with respect to a paralegal's functions. Topics include terminology, contracts, title to property, deeds, estates in land, foreclosure, mortgages, landlord-tenant, tax issues, ethics, and real estate closings. In particular, students become familiar with deeds, abstracts, survey maps, and closing statements and the drafting of law office documents. The primary focus is on the laws of New York with comparisons to the laws of other jurisdictions. Prerequisites: MATH 090 if required by placement; ENGL 101; C or better grade in BUAD 201, PARA 101, and PARA 130. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Spring semester.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. This course will be offered online only; students must have access to a reliable computer and internet.
2. This course is required for the Paralegal A.A.S. degree.
3. Students will have free access to Westlaw & Lexis online legal research tools. Use of these resources is required.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Use the basic terminology and explain procedures and characteristics of real estate law.
2. Research a real estate issue from start to finish.
3. Draft real estate letters, deeds, closing statements, and other relevant real estate documents, using appropriate procedures and complying with required instructions, with meticulous attention to detail, demonstrating competence in computer use, online research, and use of appropriate software.
4. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations, apply legal concepts and rules to unfamiliar as well as familiar situations, communicate legal concepts and procedures in written and practical form, and critically analyze other legal information including closing documents, tax documents, deeds, and title information.
5. Discuss and apply both lawyer and paralegal ethics rules in a real estate context.

IV. Tompkins Cortland General Education & SUNY Competency Goals

☑ Critical thinking (Tompkins Cortland GE Goal; SUNY Competency)

Students will read and interpret complex legal writing (legal authority) as well as real estate related documents. Students will be required to apply that reading in answering assignment questions, drafting documents, and applying that content in real estate transactions. Students will be presented with real-life legal situations for which they will conduct research to find applicable legal authority and draft relevant documents. Students will learn various procedural and substantive aspects of real estate in the role of a paralegal.

☑ Social/Global Awareness

Students will become more aware of social issues by reviewing legal issues while conducting legal research throughout the semester, in particular those relating to property rights and transfer.

☒ **Information Management**

Students will be required to retrieve information using Westlaw and Lexis, the proprietary, ubiquitous, online authoritative legal research tools. The class will be offered exclusively online, requiring that students master basic personal computer skills to navigate the course hosting program. They will create documents in both word processing formats and “pdf” format. While students will primarily rely on Westlaw and Lexis, students will access other non-legal resources relating to real estate and property law, and real estate transactions in particular, both online and in “hard-copy.”

☐ This course does not address either of these Tompkins Cortland or SUNY General Education Goals.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. Introduction to Real Property and Terminology
2. Ownership & Estates: Freehold, Leasehold, Future Interests & Concurrent Ownership
3. Surveys and Land Descriptions
4. Filing and Recording Deeds, Recording Statutes, & Clerks' Offices
5. Leases, Landlord-Tenant & Contract Review
6. Restrictions: Encumbrances, Easements & Licenses
7. Deeds
8. Closing Statements
9. Real Estate Title, Abstracts of Title, Title Insurance
10. Mortgages & Real Estate Financing
11. Real Estate Tax Issues & Foreclosure
12. Ethics Issues in a Real Estate Context

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Weekly assignments (typically best 18 of 22)	50-65%
2. Exams (typically best 3 of 4)	30-40%
3. Discussion Participation/ Attendance	5-10%
4. Optional Project(s): Individual or group projects as designed by the instructor	0-10%

VII. Texts – Required

1. Hinkel, Daniel F. <i>Practical Real Estate Law</i> , 7 th Ed., Cengage Learning, 2014.
OR
2. Hinkel, Daniel F. <i>Essentials of Practical Real Estate Law</i> , 6 th Ed., Cengage Learning, 2015.

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

- | |
|---|
| 1. Slossberg, Lynn T. <i>The Essentials of Real Estate Law</i> , 3 rd Ed., Cengage Learning, 2014. |
| 2. Fields and Fields. <i>Essentials of Real Estate Law</i> , Wolters Kluwer, 2016. |

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

IX. Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: None specified
Electronic: Students will need access to a reliable computer with internet access
Other: Students will need to apply for access to Westlaw and Lexis as directed by course materials; there is no additional cost to the student for this.

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Academic Integrity: *Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of his or her academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms.*

Any written work submitted by a student must be his or her own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own — such as cheating on a test, submitting for credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.

Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.