

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: PARA 230

Year: 2023-2024

Course Title: Paralegal Internship

Credit Hours: 3

I. Course Description: This course, to be taken concurrently with PARA 231 *Paralegal Seminar*, is a capstone course for all paralegal students. The internship is a first step toward obtaining employment as it gives the student some marketable work experience. Students in the final semester of the paralegal program apply what they have learned in paralegal courses, and learn how a paralegal functions at work. Each student completes 150 hours of field work in a legal environment under the supervision of an attorney. Each student is required to keep a weekly journal of activities and submit a final written paper on the internship experience. A student with comparable prior law office experience may apply to receive experiential credit. If approved the student will need to take PARA 231 Paralegal Seminar only. Co-requisite: PARA 231. Prerequisites: C or better grade in PARA 130, PARA 205, PARA 210, PARA 215, PARA 220 and BUAD 201; cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0; instructor permission. Up to two prerequisite courses may be taken concurrently. 3 cr. (9 Lab.) Fall and spring semesters.

II. Additional Course Information:

1. Students must have access to a reliable computer and internet.
2. This course is required for the Paralegal A.A.S. degree, and must be taken in the student's final semester.
3. Students will have access to Westlaw & Lexis online legal research tool at no additional charge. Use of these resources is required.
4. Students will need to apply for this required internship in the penultimate semester.
5. Internship placements are arranged in consultation with the instructor.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Document experience working in a law office and obtain potential attorney references.
2. Describe the basic procedures, rules, ethical considerations, and cultural characteristics of a legal environment.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in prior coursework including legal research, drafting, attention to detail, careful reading, and content; discuss how they relate to one another in practice.
4. Apply law office management skills learned in class.
5. Apply legal ethics to practical and actual situations.

IV. Tompkins Cortland Institutional Learning Outcomes; Program Learning Outcomes; SUNY General Education Outcomes

Tompkins Cortland ILOs **N/A**

Complete this section for "service" courses only (e.g. courses that are required of all students; courses that are not program specific but satisfy liberal arts requirements; or commonly used in multiple academic programs to meet non-program-specific requirements). Check only Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are meaningfully developed and assessed in this course. For each ILO chosen, include the SLO to which it aligns.

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Students will:

- ☐ Communicate effectively, in oral and written forms, taking into consideration audience and purpose.
- ☐ Apply principles and methods of scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning appropriate to their discipline.
- ☐ Use information, critical thinking, and the creative process to solve problems and reach conclusions.
- ☐ Use technology appropriate to their discipline.
- ☐ Describe the ways in which social, economic, or environmental sustainability depends on their own and the collective contributions of a diversity of ideas and people.

Program Learning Outcomes

Complete this section for program-specific courses (e.g. those that share the same 4 letter designation as the academic program or satisfy requirements in related programs). List the academic program(s) here and note which Student Learning Outcomes align to specific Programmatic Learning Outcomes. Please see the MCS Instructions for more details.

Specify the Academic Program
Paralegal A.A.S.

PLO 1: Read and understand legal writing: met through reading course materials, and required primary and secondary source documents.

SLOs:

2. Describe the basic procedures, rules, ethical considerations, and cultural characteristics of a legal environment.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in prior coursework including legal research, drafting, attention to detail, careful reading, and content; discuss how they relate to one another in practice.
5. Apply legal ethics to practical and actual situations.

PLO 2: Research & Writing- Conduct legal research and prepare professional legal documents: met through assignments.

SLO:

3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in prior coursework including legal research, drafting, attention to detail, careful reading, and content; discuss how they relate to one another in practice.

PLO 3: Understanding the role of a paralegal in working independently and meticulously under the supervision of an attorney, within ethical boundaries: met through reading, lecture materials, and assignments.

SLOs:

2. Describe the basic procedures, rules, ethical considerations and cultural characteristics of a legal environment.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in prior coursework including legal research, drafting, attention to detail, careful reading, and content; discuss how they relate to one another in practice.
4. Apply law office management skills learned in class.
5. Apply legal ethics to practical and actual situations.

PLO 4: Proficiency of technology, both in general and in proprietary legal technology: legal technology met through assignments requiring the use of Westlaw and Lexis; general technology is required to complete the asynchronous course and preparing legal documents using contemporary software.

SLOs:

1. Document experience working in a law office and obtain potential attorney references.
2. Describe the basic procedures, rules, ethical considerations, and cultural characteristics of a legal environment.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in prior coursework including legal research, drafting, attention to detail, careful reading, and content; discuss how they relate to one another in practice.
4. Apply law office management skills learned in class.

SUNY General Education Outcomes

If this course **assesses** a SUNY GEN ED Outcome, check all that apply and indicate which course outcome(s) address each checked item:

☐ CRITICAL THINKING - Students will:

- a. identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; and
- b. develop well-reasoned arguments.

☐ INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - Students will:

- a. perform the basic operations of personal computer use;
- b. understand and use basic research techniques; and
- c. locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

☐ GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY - Area(s): **N/A**

For courses that are approved to meet one (or more) of the ten SUNY General Education categories, indicate which category the course fulfills, and which outcome(s) are aligned with the SUNY outcomes for that category:

☐ This course does not address any of the above Tompkins Cortland ILOs, PLOs, or SUNY General Education Outcomes.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. Introduction to Internship in a Law Office
2. Resume and Cover Letter
3. Job Search
4. Law Office Procedure
5. Law Office Culture
6. Law Office Management
7. Professionalism
8. Time and Records Management
9. Interpersonal Skills, Communication, Stress
10. Internship Issues and Discussion

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Grade is based on completion of 150 hours of fieldwork, and professional and appropriate demeanor and actions while completing the internship. Grade is not prorated based on hours - student must complete all 150 hours to successfully complete this class.	Required
2. Weekly Journals- Failure to submit results in grade deduction per omitted journal	Required
3. Discussion Participation in weekly open review, other discussions/Attendance	50-85%
4. Cumulative Term Paper	5-10%
5. Optional Project(s): Individual or group projects as designed by the instructor	0-30%
6. Assignments- Drafting Letters, Pleadings and Other Legal Documents	10-30%

VII. Texts – Optional

1. Statsky & Sarachan. <i>The New York Paralegal</i> . Thompson-Delmar Learning, 2010.
2. Estrin, Chere. <i>Paralegal Career Guide</i> . 4 th Ed., Prentice Hall, Inc., 2009.

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

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. Cannon, Therese. <i>Ethical and Professional Responsibilities for Paralegals</i> , 6 th Ed., Wolters Kluwer, 2017.
2. Gelb & Levine. <i>A Survival Guide for Paralegals -Tips From the Trenches</i> , Cengage, 2005.
3. Vietzen, Laurel. <i>Law Office Management for Paralegals</i> , 4 th Ed., Wolters Kluwer, 2019.
4. <i>NALA Manual</i> , 6 th Ed., Cengage Learning, 2014.
5. Ennico, Cliff. <i>The Legal Job Interview</i> , Kaplan Publishing, 2008.
6. McKinney, Jacob. <i>Real-Resumes for Legal & Paralegal Jobs</i> , CreateSpace Publishing, 2012.

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.