



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	PARA
Course Number:	1
Descriptive Title:	Introduction to Paralegal Studies
Division:	Business
Department:	Paralegal Studies
Course Disciplines:	Law
Catalog Description:	In this course the student will concentrate on the background and requirements of the paralegal. Included will be the expanded use of paralegals, basic qualifications, training, nature of the work, and career considerations. Topics will include the American Legal System; methods of finding and interpreting the law; basic legal concepts and legal terminology; and legal procedures of litigation, mediation, and other non-judicial settlements. Organization and management of the law office will be included with an emphasis on ethics for the lawyer and the paralegal. Resumes, interviewing skills, and demeanor in the law office will also be covered.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	Eligibility for English C1000 or equivalent
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	
Transfer UC:	No
Effective Date:	
General Education: ECC	
Term:	
Other:	

CSU GE:	
Term:	
Other:	
IGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
CalGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Legal Memoranda and Forms Draft pleadings/memoranda including court forms in a manner sufficient for submission to the applicable court. SLO #2 Providing Direct Assistance to Attorneys Apply knowledge of the law in order to provide direct assistance to attorneys including, but not limited to research, client interviews, problem resolution and the examination of ethics in the legal workplace. SLO #3 Legal Comprehension Understand and apply theories and principles of the law to interpret legal documents and understand the role of a paralegal in a legal setting.
Course Objectives:	1. Appraise the role of the paralegal with respect to developments in the career. 2. Evaluate the basic qualifications, education, and training of the paralegal. 3. Analyze the American Legal System and find and interpret the law. 4. Identify basic legal concepts and legal terminology. 5. Analyze the legal procedures in regard to litigation, mediation, and settlement. 6. Examine the organization and management of a law office. 7. Distinguish ethical from unethical behavior for the attorney and the paralegal.
Major Topics:	I. History and Development of Paralegals (4 hours, Lecture) A. Recognition, Definition, and Organizations for the Paralegal B. Basic Qualifications, Education and Training C. Nature of the Paralegal Work Requirements II. The American Legal System (6 hours, Lecture) A. Classification of the Law B. Structure of the State and Federal Court System III. Legal Research (8 hours, Lecture) A. Statutory Law Research B. Case Law Research C. Legal Citation Methods

	IV. Agency Law (6 hours, Lecture) A. Formation and Duties of Agents B. Agency Relationships C. Duties in the Agency/Principal Relationship D. Liability to Third Parties E. Termination V. Legal Structure of Organizational Entities (6 hours, Lecture) A. General and Limited Partnerships B. Formation of a Limited Partnership C. Limited Liability Partnerships D. Corporations E. LLCs (Limited Liability Companies) F. LLPs (Limited Liability Partnerships) VI. Civil Litigation (2 hours, Lecture) A. Procedures B. Alternative Dispute Resolution VII. Legal Ethics (6 hours, Lecture) A. Confidentiality B. Conflicts of Interest C. Unauthorized Practice of Law VIII. Interpreting the Law (10 hours, Lecture) A. IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion) Legal Reasoning B. Case Law Interpretation through Case Briefing IX. Interviews, Resumes, and Office Demeanor (4 hours, Lecture) A. Interview Attire B. Interview and Office Etiquette C. Resume Format X. Client and Witness Interviews and Case Management (2 hours, Lecture) A. Ethical Issues with Client Interaction B. Docket Calendaring C. Interview Notice Procedures
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54

