

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: PARC 231**

**Year: 2024-2025**

**Course Title: Paralegal Seminar**

**Credit Hours: 3**

**I. Course Description:** This is the final semester capstone course for all paralegal majors. Students apply what they have learned in paralegal courses, and learn how a paralegal functions at work. Taken concurrently with PARC 230 *Paralegal Internship*, legal ethics (both attorney and paralegal), law office management skills (including a technological update and specific computer applications), interviewing, and job placement skills are covered. Discussion topics involve the full range of work in a law office, with an emphasis on the tasks each student is engaged in while completing the internship. Ethical considerations will be a key component. Co-requisite: PARC 230. Prerequisites: C or better grade in PARC 130, PARC 210, PARC 215, PARC 220, and BUAD 201; cumulative grade point average of 2.0, and instructor permission. Up to two prerequisite courses may be taken concurrently. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

**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 Studies Certificate 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.

**III. Student Learning Outcomes**

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

<del>After completing the class, the student should be familiar with the basic procedures, rules, ethical considerations and cultural characteristics of a legal environment. Also, students should be able to see how the various legal areas, which they have studied one at a time, relate to one another in practice. A student should also master basic law office management skills, and be introduced to other more complex matters. Further, students will master specific job related skill like job finding skills and legal resume production. Students will continue to improve their research and writing skills. Finally, students will engage in a comprehensive study of legal ethics both academically and applied to practical and actual situations.</del>
1. Recognize ethics problems for both paralegals and attorneys, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in problem situations, and apply those concepts and rules to unfamiliar as well as familiar situations,
2. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations that require the application of cumulative knowledge from prior courses.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the cumulative coursework they have completed including attention to detail, the ability to work independently, careful reading, and the comprehensive content learned in courses and how they relate to one another in practice by completing significant drafting and research projects.
4. Relate their cumulative knowledge in seminar discussions.

**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.

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 Studies Certificate**

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

### **SLOs:**

1. Recognize ethics problems for both paralegals and attorneys, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in problem situations, and apply those concepts and rules to unfamiliar as well as familiar situations,
2. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations that require the application of cumulative knowledge from prior courses.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the cumulative coursework they have completed including attention to detail, the ability to work independently, careful reading, and the comprehensive content learned in courses and how they relate to one another in practice by completing significant drafting and research projects.
4. Relate their cumulative knowledge in seminar discussions.

**PLO 2: Research & Writing- Conduct legal research and prepare professional legal memos and documents: Two comprehensive research memos, 2,000-3,000 words each.**

### **SLOs:**

2. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations that require the application of cumulative knowledge from prior courses.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the cumulative coursework they have completed including attention to detail, the ability to work independently, careful reading, and the comprehensive content learned in courses and how they relate to one another in practice by completing significant drafting and research projects.

**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 and lecture materials.**

**SLOs:**

1. Recognize ethics problems for both paralegals and attorneys, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in problem situations, and apply those concepts and rules to unfamiliar as well as familiar situations,
2. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations that require the application of cumulative knowledge from prior courses.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the cumulative coursework they have completed including attention to detail, the ability to work independently, careful reading, and the comprehensive content learned in courses and how they relate to one another in practice by completing significant drafting and research projects.
4. Relate their cumulative knowledge in seminar discussions.

**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. Recognize ethics problems for both paralegals and attorneys, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in problem situations, and apply those concepts and rules to unfamiliar as well as familiar situations,
2. Recognize legal problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in legal problem situations that require the application of cumulative knowledge from prior courses.
3. Apply the knowledge and skills learned in the cumulative coursework they have completed including attention to detail, the ability to work independently, careful reading, and the comprehensive content learned in courses and how they relate to one another in practice by completing significant drafting and research projects.
4. Relate their cumulative knowledge in seminar discussions.

**SUNY General Education Outcomes N/A**

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):

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. Regulation of Lawyers & Paralegals
<del>Regulation of Paralegals</del>
2. Unauthorized Practice of Law
3. Confidentiality
4. Conflict of Interest
5. Advertising and Solicitation
6. Fees and Client Funds
7. Competence
8. Issues in Advocacy
9. Law Office Management: General Office Culture, Professionalism
<del>Time and Records Management</del>
<del>Interpersonal Skills, Communication, Stress</del>
<del>Interviewing</del>
<del>Job Placement</del>
10. Legal Research & Writing Drafting - Review and Final Project Memos
11. Current Legal Issues
12. Paralegal Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities in the Law Office

## VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Weekly assignments - including drafting (typically best 10 of 13, <del>for example</del> )	<del>50%</del> 40%-60%
2. <del>Participation in weekly activity discussions, module seminar discussions, current events discussions, asking questions, and other Web interactions</del> Attendance/Discussion Participation	<del>25%</del> 20%-40%
3. <del>Two Cumulative Legal Research Memos 2000-word minimum</del> (typically 2,000-3,000 words each) (highest score counts)	<del>20%</del> 10%-30%
<del>Term Paper on The Role of The Paralegal and the TC3 Paralegal Program, 1,500 word minimum</del>	<del>5%</del>
4. Optional Project(s): Individual or group projects as designed by the instructor	0-30%

## VII. Texts – Required

1. Cannon, Therese. <i>Ethical and Professional Responsibilities for Paralegals</i> . 6 <sup>th</sup> Ed., Wolters Kluwer, 2017.
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## Optional

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| 1. Statsky & Sarachan. <i>The New York Paralegal</i> . Thompson-Delmar Learning, 2010.            |
| 2. Estrin, Chere. <i>Paralegal Career Guide</i> . 4 <sup>th</sup> 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

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| 1. Gelb & Levin. <i>A Survival Guide for Paralegals-Tips From the Trenches</i> . Cengage, 2005.        |
| 2. Vietzen, Laurel. <i>Law Office Management for Paralegals</i> . 4th Ed., Wolters Kluwer, 2019.       |
| 3. <i>NALA Manual</i> . 6th Ed., Cengage Learning, 2014.   |
| 4. Ennico, Cliff. <i>The Legal Job Interview</i> . Kaplan Publishing, 2008.                            |
| 5. McKinney, Jacob. <i>Real-Resumes for Legal &amp; 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

<b>Audiovisual:</b> None specified
<b>Electronic:</b> Students will need access to a reliable computer with internet access
<b>Other:</b> 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.*