COURSE OUTLINE

LEG 143  
Family Law  
3 credits

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<tr>
<th>Class or Lecture Hours</th>
<th>Laboratory Work Hours</th>
<th>Clinical or Studio Hours</th>
<th>Course Length</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
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None
Examination/Demonstration
(Placement Score (if applicable);
; minimum CLEP score)

Online
Alternate Delivery Methods

Required Textbook:
Determined by the course coordinator each semester.
Catalog description:
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.
3 lecture hours

Information resources:
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 hypothetica 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:
All materials should be provided to the students via their Blackboard course. This course is offered in an online delivery option. Therefore, supplemental materials are supplied online and students are expected to submit assignments through Blackboard.
**Course Goals:**

*The student will be able to:*

- **Course Goal 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 Goal 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 Goal Three:** Students demonstrate an understanding of family law processes, which may include divorce, consultations in consideration of marriage (prenuptial agreements/ante nuptial agreements), child custody, child support, adoption and/or mediation processes.
- **Course Goal Four:** In the role of a family law paralegal, students observe intake and initial client interviews and provide appropriate documentation.
- **Course Goal Five:** From the perspective of the paralegal’s role, students effectively manage tasks related to a hypothetical file.
- **Course Goal Six:** Students complete practical paralegal assignments.
- **Course Goal Seven:** Students understand the ethical and legal obligations related to family law.

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

Unit II  The Law of Marriage

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to…
• Explain the role of government in the process of defining marriage limitations and requirements. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 5)
• Explain the United States Supreme Court landmark cases (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 5)
• Discuss the general principles of divorce from the perspective of a non-lawyer (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 5)
• Discuss the historical and societal concepts of marriage. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 5)
• Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and/or prominent cases in the area of marriage law from the non-lawyer’s perspective. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 4)

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 Goals 1, 2, 5, 6)
• Observe a client intake interview and/or initial client interview, and provide the appropriate documentation as assigned, from the perspective of a non-lawyer. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 1)
• Read an initial draft of a divorce complaint from the perspective of a non-lawyer (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 1)
• Work with a hypothetical file over a period of many course weeks, with progressive responsibilities and duties, from the perspective of a non-lawyer. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 4)
• Locate, analyze and discuss news articles and/or prominent cases in the area of family law from the perspective of a non-lawyer. (Course Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, Institutional Learning Goal 4)

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.