Fall 9-1-2006

**LEG 185T.01: Introduction to Paralegal Studies**

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*University of Montana, Missoula*

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA - MISSOULA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY - BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
COURSE SYLLABUS

LEG 185T – INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES

FACULTY: Miva VanEngen    Class Time: 11:40 am - 1:00 pm TR
Office: By appointment         Class Location: Administration 04
Email: mivavanengen@yahoo.com

READ THIS SYLLABUS CAREFULLY. This syllabus is designed to help students understand the
goals, expectations, and evaluation methods employed in this course.

TEXT: The Paralegal Professional Essentials, Cheeseman and Goldman, Prentice Hall, 2004

SUGGESTED REFERENCE: Black’s Law Dictionary or other legal dictionary

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduction to paralegal career including ethical and professional
standards. Overview of the American legal system, substantive areas of practice, legal analysis and
investigation, and law office administration.

GOALS: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Apply American law to real or hypothetical fact situations.
2. Interact with other students in small groups requiring critical thinking and problem
   solving related to the American legal system.
3. Discern the skills, abilities, and personal characteristics needed to become a successful
   paralegal.
4. Describe the organization of law offices and the interrelationships between attorneys and
   paralegals.
5. Be aware of ethical obligations of paralegals.
6. Formulate solutions to potential dilemmas arising out of employment in the legal field.
7. Be acquainted with major substantive areas of law and duties and responsibilities integral
   to those specialties.
8. Acquire a working legal vocabulary.
9. Analyze legal situations to distinguish relevant facts from informational sources.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT METHODS AND GRADING PROCEDURES: All
assignments, tests, and projects completed during the semester will be assigned point values. Total
points earned will be divided by points possible, and a letter grade will be assigned based on the
following percentage scale: A = 93-100, B = 86- 92, C = 80- 85, D = 75- 79

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance will be taken. Students may miss three (3) class sessions
during the semester with no negative impact on grade. Each missed class thereafter may result in a 5-
point deduction from final points accumulated. No make up is allowed for in-class projects. If students
are absent for any reason, they will be accountable for any information disseminated and be held
responsible for class notes and announcements of tests and assignments.

PARTICIPATION: Students contribute to the learning environment and become active learners by
attending class and participating in discussions. Each student has distinctive and valuable life
experiences to share. Students will be expected to respect such contributions. Students who read text
assignments prior to class will be equipped to participate and will obtain the most from this course.
**DUE DATES**: To receive full credit, assignments must be submitted by stated due dates. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**TESTS**: Tests will be given during the semester as indicated on course outline (dates subject to change). Arrangements for makeup tests will be made only if faculty is notified by e-mail or personally prior to the test date. A score of zero will be averaged into grade determination for any missed test.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**: Students are required to adhere to standards of academic integrity. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Students should review The University of Montana Student Conduct Code regarding their rights and responsibilities. The Conduct Code is located at [www.umt.edu/studentaffairs](http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs).

**CELL PHONE POLICY**: Please turn off cell phones before class begins as they are distracting to others.

**COURSE OUTLINE** (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 29 - September 26</td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1</strong>: The Professional Paralegal</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 6</strong>: Judicial and Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<td><strong>CHAPTER 5</strong>: The American Legal System</td>
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<td>September 28</td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2</strong>: Ethics, Regulation, and Professional Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 3 - 19</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam 1</strong>: September 28</td>
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<td><strong>CHAPTER 3</strong>: Careers in the Paralegal Profession</td>
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<td><strong>CHAPTER 7</strong>: Civil Litigation</td>
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<td><strong>CHAPTER 8</strong>: Criminal Law and review chapters 3, 7, 8</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam 2</strong>: October 24</td>
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<td>October 26 - December 7</td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 4</strong>: Paralegal Workplace Skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 9</strong>: Interviewing and Investigation</td>
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<td><strong>CHAPTER 10</strong>: Traditional and Computer Legal Research</td>
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<td>Working the Web</td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Election Day, Holiday - NO CLASS</td>
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<td>November 23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Vacation - NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 7</td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 11</strong>: Critical Legal Thinking and Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam 10:10 am - 12:10</strong> Have a great winter break!</td>
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