COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number
LEG 143

Course Title
Family Law

Credits
3

Hours:
lecture/Lab/Other 3/0/0

Co- or Pre-requisite
none

Implementation
sem/year SP/2019

Catalog description (as it appears in 2014-2015 edition):
[Note: All revisions to the course description in the catalog require the submission of a memo to the Curriculum Committee.]

Survey of procedures and pleadings in domestic relations including the preparation of divorce complaints, answers, counterclaims, motions, disclosure statements, and property settlement agreements. Includes issues of custody, visitation rights, child support and maintenance, adoptions and name changes. [Spring offering] 3 lecture hours

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? [Modified courses are those which have a new prefix or course number]

No.
Required texts/other materials:

Required Textbook:
To be determined by the course coordinator each semester.

Supplemental Materials:
This course is offered online and therefore each student must obtain the unique (semester-specific) access code to the Family Law Office Simulation & Student Lab. The faculty member will provide this code to students during the first week of class in the course announcements.

Revision date:
This outline was updated Spring 2019; no changes were made to the curriculum.

Course coordinator: (Name, telephone number, email address)
Erin Rybicki
(609) 570-3649
rybickie@mccc.edu

Information resources: (Describe the primary information resources that support the course, including books, videos, journals, electronic databases, websites, etc. To request new materials for your course, use the library request form at: www.mccc.edu/student_library_course_form.shtml)

This course uses a textbook and Law Office Simulation and Online Lab. The Law Office Simulation provides students with recordings of client interviews, access to a hypothetical client file, templates for legal documents and audio recordings (with transcripts.) Due to the significant importance of these learning resources, students are required to purchase access to the Law Office Simulation for this course.
Other learning resources: (Describe any other student learning resources that are specific to this course, including any special tutoring or study group support, learning system software, etc.)

All materials shall be provided to the students via their Blackboard course. This course is ONLY offered in an online capacity. Supplemental materials are supplied online and students are expected to submit items through Backboard.

Course Competencies/Goals: [List the most important 5-8 overall student learning outcomes for your course. Course-level student learning outcomes (or Course Competencies/Goals) are statements that describe the specific, measurable knowledge, skills, and/or values that the student is expected to demonstrate, perform or exhibit after completion of the course. Student learning outcomes should focus on what the students will learn (rather than what the instructor will teach) and must include verbs (explain..., demonstrate..., analyze...) that reflect lower-order and higher-order learning goals.]

The student will be able to:

- **Course Competency One**: Students explain the role and responsibilities of the paralegal in a family law setting, which may include employment within a law firm, legal aid office and/or applicable state agencies.
- **Course Competency Two**: In the perspective of a paralegal, students can effectively analyze hypothetical family law scenarios and provide meaningful analysis of the correct application of law.
- **Course Competency Three**: Students demonstrate an understanding of family law processes, which may include divorce, consultations in consideration of marriage (prenuptial agreements/antenuptial agreements), child custody, child support, adoption and/or mediation processes.
- **Course Competency Four**: In the role of a family law paralegal, students observe intake and initial client interviews and provide appropriate documentation feedback to the attorney (faculty member.)
- **Course Competency Five**: From the perspective of the paralegal’s role, students effectively manage tasks related to a hypothetical family law client file, as assigned, under the guidance of the attorney (faculty member.)
- **Course Competency Six**: Students complete practical paralegal assignments under the guidance of an attorney (faculty member.)
- **Course Competency Seven**: Students understand the ethical and legal obligations related to a law firm’s representation of a family law client.
Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills. [To an extent consistent with its primary purposes, each course in every program is expected to reflect the college’s commitment to general education, as affirmed in the 2005 General Education Policy. A General Education Course is one whose primary purposes and overall design coincide strongly with one or more of the approved general education goals and objectives. For any approved (or proposed) General Education Course, the General Education Goals and Objectives form (the form identified as the “Gen Ed Attachment”) should be completed and attached to the course outline. Below is a complete list of Mercer’s General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills. Retain on this course outline the Goals and Skills that pertain to your course and delete those that are not a central part of the course.]

**General Education Knowledge Goals**

**Goal 1. Communication.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Goal 4. Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**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.

**Goal 7. History.** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Goal 8. Diversity.** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

**Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

**MCCC Core Skills**

**Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

**Goal D. 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.

**Units of study in detail.** [Each unit should center around a topic, theme or skill that supports the Course Competencies/Goals (the course-level student learning outcomes [SLOs]) and general education student learning outcomes. For each unit, identify specific student learning outcomes that focus on content knowledge or process skills. Units of study are not simply the chapters of the textbook; they are independent of the selected textbook. Unit-level student learning outcomes should state (in terms that can serve as the frame of reference for ongoing assessment of both student achievement and of the course’s effectiveness) what successful students will be able to demonstrate, perform or exhibit at the end of the unit. Connect the unit-level SLOs back to the course-level SLOs and the General Education and Core Skills SLOs either by cross-referencing them by number or by explaining the connections in a brief narrative. It is not expected that every unit-level SLO will connect to the General Education and Core Skills SLOs; each unit-level SLO, however, must connect to at least one course-level SLO. See the attached examples.]

