

COURSE SYLLABUS

POLITICAL SCIENCE 426: PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP (3 semester hours)

Tuesdays, 6:00 – 7:00 PM
Political Science Main Office (Conference Room)

Instructor: Professor April Pitts
Office Location: SS – 163
Office Hours: M 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
T 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM (except intern meeting days)
W 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
R 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
(or by appointment)
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Required Texts

Deborah E. Bouchoux and Susan M. Sullivan, *Internships Through Employment*
ISBN: 9780735562479

Course Description

Basic internship for paralegals who lack experience in the legal field. Course integrates practical experience with the student's academic program through supervised work in an appropriate legal environment. Prerequisite: Completion of at least 18 hours of paralegal specialty or consent of the program coordinator. Requires a minimum of 160 working hours.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to enable the student to:

- Understand the role of the paralegal as a legal professional;
- Use practical skills obtained in coursework;
- Identify ethical dilemmas, if any, and apply the rules of professional conduct while working as a paralegal;
- Identify areas of interest within the legal field;
- Gain real world experience in the legal field with feedback regarding the student's work product and job performance;
- Understand strengths and identify weaknesses;
- Build and improve upon weaknesses identified while working as a paralegal.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required and roll will be taken at every class. If you miss any class and/or supervisor meetings, I reserve the right to drop you from the course. If a student leaves before the end of class, it will be considered 1 absence.

Grading Policy

All written work will be graded not only on content, but also on writing style, **including punctuation and grammar**. Homework, case briefs, memos, take-home exams and any other written assignment will NOT be accepted late or by email. If an assignment is turned in late, a grade of zero will be given.

Your grade will be evaluated by consideration of the following: attendance at all class/supervisor meetings; evaluation of your work by the internship sponsor; compilation of weekly timesheets and weekly journals; mock interview; resume and cover letter; final paper; and final oral presentation.

Evaluation of Student Work: Your internship sponsor will complete a written evaluation of your job performance as a paralegal at the end of the semester. Areas of evaluation will include appearance, punctuality, attitude, work product, and overall performance. I will also contact your sponsor periodically throughout the semester. I reserve the right to drop you one grade level based on inadequate performance as determined by your internship sponsor in the aforementioned areas of evaluation.

Final Paper: You are required to write a 5 page paper detailing your experiences working as a paralegal intern. Your paper will be typewritten in 12 point font. You must attach a cover page.

Final Paper Presentation: You will be required to orally summarize your paper at the last class meeting as indicated on the syllabus. It must be 10-15 minutes in length. Appearance will be evaluated as well. Please dress appropriately.

Mock Interview: You will participate in a mock interview with me. You will be evaluated on appearance, speech, ability to answer questions clearly, resume, etc. You will be given immediate feedback.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Weekly timesheets & weekly journals	25 points
Participation in mock interview	25 points
Resume and Cover Letter	10 points
Final paper	15 points
Final oral presentation	<u>25 points</u>
Total	100 points

Grade Distribution is as follows:

A = 90-99

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 65-69

F = 64 and below

(No extra credit work will be allowed)

Classroom Etiquette

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) You are expected to exhibit respect for the instructor and fellow students at all times. All electronic devices (except laptops) must be turned off during class. Laptop use is limited to reading notes made for class and taking notes during class. In the event you choose to use a laptop, sound features must be disabled. Surfing the internet and playing games on your laptop during class time are strictly prohibited. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from class.

Disability Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University – Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132
Phone: (903)886-5150 or (903)886-5835
Fax: (903)468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

“What is Plagiarism

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.” (www.plagiarism.org)

If you plagiarize, you will receive an F for the assignment in question and the matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

As Instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or alter this syllabus as the situation may require.

Meetings with Internship Supervisor

09/04/2012	Syllabus Review and Questions Internship Goals
09/18/2012	Class Meeting
10/02/2012	Resume/Cover Letter Writing and Review Review of Internship <u>Assignment:</u> Prepare a cover letter and resume using chapters 3 and 5 of your textbook. You can also find sample resumes and cover letters in Appendices B and C of your textbook.
10/23/2012	Class Meeting
11/06/2012	Mock Interview Review of Internship <u>Assignment:</u> Please read and utilize chapter 6 of your textbook in preparation for the mock interview
11/20/2012	Class Meeting
12/04/2012	Final Papers Due Final Paper Presentation (15 minute oral presentation of paper)