

PARALEGAL 18 FAMILY LAW (FALL 2012 - SECTION 4652)

Wednesday 6:45pm – 10:00pm

Classroom GC 350

August 26, 2012 – December 15, 2012

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 6:15pm – 6:45pm, in the classroom. I am also available via email and phone during standard business hours.

Course Description: This course surveys family practice and procedure topics including: parental prerogatives, marriage, separation, divorce, custody and support, adoption and guardianship. Students learn to conduct client interviews, and draft pleading necessary to the general practice of family law.

Course Objectives:

It is expected that the student will achieve the following basic objectives as a result of actively participating in this course. At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the role of a paralegal in a family law practice;
2. Understand and apply terminology applicable to the field of family law;
3. Draft basic documents and pleadings commonly used in a family law practice;
4. Access information essential to critical thinking and the development of informed opinions; with respect to family law related topics by using a variety of legal research tools both traditional and computer based;
5. Identify ethical issues and biases encountered in a family law practice and develop strategies for addressing them.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

This course will help students achieve the following institutional Student Learning Outcomes:

- A. Identify the California Laws that apply to family law and practice.
- B. Create documents used in the practice of family law such as petitions for dissolution, discovery requests and requests for order.
- C. Critical Thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences.
- D. Ethics: Practice and demonstrate standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness, apply ethical principles in submission of all college work.
- E. Communication: Effectively communicate thought in a clear, well-organized manner to persuade, inform, and convey ideas in academic, work, family and community settings.
- F. Civic Responsibility: Apply the principles of civility to situations in the contexts of work, family, community and the global world.

Learning Strategies:

Learning outcomes will be achieved through the following strategies:

- Research and writing assignments
- Class discussion
- Small group work
- Exams

Text:

Family Law for the Paralegal: Concepts and Applications, Second Edition

2013 Mary E. Wilson, Esq.

Pearson Education, Inc. publishing as Prentice Hall

ISBN – 13: 978-0-13-510948-9

ISBN – 10: 0-13-510948-5

Grading and Evaluation

Practical Assignments	400 points (100 points for each assignment)
Exams	400 points (100 points for each exam)
Class Discussion Assignments	100 points (10 points for each discussion topic)
Class Participation	50 points
Extra Credit	50 points

Each assignment will be given a numerical grade. Grading will be based on quality completeness and how well you follow directions.

Your final point average is calculated by averaging all the points that you have earned throughout the semester. The final grade is determined by the following scale.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Web Links:

During the semester, you will access several websites for you practical assignments. You will find forms, statutes, case law, and much more at the followings websites:

California Courts: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/> OR <http://www.lasuperiorcourt.org>

Attendance:

- Your attendance will be recorded for each class. **The instructor has the discretion to drop any student who has more than 3 absences (excused or not excused) in the semester.**
- Attend every class and be prepared. **IF YOU ARE ABSENT, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORK WHICH IS DUE UPON YOUR RETURN. THUS, YOU SHOULD OBTAIN SEVERAL STUDENTS' TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES IN ORDER TO PROPERLY PREPARE FOR CLASS PRIOR TO YOUR RETURN.**
- There are absolutely **no make-ups** for any missed assignments or classes unless previously agreed upon by the instructor.
- **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Course Readings:

- Objectives: To familiarize students with course content
- Description: It is expected that students will complete readings for each class prior to class. Please see the course schedule below for details on the reading that is due before each class session.
- Grading: This assignment will not be assessed formally. However, content from readings will be assessed indirectly through exams and course assignments.

In Class Participation:

- Objectives: To practice thinking about and discussing course terms, concepts and theories. To assess the students ability to think critically and creatively respond independently.
- Description: Participation in all course components is both encouraged and required for successful performance. Class participation and interaction is an integral component of this learning experience. Fact finding, probing for information, presenting evidence and sharing knowledge are core skills that correlate to active class participation. Active participation will enhance the learning experience and the probability of success on the graded assignments.
- Grading: This assignment is worth approximately 5% of the overall course grade.

Practical Assignments:

- Objectives: To encourage the practical application of family law concepts and rules.
- Description: Students will be required to complete 4 writing and forms assignments worth 100 points each. All assignments should be prepared using the criteria established in the grading section below.

Grading:

1. failure to follow specific instructions on how the assignment should be completed will result in a grade reduction.
2. Excessive spelling or grammatical errors will result in a grade reduction.
3. I will only accept typed or computer printed papers. It is unacceptable to turn in hand written assignments. Handwritten assignments will receive a grade of zero.
4. Papers not handed in on time will receive a grade of zero. An on time paper is one that is turned in at the beginning of class on the date that it is due.

Class Discussions:

Objectives: Class discussions are designed to provide students with the opportunity to vet real world issues, problems, obstacles, etc., in the workplace amongst themselves with instructor facilitation.

Description: Class discussions offer students the opportunity to engage in discourse with each other and apply critical analysis and critical thought techniques to various discussion prompts, ideas and concepts as well as course materials.

Grading: Students will be graded on the quality and thoughtfulness of their responses to the discussion prompts.

Exams:

Objectives: To reinforce concepts and term discussed in the text and in class. To evaluate students grasps of terms, concepts and theories.

Description: 4 exams will be given worth 100 points each. Exams will be given in class and will be closed book. Exams may include a variety of multiple choice, short answer, true false and essay questions.

Grading: Exams are worth almost 50% of the total grade for the class.

Writing Policy:

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional presentation of another's ideas or products as one's own. Plagiarism may include but is not limited to copying verbatim all or a part of another's written work, using phrases conclusions, charts, figures, illustrations, etc. without citing a source. Penalties include a grade of 0 for the assignment, a grade of "F" for the course, or dismissal.

Cheating Policy:

Any student found cheating on any assignment will receive a grade of "0" for that assignment. This includes a student allowing another student to copy his or her assignment. Both students will receive the grade of "0" for the assignment. Both students will also lose the opportunity of

completing any extra credit assignment for the semester. Both students may also be referred to the Dean for further discipline.

ASSIGNMENTS

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE INSTRUCTOR. ADDITIONAL HANDOUTS AND ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GIVEN THROUGHTOUT THE SEMESTER. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS EVEN IF YOU ARE ABSENT.

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1	INTRODUCTION TO A FAMILY LAW PRACTICE	CHAPTER 1
2	COHABITATION AND PREMARITAL AGREEMENTS	CHAPTER 2
3	MARRIAGE AND EMERGING ALTERNATIVES	CHAPTER 3
4	ANNULMENT	CHAPTER 4
5	EXAM #1 – Chapters 1-4	
6	THE DIVORCE PROCESS PA#1 – hand out	CHAPTER 5
7	DISCOVERY AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PA#2 – hand out	CHAPTER 6
8	PARENTHOOD	CHAPTER 7
9	CHILD CUSTODY PA#3 – hand out	CHAPTER 8
10	EXAM #2 – Chapters 5-8	
11	CHILD SUPPORT	CHAPTER 9
12	SPOUSAL SUPPORT	CHAPTER 10
13	PROPERTY DIVISION	CHAPTER 11
14	EXAM #3 – Chapters 9-11	
15	SEPARATION AGREEMENTS PA#4 – hand out	CHAPTER 12
16	FINAL EXAM – Chapters 1-12	