# COURSE OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEG 129</td>
<td>Role of the Paralegal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours:</th>
<th>Co- or Pre-requisite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lecture/Lab/Other</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

No.

**Revision date:**
This outline was updated
Spring Semester, 2020

**Course Coordinator:**
Erin Rybicki, JD, M.Ed.
(609)570-3649
Legal Specialty Course Notice:
This course is a legal specialty course (LS) and is one of the four (4) required on-campus courses students are required to complete on campus to meet their 12 credit on campus minimum for the Paralegal Studies AAS degree or Paralegal Certificate program. The following courses may only be completed on campus: LEG 129, LEG 130, LEG 132, LEG 133.

Required Textbook:
Determined by the course coordinator each semester.

Supplemental Materials:
Ethical Rules from NALA, ABA & NFPA
News articles from : ABA Journal (changes each semester)

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 faculty-created PowerPoints as the main source of information. In addition the students will closely study the applicable rules of ethics (ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, NFPA Model Code, NALA Code) as well as paralegal-specific news articles from reliable sources (ABA Journal.)

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 should be provided to the students via their Blackboard course. This course is ONLY offered in a seated capacity, with all sessions taking place on campus. However, supplemental materials are supplied online and students are expected to submit items through Blackboard.
Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:

- **Course Competency One:** Students demonstrate the role and responsibilities of the paralegal, including an understanding of the differing responsibilities for a paralegal in a variety of legal employment settings.
- **Course Competency Two:** Students can effectively 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.
- **Course Competency Three:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the role of the attorney, judge, legal administrator, legal support staff and other professional roles within the legal employment setting.
- **Course Competency Four:** Students understand the basic legal process, including the foundations of United States law, the sources of law, and the essential concepts relating to pre-trial and trial process.
- **Course Competency Five:** Students conduct intake and initial client interviews and provide appropriate documentation feedback to the attorney (faculty member.)
- **Course Competency Six:** From the perspective of the paralegal’s role, students effectively manage a hypothetical client file from initial interview through the pre-trial stage.
- **Course Competency Seven:** Students understand and apply the jurisdiction’s UPL (Unauthorized Practice of Law) statute(s) including the exceptions and restrictions; students demonstrate an understanding of federal UPL exceptions and national trends with UPL exceptions.
- **Course Competency Eight:** Students can compare and define essential legal research concepts including: case briefs, case law, codified law, stare decisis, precedent, primary sources, secondary sources, binding authority and secondary authority.

Institutional Learning Goals: The following Institutional Learning Goals apply to this course, as noted in the units below.

**Institutional Learning Goal 1.** Written and Oral Communication in English: Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
**Institutional Learning Goal 4.** Technology: Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
**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 8. Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

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

Unit I Understanding United States Law and Legal Process

Learning Objectives

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 the paralegal. (Course Competencies 3, 4, 8; Institutional Learning Goals 5)
- Discuss the New Jersey legal system, sources of law, distribution of powers and how these concepts relate to the work of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 3, 4, 8; Institutional Learning Goal 5)
- Explain the basic pre-trial stages and the role of paralegal at each stage, as applicable. (Course Competencies 1, 2 & 6; Institutional Learning Goals 5)
- Define the roles of the three branches of United States government and explain the roles of the judicial, executive and legislative branches. (Course Competencies 3, 4, 8; Institutional Learning Goals 5)
- Explain the history of paralegals in the United States, how the legal industry identified the need for paralegals and the evolving role of paralegals. (Course Competency 2, Institutional Learning Goal 5)

Unit II Understanding the Practical Role of the Paralegal

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Discuss the practical role and responsibilities of the paralegal within a variety of legal employment settings. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goal 1)
- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goal 1)
- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of American Bar Association (ABA.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goal 1)
- Identify the practical role and responsibilities of National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA.) (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goal 1)
- Conduct client intake interviews and summarize client intake information for a new or prospective client. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goals 1 & 4)
- Assist in client and witness interviews; prepare questions for client interviews upon review of the client file. (Course Competencies 1,2,5,6; Institutional Learning Goal 1)
- Draft a case brief for a landmark case of significant historical value. (Course Competencies 1,2,6, 8; Institutional Learning Goals 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; Institutional Learning Goals 1 & 4)

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

**Learning Objectives**

*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. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goals 1, 9)
• Apply the correct law to ethical and legal issues. (Course Competencies 4,7,8; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Review the news and current events and discuss in presentations to the class how the ethical and legal issues apply to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,5; Institutional Learning Goals 5 & 9)
• Explain Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) and how it applies to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain and apply the national trends and changes in UPL law, including exceptions to UPL. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain confidentiality and attorney privilege and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain conflict of interest and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain competence/competent representation and how this rule applies to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain the rules of advertising and solicitation and how these rules apply to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goal 9)
• Explain the rules and responsibilities when communicating with current and prospective clients and how these rules apply to the role of the paralegal. (Course Competencies 1,2,7; Institutional Learning Goals 1 & 9)

**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:** As per the student handbook, “A student will be guilty of violating academic integrity if he/she (a) knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, (b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of academic work, or (c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.” Students should read the Academic Integrity policy in the MCCC Rights and Responsibilities Student Handbook. 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.