This Course is Three Semester Hours.  
This is a Required Course in the Paralegal Curriculum.

Course Description

The purpose of the course is to provide the student with a basic overview of family law issues which face practitioners and paralegals today, with specific emphasis on the practical matters of obtaining information from clients, drafting, and preparing for trial.  Students will learn to read and brief cases.  Students will be expected to learn and be fluent in the identification of ethical issues that face family law practitioners.  Students will gain knowledge of organization and preparation of witnesses.  Students will be trained and expected to utilize computer programs to assist in drafting.

Course Objectives

1. To give students a basic overview of family law issues, focusing on dissolution issues.
2. To give students a portfolio of documents which reflect their ability to draft documents related to family law.
3. To accustom students to the Socratic method of teaching.
4. To allow students to express their interpretations of the issues covered in the reading which will assist them in discussing issues with attorneys, paralegals, clients and the community.
5. To address issues which may have law enforcement implications in the day-to-day legal world.

Texts

Etiquette

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. You are expected to exhibit respect for the instructor and fellow students at all times. Active cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices (excluding laptops) are not permitted in the classroom. Please turn off and fully conceal all such items during class. Do not conduct any activity on your laptop during class that is not related to class. Please disable any sound features associated with your laptop. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from class.

Class participation is expected and encouraged. However, disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Further, if a student appears to be under the influence of a mood/mind altering substance and the conduct is disruptive, the student will be asked to leave the class.

This class begins at 7:20 p.m. and continues until 10:00 p.m. You may be allowed to leave early to go to the Library to work on the following week’s exercises.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Disability Statement

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services, Halladay Student Services Buildings, Room 303D, 903-886-5835.

Modifications

From time to time, modifications to the syllabus may be necessary. THEY WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS AND YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING ABOUT THE MODIFICATIONS WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE TIME OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT. You should regularly check the instructor’s website for any changes in the syllabus or class assignments.
Notes

There will likely be very few notes posted related to this class. However, notes will be given from time to time. Instructor will endeavor to email notes and other information directly to the student.

Office Hours

Instructor will be available from 7:00 p.m. until class starts and after class. Any other time must be made by appointment. Texting is the best way to contact Instructor; second best contact is at clbraddy@yahoo.com.

Course Content

Class 1: January 21, 2015
Overview of Course

Class 2: January 28, 2015
“Dating in the Dark Ages”
Discussion of the history of family relationships.

Class 3: February 4, 2015
“Gold Diggers are Us!”
Fault Grounds and money issues in divorce proceedings.

Class 4: February 11, 2015
“If He Beats Me, Can I Kill Him?”
Family Abuse issues.

Class 5: February 18, 2015
“Why Can’t I Get a Divorce?”
Problems that occur in attempting to divorce, including failing to prove a marriage.

Class 6: February 25, 2015
“Show Me the Money”
Property Division

Class 7: March 4, 2015
Review Session
Class 8: March 11, 2015 - Mid-Term Exam

No Class March 18, 2015

Class 9: March 25, 2015
“Who’s Better Johnny? Mommy or Daddy”
Child Custody issues

Class 10: April 1, 2015
“CPS: Friend or Foe?”
State regulation of the family and issues concerning abuse.

Class 11: April 8, 2015
“That’s an $80,000.00 Baby if I ever Saw One!” Adoption issues

Class 12: April 15, 2015
“That’s an $80,000.00 Baby if I ever Saw One! It’s a twin!” Adoption continued

Class 13: April 22, 2015
“Johnny has Two Daddies”
Alternative families and legal issues concerning them.

Class 14: April 29, 2015
Review Session

Class 15: May 6, 2015
Final Exam

Teaching Method

The Socratic method of teaching will be used in part. Class participants will be called upon to give briefs to the class. Straight lecture will also be used. Class participation is a cornerstone of this class and students who do not wish to participate will lose points on their grade.
Expectations / Grading Rubric

Reading Assignments – 5%
In Class Participation – 5%
Mid Term Exam – 25%
Drafting and Briefing Assignments – 40%
Final Exam – 25%

Grading Scale

A  90-100
B  80-90
C  70-80
D  64-70
F  Below 64

Exam Content

Short Answer

Essay

There will be a Mid-Term Exam. It will comprise twenty-five percent of the student’s grade.

There will be a Final Exam. It will comprise twenty-five percent of the student’s grade.

Drafting Assignments

Students will be given a fact situation and asked to draft documents. ProDoc will be used and is available on computers in the library. Forty percent of the student’s grade will be based on these drafting assignments.

Class Participation

Students are expected to have read the material and be prepared to discuss the cases and issues in the assigned reading. Students are also expected to ask relevant questions pertaining to the material.