

## PARA 1101 – Introduction to Law & Ethics

Course Syllabus – Fall 2011

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### Instructor Information:

Name: Professor Mara Mooney  
Office: T- 109D  
Office Hours: **Mondays: 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays: 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.;** and by appointment  
E-mail: Please email me in GeorgiaVIEW for matters related to this course  
Responses: I respond to email questions within two business days of receipt.  
Phone & Fax: Phone: (678) 466-4642 (*I can only be reached at this number during office hours, so email is the best means of contacting me*); Fax: (678) 466-4669  
Internet: <http://a-s.clayton.edu/socsci/paralegal/Default.htm> (program web site)  
<http://a-s.clayton.edu/mmooney/> (instructor web site)

### Course Information:

Name/CRN: PARA 1101 – Introduction to Law & Ethics (CRN 86605)  
Credit Hours: 3.0 semester credit hours (3-0-3)  
Description: This course provides an overview of the legal system and the role of paralegals within the system and within a law office. The course also focuses on critical thinking, communication skills, case analysis, the U.S. and state legal systems, the laws of contracts and torts, and ethical issues confronted by legal professionals. In addition, the course provides an overview of paralegal careers and employment techniques. Students who do not achieve a grade of C or higher (or K) in PARA 1101 must re-take PARA 1101 and achieve a grade of C or higher before a student may continue taking other PARA classes.  
Prerequisites: Must exit from or be exempt from Learning Support Reading and English (B.S. Legal Studies and A.A.S. Paralegal Studies majors)  
Co-requisites: None

### Class Meetings:

This class meets on campus every week.  
Location: Clayton Hall, Room T-220  
Class Days/Times: **Mondays: 6:30 pm – 9:15 pm**

### Textbook and Other Materials:

Required text: Cornick & Fisher, Introduction to Law (XanEdu)  
Textbook coverage: All chapters  
Also required: Handouts and other information provided by the instructor

**Computer Requirement:** Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to

such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Policy, refer to <http://itpchoice.clayton.edu/policy.htm>.

### Computer Skill Prerequisites:

- Able to use the Windows™ operating system
- Able to use and submit work using Microsoft Word™ word processing
- Able to use a Web browser
- Access to the Internet, either through the local area network on campus, or through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) of your choice (the costs for the ISP are your responsibility). No excuses will be accepted for inability to access the Internet.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader is available free at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).
- You must activate your CSU Student E-mail account. For directions on activation, go to <http://thehub.clayton.edu/email.shtml>.
- You must be able to use GaVIEW features in order to participate fully in this course
- You must regularly check your GaVIEW & CSU student email accounts

**In-Class Use of Student Notebook Computers:** Student notebook computers will not be required in the classroom in this course. However, computers are required to access course materials and to communicate with your instructor.

### Legal Studies Program Learning Outcomes:

- Perform manual and computerized legal research
- Examine rules of legal ethics and substantive and procedural law
- Identify and analyze practical and theoretical legal issues and prepare legal documents
- Utilize technology to prepare legal documents
- Apply course content to an occupational learning experience (B.S. degree)

### Course Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the structure of the U.S. federal and state legal systems in the civil and criminal systems
- Obtain fundamental knowledge of contracts law
- Understand and apply torts law principles
- Examine ethical issues in the legal field
- Gain knowledge of the typical timekeeping structure in law firms
- Complete a career module about the legal profession

### Evaluation:

Exam 1	60 points
Exam 2	55 points
Exam 3	73 points
Career Module	30 points
<b>TOTAL Points Possible</b>	<b><u>218</u></b>

**Grades:**

<b>A</b>	196 – 218 points
<b>B</b>	174 - 195 points
<b>C</b>	152 – 173 points
<b>D</b>	141 – 151 points
<b>F</b>	140 points and below

**No extra credit will be given.**

**Mid-term Progress Report:** The mid-term grade in this course, which will be issued by **October 4**, reflects approximately 25% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W" (this will count as an attempt in the course). Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, or withdraw on-line using the Swan by mid-term, which occurs on **October 7**. Instructions for withdrawing are provided on the Registrar's web site. **The last day to withdraw without academic accountability is Friday, October 7.**

**Course Policies:**

General Policy: Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State Academic Catalog (<http://publications.clayton.edu/catalog/>), the Clayton State University Student Handbook (<http://adminsivices.clayton.edu/studentaffairs/>), and the Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities (<http://a-s.clayton.edu/BasicUndergraduateStudentResponsibilities.htm>).

University Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and penalties for missed and/or late assignments, and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students' ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Course Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend all class meetings. If a student must miss class, the student is responsible for obtaining notes from a fellow student. The student must also make prior arrangements for timely submission of any assignments that are due in class that day. This submission will be subject to a 2 point deduction for noncompliance with format requirements if the student submits the assignment via fax or email when a hard copy was to be submitted in class.

On a day that a graded assessment (e.g., quiz, exam, homework, module, project) is due, any absence must be accompanied by a written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority within one week of the day of class; otherwise, the student will not be given an opportunity to make-up the work or turn it in late for a grade.

Missed Work Due to Absence **With** Written Excuse from a Doctor or Other Competent Authority: A make-up exam must be approved by the instructor and will only be permitted if

the student takes the assessment before the assessment is graded and given back to the class. For any homework, a student with a valid written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority will have one week from the due date to turn in the completed assignment for a grade or receive a "0" on the work.

Missed Work Due to Absence **Without** Written Excuse from a Doctor or Other Competent Authority: All work, including exams, homework, and any other submissions, missed by a student without a valid written and acceptable excuse will be graded an automatic "0." There are no make-ups in these situations. Any missed quizzes, exams, homework, or other work will be graded a "0" if the work is not submitted on time. There is no opportunity to submit late work for credit if the student does have produce a written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority that is provided within one week from the date the missed work was due.

Graded Assessments: Grades on all graded submissions are based upon their conformance with submission instructions, and the quality, depth, organization, appearance, accurateness and completeness of the work. Each student is required to do his/her own work on all graded assessments.

*Exams:*

On exams, students are responsible for all material covered by the instructor in class, whether the material was in the assigned reading. Students are not responsible for assigned material in the textbook that is not covered by the instructor in lectures. Exams are closed book/closed note, although in some instances the instructor will provide students with supplemental information sheets that have been prepared by the instructor to be used in testing situations.

The three exams in this class will utilize SCANTRON sheets. Students are required to supply their own SCANTRON sheets with **A through E** options. Students who do not bring their own sheets and need to use one from the instructor will have 2 points deducted from their exam scores.

*Career Module:*

Each student will interview a paralegal, legal assistant, or attorney who is working in the legal field, and present the findings of the interview. No extensions will be given for the career module. If the work is not completed by the due date, the student will receive an automatic 0 unless the student produces a written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority within one week of the due date.

*Other Information for Graded Assessments:*

Students may not use a cell phone in lieu of a calculator on in-class graded assessments. If you do not have a calculator and need one for an exam, please make arrangements to borrow one or to share one with a classmate.

Any graded assessment due in hard copy is due at the beginning of class. Any graded assessment submitted by a student during class, but after I have already collected the assessments, will be deducted 2 points from the grade.

Hard copies of any assignment submissions must be typed (if not typed, the assignment will be given a 0), with the pages appearing in order (2 deduction if not), stapled (2 point deduction if not), and your name must appear on the first page (2 point deduction). If you fax or email your assignment instead of turning in a hard copy, 2 points will be deducted.

Academic Dishonesty: Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Life/Judicial Affairs. Judicial procedures are described at <http://adminservices.clayton.edu/judicial/>.

Disruption of the Learning Environment: Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF. A more detailed description of examples of disruptive behavior and appeal procedures is provided at: <http://a-s.clayton.edu/DisruptiveClassroomBehavior.htm>.

