



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
<b>LEG 129</b>	<b>Role of the Paralegal</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hours:</b> Lecture/Lab/Other	<b>Co- or Pre-requisite</b>	<b>Implementation Semester &amp; Year</b>
<b>3/0/0</b>	<b>ENG 101</b>	<b>Spring 2022</b>

**Catalog description:** Study of the relationship among paralegals, attorneys, and clients particularly as it relates to law office economics, legal ethics, and confidentiality. Stages in a civil lawsuit and a criminal prosecution are examined; legal interviewing, investigation, and an orientation to legal research are stressed.

**General Education Category:**  
**Not GenEd**

**Course coordinator:**  
**Erin Rybicki, J.D., M.Ed.**  
**(609) 570-3649**  
**rybickie@mccc.edu**

**Required texts & Other materials:**

*Paralegal Today*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition  
Cengage Publishers  
ISBN-13: 978-1305506084  
ISBN-10: 1305506081

**Legal Specialty Course Notice:**

This course is a legal specialty course (LS) as designated in the college's American Bar Association (ABA) approval reports for the legal studies degree and certificate programs.

This course does not constitute the teaching of law for the purpose of practicing law; in the State of New Jersey only a licensed attorney may practice law.

**Legal Specialty Course Transfer Notice:** The following legal specialty courses must be completed at MCCC and may not be transferred: LEG 129, LEG 130, LEG 132, LEG 133, LEG 143, LEG 255.

**Legal Specialty Teaching Modality Notice:** LEG 129 may be completed in an asynchronous or synchronous learning modality depending on the current course offerings.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

***Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of legal professionals, including lawyers, paralegals, judges, mediators, corporate staff, judicial staff and support staff. [Supports ILG # 5 ; PLO 1, 5 ]
2. Describe the legal professional's ethical considerations and responsibilities concerning client communications and legal work. [Supports ILG # 9, 11 ; PLO # 1, 2 ]
3. Explain the paralegal's role in the law firm concerning legal research, legal writing, client communications, case work and related responsibilities. [Supports ILG # 1, 10; PLO #1, 4 ]
4. Distinguish and explain various areas of legal practice and related professional roles, including civil litigation, criminal law, corporate law and focused areas of legal practice. [Supports ILG # 5 ; PLO # 1, 5 ]
5. Assess and prepare practical legal tasks including drafts of complaints, general pleadings, client communication or related documents. [Supports ILG # 1,11; PLO # 3, 4 ]

6. Describe the role of professional association-based ethics codes, state ethics opinions and state bar regulations concerning the legal profession. [Supports ILG # 9, 11 ; PLO # 1, 2 ]

### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science.** Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

**Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

### **Program Learning Outcomes for:**

#### **Paralegal A.A.S. degree and Paralegal Certificate (post-degree credential)**

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of legal professionals in a variety of legal employment settings;
2. Identify and implement standards of legal ethics and professionalism;
3. Demonstrate practical skills in a range of substantive legal areas;
4. Engage in effective written and verbal professional communication;
5. Develop appropriate methods for embarking on a legal career.

### **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

#### **Unit I Understanding United States law and Legal Process**

##### **Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 1, 3]

##### **The student will be able to...**

- Discuss the United States legal system, sources of law, distribution of powers and how these concepts relate to the work of legal professionals.
- Discuss various state legal systems, administrative agencies, sources of law, distribution of powers and how these concepts relate to the work of the paralegal.
- Explain general concepts in civil litigation, including legal support work and responsibilities to the client.
- Define the regulation of attorneys, judges, paralegals, support staff and others
- Explain the history of paralegals in the United States, how the legal industry identified the need for paralegals and the evolving role of paralegals.

#### **Unit II Understanding the Practical Role of the Paralegal**

##### **Learning Objectives** [Supports SLO # 4, 5, 6 ]

##### **The student will be able to...**

- Discuss the practical role and responsibilities of the paralegal within a variety of legal employment settings.

- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA.)
- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of American Bar Association (ABA.)
- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA.)
- Conduct client intake interviews and summarize client intake information for a new or prospective client.
- Apply best practices for tasks concerning client and witness interviews; explain processes and materials used client interviews upon review of the client file.
- Draft a case brief for a landmark case of significant historical value.
- Analyze and manage a hypothetical client file over a period of many course weeks, with progressive responsibilities and duties.

### **Unit III Understanding the Ethical Role of the Paralegal**

#### **Learning Objectives [Supports SLO # 2, 6]**

##### **The student will be able to...**

- Analyze hypothetical paralegal scenarios and provide meaningful analysis of the correct application of state statutes, ABA Model Rules for Professional Conduct, NFPA rules and/or NALA Rules.
- Apply the correct law to ethical and legal issues.
- Appraise highlighted cases and current events concerning legal issues
- Design presentations to the class how the ethical and legal issues apply to the role of the paralegal.
- Explain Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) and how it applies to the role of the paralegal.
- Explain and apply the national trends and changes in UPL law, including exceptions to UPL.
- Analyze issues concerning confidentiality and attorney privilege and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal.
- Explain conflict of interest and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal.
- Analyze issues concerning professionalism and competent representation and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal.
- Explain the rules of advertising and solicitation and how these rules apply to the role of the paralegal.
- Explain the rules and responsibilities when communicating with current and prospective clients and how these rules apply to the role of the paralegal.

##### **Evaluation of student learning:**

**Assignments:** Written research, case briefs, legal document drafting assignments and practical legal tasks designed to assess preparedness for practical legal work.

**Quizzes:** Essay and multiple-choice assessments designed to measure understanding of objective legal concepts.

**Discussions:** Course-related conversations in a live setting or via discussion board to support and assess concepts presented in the unit.