

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

LEG 212

Course Number

Field Experience – Paralegal

Course Title

3

Credits

1

Class Hours

210

Field Experience  
Work Hours

Text: Title: How to Land Your First Paralegal Job  
Author: Andrea Wagner  
Publisher: Prentice Hall  
Edition: Third  
Copyright: 2001

Catalog Description

LEG 212 Field Experience – Paralegal

3 credits

Prerequisites: Sophomore status and permission of the instructor

Eligibility is determined by the Paralegal Program Coordinator and is generally limited to students in their final semester prior to graduation. Students work in a New Jersey law office or other approved legal site, supervised by practicing attorneys and graded on ability to apply learning in practical situations. Includes seminar meeting one day per week.

1 lecture hour/210 hours work experience

Eric Perkins  
Course Coordinator

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Time/Room #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
Office #/Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Grading

The student's final course grade will be based on the following:

1. ***Student Self-Evaluation*** 25%  
The student will be expected to analyze in detail his/her total field experience evidenced by completing a detailed student evaluation form prepared by the program coordinator and by presenting to the program coordinator a written subjective analysis of the field experience based on various criteria established by the program coordinator.
2. ***Student Log and Projects*** 25%  
On a weekly basis during the semester, each student will be required to submit a log of his field experience to the program coordinator. Each student will be given a list of required items to be included in the log.
3. ***Field Experience Supervisor Rating*** 25%  
Toward the end of the field experience semester, the supervising lawyer(s) will be asked to complete a detailed evaluation of the field experience student. Evaluative feedback from the supervising lawyer(s) will be both by oral discussions and via completion of written forms supplied to the supervising lawyer(s) by the program coordinator.
4. ***Faculty Rating*** 25%  
Students enrolled in the field experience course will meet on a collective basis in a seminar class one day per week with the program coordinator, and the students' involvement will be considered in the determination of the students' final grade.

## General Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Develop an awareness of the roles and responsibilities of a paralegal working in a law office including such dimensions as an understanding of the specific tasks to be performed by the paralegal; the development of an effective rapport with various law office personnel and clients; and an understanding of the concept of confidentiality and the various legal and ethical considerations which govern the utilization of paralegals in private law offices.
- Facilitate the wedding of theory with practice by competently performing a wide range of paralegal skills under the general supervision of a licensed attorney.
- Thoroughly analyze and evaluate the totality of the internship experience.
- Make a meaningful contribution to the cooperating law office.

## Specific Course Objectives

The student should be able:

- To list and develop a set of individual goals of the field experience student enumerating what the student desires to accomplish during the field experience period. (The instructor may also be involved with this objective.)
- To describe, analyze and evaluate the organizational structure of the cooperating law office.
- To identify the role and responsibilities of the field experience student within the cooperating law office.
- To develop a cooperative and effective rapport with the supervising lawyer(s), other office lawyers, and the various other law office personnel including other paralegals, law clerks, legal secretaries, and other legal support staff.
- To identify various strategies for dealing with possible areas of resistance within the cooperating law office—for example, a non-cooperative lawyer, rival paralegals, resentful legal secretaries, or reluctant clerks.
- To discuss, analyze and evaluate the various psychological needs of clients in various legal settings as they relate to the functions of a paralegal.
- To work effectively with persons from various environments and backgrounds and handle problems of various degrees of seriousness and delicacy.
- To evaluate the quality and quantity of communications that should occur between the student intern, the supervising lawyer(s), other law office personnel, and clients of the cooperating law office.
- To discuss, analyze and evaluate the responsibilities of the field experience student to, at all times during and after employment, protect the confidentiality of client and office matters.
- To discuss, understand, analyze and evaluate various legal-ethical considerations regarding the usage of paralegals in various law office settings.
- To analyze and evaluate various types of directions given to the field experience student by the supervising lawyer(s) preparatory to performing various paralegal skills.
- To perform various paralegal skills in a competent manner in various law office settings as dictated by the types of tasks delegated to the field experience student by the supervising lawyer(s).
- To analyze, evaluate and communicate to the supervising lawyer(s) ways by which the field experience student can aid the supervising lawyer(s) and cooperating law office.
- To discuss, analyze and evaluate the total training experience of the field experience student in an objective and critical manner.

## **Student Log for LEG 212/Field Experience – Paralegal**

On a weekly basis during the semester, each student is required to submit a log of his/her field experiences to the seminar instructor. Data should be accumulated and written up daily during the field experience period.

The following is a list of required items to be included in the student log:

1. The name and location of the cooperating law office in which your field experience work took place. Also, include the name of the supervising attorney.
2. A description of the cooperating law office's internal environment—i.e., the number of employees, their positions, and how they are organized and structured. This description only has to be included in the first student log.
3. Describe in detail your daily activities from the time you arrived until you left each day you worked. An adequate supply of daily activity forms will be supplied to you by the seminar instructor.
4. What interesting experiences did you encounter during your field experience with respect to your fellow workers and law office clients? This information can be included in your daily log.
5. Discuss in detail any accomplishments and difficulties each week.
6. Include a first draft of your résumé.
7. Include a first draft of a sample cover letter in application for a position of a paralegal (include a copy of the job posting or advertisement).
8. Include a list of items you would include in a professional portfolio.

### Topics for Discussion at the Seminars

The following topics will be presented and discussed during the weekly seminars:

- Writing a résumé for the paralegal profession
- Writing a cover letter for a position as a paralegal
- Job search strategies and techniques
- Interviewing skills
- Organization of law offices
- How to get and stay organized
- Professionalism and legal ethics
- Dealing with stress on the job
- When to move on
- Further educational opportunities: bachelor's degrees and law school