



PARA 2235 – Law Office Skills

Course Syllabus – Fall 2011

Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center 255, 678-466-5445, disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu

Instructor Information:

Name: Professor Mara Mooney
Office: T- 109D
Office Hours: **Mondays: 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.** and by appointment
E-mail: **Please use GeorgiaVIEW (GaView) for ALL emails relating to this course.** It is our virtual classroom. If you need to reach me about a matter unrelated to this course, please use maramooney@clayton.edu.
Responses: I respond to all email questions within two business days.
Phone & Fax: Phone: (678) 466-4642 (*I can only be reached at this number during office hours, so GaVIEW 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 2235 - Law Office Skills (**CRN 87577**)
Credit Hours: 3.0 semester credit hours (3-0-3)
Description: This course involves students in practical problem solving and hands-on scenarios that occur in the law office, such as ethical issues, document management, and billing procedures.
Prerequisites: PARA 1101, PARA 2203, PARA 2205, and PARA 2209 (for all majors)
Co-requisites: None

Class Meetings:

This course has three mandatory on-campus meetings that meet from 5 pm – 6:15 pm.

Location: Clayton Hall T-201
Class Days/Times: **(1) Monday, August 15; (2) Monday, Sept. 26; (3) See schedule**

Textbook and Other Materials:

Required text: Linda L. Edwards, Law Office Skills (West Legal Studies)
Textbook coverage: Entire text
Also required: Scanned articles and other information provided in GaVIEW

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 create PowerPoint presentations
- 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.
- 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 such as email, discussion, assignment tool, and calendar 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 used in the classroom in this course. 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:

- Become proficient and ethical in the mechanics of legal timekeeping
- Learn how to manage workflow in a law office
- Improve oral and written communication skills

Evaluation:

Homework Assignments: 10 (each is worth 10 points)	100
Learning Modules: 15 (each is worth 5 points, except Learning Module 5, which is worth 10 points)	80
Midterm Exam	40
Written Communications Assignment	35
Final Exam/Oral Presentation	30
TOTAL	285

Grades:

A	257 to 285 points
B	228 to 256 points
C	200 to 227 points
D	186 to 199 points
F	185 points or 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 58% 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://adminservices.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 log into GaVIEW every week and to complete the module instructions and any corresponding submissions for the week. Attendance is expected for all of the student's on-campus meetings. Any absence must be accompanied by a written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority.

Missed Work: For examinations, a make-up quiz or 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.

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.

Graded Assessments: Grades on all submissions are based upon quality, depth, organization, appearance, accurateness and completeness. Attention to detail and the use of proper grammar are essential to your success in the legal field. Therefore, formatting, spelling, grammatical, punctuation, and other typographical errors result in point deductions. Each student is required to do his/her own work on all graded assessments. Meeting deadlines is also critical in the legal field, and all graded assessments must be submitted by the day and time indicated in the Course Schedule or they will be subject to late penalties. Feel free to submit work prior to its due date.

Homework Assignments:

Homework assignments are posted in GaVIEW in an expandable folder on the course home page. Homework assignments must be submitted via the GaVIEW assignment tool. **Homework assignments submitted via CSU email, GaVIEW email, or any other means will be deducted 20%.** Comments will be provided in GaVIEW for any deductions made to homework assignments. **Any**

homework assignment not submitted by its due date/time will be assigned an automatic “0.”

Learning Modules:

Learning modules are posted in GaVIEW in an expandable folder on the course home page. Carefully read the instructions in each learning module posted in GaVIEW. For emails, send your message to my GaVIEW email and make sure to include the correct name in the subject matter line of the email (1 point deduction for failure to do so). **For emails, you must type your answers directly into the body of the email (don't use attachments).** If you use an attachment in your email, 1 point will be deducted from your learning module score, and I will return your email to you for re-submission before any grade will be posted. If a learning module directs you to complete a discussion posting, go to the discussion tool and select the appropriate discussion heading/thread in which to place your posting. **Late learning module submissions are not accepted and are assigned an automatic “0.”** Whatever you have or have not submitted by the due date/time for each learning module will be used to compute your learning module grade. Partial credit is possible, although, in addition to any point deductions on submitted portions, your overall grade for a learning module will be reduced by an additional 2 points for failure to timely submit all sections.