A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 - all courses; choose one):	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	In a one- to two-page memo, prepare a legal memorandum using the following facts and law. Use the Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion (IRAC) legal analysis method. Facts: Carl Clay has been charged with burglary. He has asked our firm to represent him. Last Friday Carl was watching <i>As the World Turns</i>, his favorite soap opera, when suddenly the TV screen went blank. Nothing he could do would cause it to work. Unfortunately, Carl did not have enough money to buy a new set. He decided to help himself to someone else's. He drove to the nearby Sleep Well Motel because he knew that the owners had recently purchased new nineteen-inch TVs. When he got to the motel around 5:00 p.m., he waited in his car until he saw a lady leave her room, ice bucket in hand. She had left the door to her room slightly ajar. Carl quickly ran to the door, opened it, and saw the TV. He went over to the TV, unplugged it, and picked it up. He was about to leave when the woman unexpectedly returned. Knowing karate, she felled him on the spot and then called the office manager, who, in turn, called the police. The TV, which was purchased for \$600 and had a resale price of approximately \$400, was returned to its rightful place in the room. State Statutes: Ch 228, Section 1 Burglary is defined as the BREAKING and ENTERING of a DWELLING at NIGHTTIME with the INTENT TO COMMIT A FELONY THEREIN. (The five issues are in bold.) Ch 228, Section 2 Theft of personal property over the value of \$500 is a felony. Theft of personal property of a value less than \$500 is a misdemeanor.
Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Facts: Betsy Barn, who is 17, has just inherited property from her grandparents. She would like to make a will to ensure that her friend "Bruno" will get this property if she should die. Her parents despise Bruno as they believe he is the source of drugs that Betsy is hooked on. Analyze the three issues below using the attached section of the California Probate Code and the Estate of Nolan case. In a two- to three-page report, prepare an analysis of your findings in the Issue, Reason, Analysis, Conclusion (IRAC) format. Issue 1: Can Betsy make a will? Issue 2: Who gets this property on her death if she does not make a will? Issue 3: If Betsy makes a valid will (later) could her parents challenge the validity of any will based on either her drug use or her choice of beneficiary?
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	Imagine that you are interning in the attorney Harper's law firm. She has asked you to give her your thoughts on Mr. Drake's case. Specifically, attorney Harper wants you to list all of the ways in which you think Mr. Drake's case is similar to that of the hypothetical of the mother who saw her child injured. Then list all of the ways in which you think Mr. Drake's case could be linked to that of the bystander. Finally, give attorney Harper your evaluation as to why you think that a court would see Mr. Drake's case as more similar to that of the mother or to that of the bystander. Also, let her know if you think there are additional facts that you would want to gather before making a final recommendation. Present your findings in a two- to three-page report. Facts: Approximately one year ago, Donald Drake and his six-year-old grandson, Philip, were walking down a residential road on their way home from visiting one of Philip's friends. Philip was walking on the sidewalk approximately thirty feet in front of Mr. Drake. Suddenly, a car sped past Mr. Drake, seemingly went out of control, jumped the curb, and hit Philip. Mr. Drake ran to Philip's side, but it was too late. Philip had been killed instantly. The driver of the car, Mrs. Wilma Small, was unhurt. Based on skid marks and testimony from both Mrs. Small and Mr. Drake, the police investigation following the accident determined that excessive speed was the cause of the accident. Mr. Drake said that at the time of the accident his only concern was for the welfare of his grandson because he himself was clear of the danger.

	Naturally, Mr. Drake suffered a great deal of mental pain and shock because of seeing his grandson killed. While being driven home from the accident, he suffered a heart attack that necessitated a lengthy hospital stay. One year later, he still does not feel completely recovered and often suffers from nightmares reliving the accident and his grandson's death. Following the advice of trusted friends he decides to make an appointment at the law office of Darrow and Bryan to see if he can sue Mrs. Small to recover for his hospital bills and for his pain and suffering.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Essay Exams, Homework Problems, Multiple Choice, True/False, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Problem solving activity, Required reading, Skill practice, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Katherine Currier and Thomas Eimermann. Introduction to Law for Paralegals: A Critical Thinking Approach. 8th ed. Aspen Publishers, 2023.
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite:	
Category:	
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching Skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). If applicable	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	Eligibility for English C1000 or equivalent

Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	This course involves reading college level textbooks, developing projects, and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills. Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts. Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Marlene Hoover
Date:	01/03/1992
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	N. McGrue
Date:	11/12/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	01/21/2026
Effective Term:	FA 2026