**Unit I Understanding Family Law Terminology, Concepts and Law**

*Learning Objectives*

*The student will be able to...*
• Discuss the sources of law for family. (Course Competency 3; Gen Ed Goals 1, 5 & 7)
• Explain the basic stages of a divorce case and the role of paralegal at each stage, as applicable. (Course Competencies 1, 2, 5; Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Define the role of the paralegal in a typical family law case. (Course Competencies 1, 5; Gen Ed Goals 1)
• Define the essential family law terminology and concepts, and can accurately define and apply these concepts. (Course Competency 3, Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Discuss the ethical obligations of the paralegal and attorney when relating to the family law client. (Course Competency 1,7; Gen Ed Goal 1, 9)
• Discuss the principles of family law, and communicate the guiding principles of working with family law cases. (Course Competency 1, 2)
• Explain the role of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and how mediation is used in family law. (Course Competency 4, Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Explain the role of the state courts in family law. (Course Competency 4, Gen Ed Goal 1, 5)
• Explain the role of state agencies in family law. (Course Competency 4, Gen Ed Goal 1, 5)
• Discuss the practical role and responsibilities of the family law paralegal within a variety of legal employment settings. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Draft a case brief for a landmark case of significant historical value. (Course Competencies 1,2,6, 8; Gen Ed Goal 1, 7)
• Locate, discuss, and analyze prominent family cases and/or news articles. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 5)

Unit II The Law of Marriage

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

• Explain the state’s role in defining marriage limitations and requirements. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Explain the process for obtaining a lawful marriage (adult clients.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Explain the process for obtaining a lawful marriage (minor clients.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
• Explain the United States Supreme Court landmark cases, including same sex marriage, marital agreements, and/or marriage requirements. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 7)
• Discuss the requirements for marriage in the State of New Jersey. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Discuss the requirements for marriage in the United States, and how this can differ among the jurisdictions. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Explain the process of obtaining a prenuptial agreements and antenuptial agreements. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Discuss the historical and societal concepts of marriage. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Discuss the concept of unmarried domestic partners. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and/or prominent cases in the area of marriage law. (Course Competencies 1, 2, 5, 6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 5, 7; Core Skill D)

Unit III The Law of Divorce

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to…

● Discuss the practical role and responsibilities of the family law paralegal within a variety of legal employment settings. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Observe a client intake interview and/or initial client interview, and provide the appropriate documentation as assigned. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4; Core Skill D)
● Explain the concept of divorce in New Jersey, and the process of obtaining a divorce in the state of New Jersey. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Explain how a divorce is initiated in New Jersey, and the process of providing the other spouse with the divorce complaint (service.) (Course Competencies 1, 2, 5, 6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4)
● Draft an initial draft of a divorce complaint, under the supervision of an attorney (faculty member.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4; Core Skill A)
● Revise a divorce complaint, per the supervising attorney’s directives. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4; Core Skill A)
● Discuss the grounds for divorce in the State of New Jersey. (Course Competencies 1, 2, 5, 6; Gen Ed Goal 1)
● Explain the role of mediation in divorce in the State of New Jersey. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 5)
● Students can manage and work with a hypothetical client file over a period of many course weeks, with progressive responsibilities and duties. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4)
● In the role of a paralegal, manage a divorce case while under the supervision of an attorney. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4)
● Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and/or prominent cases in the area of challenges to prenuptial agreements. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4, 7)
- Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and/or prominent cases in the area of divorce process. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4, 7; Core Skill D)
- Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and prominent cases in the area of divorce settlements and mediation. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4, 7; Core Skill D)
- Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and prominent cases in the area of alimony. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4, 7; Core Skill D)

**Unit IV Child Custody and Child Support**

*Learning Objectives*

The student will be able to...

- In the role of the paralegal, analyze hypothetical paralegal scenarios involving child custody issues. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1)
- In the role of the paralegal, analyze hypothetical paralegal scenarios involving child support issues. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1)
- Explain and define the prominent concepts in child custody. (Course Competencies 4,7,8; Gen Ed Goal 1)
- Explain and define the prominent concepts in child support. (Course Competencies 4,7,8; Gen Ed Goal 1).
- In the role of the paralegal, locate and understand the rules governing the child support calculations for the State of New Jersey. (Course Competencies 4, 7, 8; Gen Ed Goal 1, 5).
- Understand the ethical and legal implications of a law firm, including the paralegal and attorney, when representing a client in a child custody case. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1, 9)
- Understand the ethical and legal implications of a law firm, including the paralegal and attorney, when representing a client in a child support case. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1, 9)
- Draft assigned legal documents, under the direction of an attorney (faculty member), for child support. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4; Core Skill A)
- Draft assigned legal documents, under the direction of an attorney (faculty member), for child custody. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Gen Ed Goal 1, 4; Core Skill A)

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the
Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson’s office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

This course is entirely compliant with the academic integrity standards of the college. This course specifically covers the implications of plagiarism and academic integrity, and covers how students can ethically embark on legal research tasks and the use of technology in the online classroom and beyond. Students are required to read, review, and follow the standards set forth in the Mercer County Community College Student Handbook academic integrity standards before submitting any assignment. Academic Dishonesty will result in failure of this course.

**Equal Opportunity Policy**

Mercer County Community College is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality, political views, religion, disability unrelated to job or program requirements or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited. Questions regarding the equal opportunity policy and compliance statement may be directed to the Affirmative Action Officer, West Windsor Campus, (609) 586-4800, ext. 3270.