No Legal Advice: The instructor will not give legal advice and nothing discussed in this course shall constitute legal advice. You are encouraged to consult a member of the Georgia Bar for such counsel.

Course Changes: This course syllabus and schedule provide a general plan for the course. The instructor reserves the right to make periodic changes to the syllabus and/or schedule, including, but not limited to, assignments, projects, and timetables, to meet the needs of the class as a whole and to fulfill the goals and objectives of this course. If changes are necessitated, the instructor will notify the students in class or via email.

Grades: I will not grant any grade changes except in the rare circumstance that I make an actual error in grading. Also, if asked to review a particular point on an assignment, I reserve the right to critically review the entire assignment. This means that your grade may go either up (unlikely), stay the same (possible), or go down (more likely). Further, if you produce a classmate's work as part of an argument for a higher grade, I reserve the right to critically re-review both assignments and adjust grades accordingly.

**Graduation Applications**: Students are responsible for submitting their own graduation applications to the Registrar's Office (also required for certificates). Applications are due one semester prior to the semester in which you plan to graduate. You must check the Registrar's web site for current information on due dates and fees.

**PARA 1101 Course Schedule – Fall 2011:**

Several of the materials referenced below are provided by the instructor in our course website in GeorgiaVIEW (GaVIEW) – you will be responsible for printing out all of your own handouts or bringing a laptop to class to view them on your screen.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Classroom Activities</u>	<u>Textbk Ch's; Handouts; Cases; Articles&amp;Worksheets</u>
Mon., 8/15	<i>Welcome to the Legal Studies Program!</i> Introduction to Course Syllabus Review The paralegal profession and paralegal organizations (national and state)	Lecture Demonstration of GeorgiaVIEW	<b>ABA definition of paralegal (in GaView)</b>
Mon., 8/22	U.S. and State Legal Systems and Primary Sources of Law	Lecture Discuss legal terms from dog bite article Discuss state and federal court charts	<b>Ch.1 of Text</b> (skip 1.6: "Online Assignment") <b>Documents (in GaVIEW):</b> Georgia Courts Chart Federal Courts Chart Primary & Secondary Sources Basics of a Lawsuit <b>Article (in GaVIEW):</b> Dog Bite Article (Look up any terms in the article that are unfamiliar to you and be prepared to discuss in class)
Mon., 8/29	Continue U.S. and State Legal Systems and Primary Sources of Law discussion		
Mon., 9/5	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
Mon., 9/12	Continue U.S. and State Legal Systems and Primary Sources of Law discussion Review for Exam #1		
Mon., 9/19	<b>Exam #1</b> (ends at 7:45 pm)	After test – Discuss Career Module	<b>Assignment in GaVIEW</b>
Mon., 9/26	Contracts Law	Lecture Discuss answers to contracts scenarios worksheet	<b>Ch. 3 of Text Worksheet (in GaVIEW):</b> Contracts Scenarios worksheet
Mon., 10/3	Continue Contracts Law		
Mon., 10/10	Continue Contracts Law		
Mon., 10/17	Timekeeping/Billing in a Law Office Review for Exam #2	Discuss answers to timekeeping worksheet	<b>Articles/Info. in GaView</b>
Mon., 10/24	<b>Exam #2</b> (lasts 1 hour, 15 minutes) After exam, begin Torts Law	Before test – Discuss advisement issues	
Mon., 10/31	Torts Law	Lecture Discuss torts definitions and answers to torts worksheet	<b>Ch. 2 of Text Worksheets (in GaVIEW):</b> Torts Terms, Cases, and Scenarios
Mon., 11/7	Continue Torts Law		See above
Mon., 11/14	Continue Torts Law		See above

Mon., 11/21	Finish Torts Law Legal Ethics	Lecture In-Class Exercises	<b>Ch. 4</b> of Text <b>Articles/Info.</b> in GaView
Mon., 11/28	Finish Legal Ethics <b>Career Module Due</b> in class Review for Exam #3		
Mon., 12/5	<b>Exam #3</b> (Time TBD)		