Midterm Exam:

The midterm examination is given in class. It is a closed book, closed note exam. Please refer to the Course Schedule for details.

Written Communications Assignment:

The Written Communications Assignment is posted in GaVIEW on the course home page and is due by the date of the midterm. **Please bring your completed assignment to class on the day of the midterm exam.** Refer to the Written Communications Assignment for additional details and make sure to **staple your assignment in the correct order.** If you submit your Written Communications Assignment late, your grade will be reduced by 10 points. **Any Written Communications Assignment not submitted within 2 business days of the due date will receive a “0.”**

Final Exam/Oral Presentation:

Information regarding your final exam/oral presentation is posted in an expandable folder in GaVIEW on the course home page. The instructor will circulate a sign-up sheet for students to commit to a day on which to do their oral presentations. You may be asked to change days if students drop the course throughout the semester and the instructor elects to collapse days. Each student is only required to attend class on the day of his or her oral presentation. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class period on that day. If a student misses their presentation, they will receive a 20% deduction on their make-up grade.

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 2235 Course Schedule – Fall 2011:

<u>Meeting or Due Date</u>	<u>Delivery Format</u>	<u>Learning Modules and Other Activities</u>	<u>Assignments & Instructions</u>
Week of 8/15			
Mon., 8/15 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	<i>MODULE 1 - Course Orientation</i> 1. Review Syllabus and Due Dates 2. Class Requirements 3. Student Goals 4. GaVIEW Orientation <i>MODULE 2 – Professionalism</i> 1. Attire 2. Nonverbal Messages 3. Personal Greetings 4. Language and Behavior 5. Traits of a Professional 6. Taking Directions	-Attend in-class lecture -Complete Learning Module 1 and Learning Module 2 in GaVIEW -Read Chapter 1 in textbook
Thurs., 8/18 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULES 1 & 2	
Fri., 8/19 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 1 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 1: Review Questions 1 – 8
Week of 8/22			
	Online	<i>MODULE 3 – Telephone Etiquette</i> 1. Basic Telephone Skills 2. Taking Calls from Clients 3. Taking Messages 4. Voicemail (creating your own and leaving messages) 5. Email	-Read Chapter 2 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 3 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 8/25 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 3	
Fri., 8/26 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 2 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 2: Review Questions 1 – 9
Week of 8/29			
	Online	<i>MODULE 4 – Time Management</i> 1. Purpose and importance of time management 2. Methods of time management 3. Time stealers and procrastination 2. Short and Long Terms Goals 3. Re-evaluating Goals 4. Creating an orderly work environment	-Read Chapter 3 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 4 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 9/1 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 4	
Fri., 9/2 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 3 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 3: Review Questions 1 -11

Week of 9/5			
	Online	MODULE 5 – Timekeeping and Billing 1. Importance of accurate timekeeping 2. Common fee arrangements 3. Mechanics of timekeeping 4. Ethical issues in timekeeping 5. Billable v. Nonbillable hours 6. Methods of recording time	-Read Chapter 4 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 5 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 9/8 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 5	
Fri., 9/9 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 4 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 4: Review Questions 1 -20
Week of 9/12			
	Online	MODULE 6 – File Management 1. Filing systems 2. File retrieval 3. Opening files 4. Organizing and maintaining files	-Read Chapter 5 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 6 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 9/15 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 6	
Fri., 9/16 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 5 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 5: Review Questions 1 – 17
NOTE:	Online	Begin work on the Written Communications Assignment located on course homepage	-Your Written Communications Assignment is due in hard copy when you come to class to take the midterm exam
Week of 9/19			
	Online	MODULE 7 – Business English 1. Grammar and punctuation 2. Business correspondence 3. Editing and proofreading 4. Plain English drafting	-Complete Learning Module 7 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 9/22 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 7	
Week of 9/26			
Mon., 9/26 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	MIDTERM EXAM 1. Closed book/notes/material 2. Covers material from Learning Modules 2 – 6 & Chapters 1 – 5	- Bring completed Written Communications Assignment to Class
Week of 10/3			
	Online	MODULE 8 – Document Management 1. Managing document flow 2. Participating in requests for document production 3. Trial preparation 4. Reviewing automated document mgmt. systems 5. Manual and computerized docket control	-Read Chapter 6 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 8 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 10/6	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR	

by 2 pm		LEARNING MODULE 8	
Fri., 10/7 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 6 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 6: Review Questions 1 – 15
Week of 10/10			
	Online	<i>MODULE 9 – Ethics in the Law Office</i> 1. Ethical obligations on attorneys and paralegals 2. Common ethical errors	-Complete Learning Module 9 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 10/13 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 9	
Week of 10/17			
	Online	<i>MODULE 10 – Docket Control</i> 1. Manual calendaring 2. Computerized calendaring 3. Tickler systems	-Read Chapter 7 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 10 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 10/20 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 10	
Fri., 10/21 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 7 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 7: Review Questions 1 – 20
Week of 10/24			
	Online	<i>MODULE 11 – Office Politics</i> 1. Definition of office politics 2. Engaging in office politics 3. Building relationships with others 4. Building your power base	-Read Chapter 8 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 11 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 10/27 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 11	
Fri., 10/28 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 8 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 8: Review Questions 1 – 8
Week of 10/31			
	Online	<i>MODULE 12 – Human Dynamics in a Law Office</i> 1. Dealing with stress 2. Building good client relationships 3. Oral communication skills 4. Working with attorneys 5. Working with legal secretaries and other staff	-Read Chapter 9 in textbook -Complete Learning Module 12 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 11/3 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 12	
Fri., 11/4 by 2 pm	Online	Ch. 9 HOMEWORK DUE	Chapter 9: Law Office Practices Questions 9-3, 9-4, 9-5, (skip 9-6), 9-7, 9-8, (skip 9-9), 9-10, and 9-11
Week of 11/7			
	Online	<i>MODULE 13 – Working with People Who Make You Want to Scream</i> 1. Common varieties of people who make you want to scream 2. General principles in dealing with these people	-Read Appendix in textbook -Complete Learning Module 13 in GaVIEW

		3.Can you change someone's behavior? 4. Knowing yourself	
Thurs., 11/10 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 13	
Fri., 11/11 by 2 pm	Online	Appendix HOMEWORK DUE	Access Appendix homework in GaView for instructions
Week of 11/14			
Mon., 11/14 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView
	Online	<u>MODULE 14</u> – <i>Resume and Job Skills</i> 1. Obtaining a paralegal job – online, newspaper, friends, family, other contacts 2. Resume tips 3. Drafting a cover letter 4. Thank you notes 5. Follow up 6. Interview tips	-Complete Learning Module 14 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 11/17 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 14	
Week of 11/21			
Mon., 11/21 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView
Week of 11/28			
Mon., 11/28 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView
Wed., 11/30 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView
	Online	<u>MODULE 15</u> – <i>Law Firm Organization, Areas of Law & the Paralegal Profession</i> 1. Common types of law firm organization 2. Areas of law 3. Legal work environments 4. Paralegal profession	-Complete Learning Module 15 in GaVIEW
Thurs., 12/1 by 2 pm	Online	ONLINE POSTINGS DUE FOR LEARNING MODULE 15	
Mon., 12/5 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView
Wed., 12/7 5 – 6:15 pm, Room T-201	In Class	ORAL PRESENTATIONS	Follow instructions located in GaView