

PARALEGAL STUDIES (PLS)

PLS 300 Introduction to Civil Procedure (Units: 3)

This course provides an overview of the American system of civil litigation and the role the paralegal plays in it. You will learn the sources of the law; how to read and brief a case; the similarities and differences between the California and federal systems; trial preparation and alternative dispute resolution. The course follows a hypothetical civil dispute, based upon the laws of contracts and torts, from its inception through trial. Students will acquire skills needed to prepare and file basic pleadings and discovery tools. They will be introduced to the basics of case management; trial preparation and the appeal process.

PLS 305 Investigation, Discovery & Trial Preparation (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

This course concentrates on investigation, discovery, and trial preparation in civil litigation. Content includes state and federal discovery procedures and statutes; methods of gathering factual data; preparation and organization of evidence for trial; analysis and digesting of discovery motions and documents; and the role of the paralegal at trial. Emphasis is on tort litigation.

PLS 310 Communication Skills and Legal Ethics (Units: 3)

This course is designed to provide students with a working knowledge of the principles and rules of legal ethics and professional responsibility, with particular emphasis on their application to legal paralegals, and to develop students' abilities to communicate effectively in the legal environment. Ethics material includes regulation of lawyers and legal assistants, unauthorized practice of law, confidentiality and attorney-client privilege, conflicts of interest, advertising and solicitation, competence and professionalism. Students' communication skills are enhanced through weekly assignments, including case briefs, mock interviews, and formal presentations.

PLS 320 Legal Research & Writing (Units: 3)

In this comprehensive, basic legal research course, students are introduced to legal research materials and taught how to use the law library. Skills developed include using statutes, codes, cases, digests, citations, encyclopedias, legal periodicals and government documents; finding, reading and synthesizing cases and statutes; and preparing certain kinds of legal memoranda. Assignments emphasizing problem analysis, legal writing and legal research tools normally require at least six to eight hours per week in a law library. Demonstration and hands-on use of LexisNexis online database, and the Internet are included.

PLS 325 Employment Law (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

This course examines the legal basis and litigation strategy of employment cases, including discrimination and wrongful termination. The course will cover both federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, and age. Topics covered will also include sexual harassment, affirmative action, defamation, drug testing, and privacy rights in the workplace.

PLS 330 Family Law (Units: 3)

This is a practice-oriented overview of family-law substantive law and procedure: child custody and visitation, property division, child and spousal support, alternative dispute resolution, domestic violence. It is designed to develop paralegal skills for conducting client and witness interviews, drafting routine pleadings, and understanding basic family-law procedure. Students will be introduced to psychological issues, high-conflict cases, developing sensitivity to clients, awareness of ethical issues and the legal system's capacities and limitations.

PLS 345 Immigration Law (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: PLS 300 and PLS 320, each with a grade of C or better.

This course is a basic introduction to the theory and practice of immigration law, with an emphasis on immigration law and procedures in the following areas: family and employment visas, political asylum, naturalization and non-immigrant visas. Students gain an understanding of immigration theory and practice and develop practical skills in preparation of forms and supporting documentation, client interviews and case preparation. Current issues in immigration are discussed and analysed.

PLS 355 Wills Trust Estate Plan (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

This course covers the role of the paralegal in estate planning practice, emphasizing those aspects most related to paralegal functions. Topics covered include control and disposition of property during life and at death, intestate succession, and federal gift and estate taxes. Students develop an estate plan, draft a will and a trust, and prepare a health care power of attorney, and a gift tax return.

PLS 370 Criminal Law (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: PLS 300 and PLS 320, each with a grade of C or better.

This course focuses on legal procedures and practice in criminal law, including selected crimes and their element, the function of the grand jury and preliminary hearing, the law of search and seizure and other pretrial motions. Also covered are methods of jury selection, preparation of case for trial, plea bargaining, death penalty law, and procedure, diminished capacity and insanity, sentencing and other post-trial procedures.

PLS 380 Field Experience Paralegal Studies (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: Restricted to Certificate in Paralegal Studies students; PLS 300* and PLS 320* with grades of C or better; permission of the instructor.

An internship bridges the gap between the classroom and the legal work world. Work in a legal setting for eight hours per week for 15 weeks (120 hours.) Placements are available with large and small law firms, corporations, and legal service and government agencies. Includes monthly Saturday morning seminars on a variety of topics. May be repeated for a total of 6 units. (CR/NC grading only)

PLS 386 Contemporary Legal Issues: Constitutional Law in the 21st Century (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: PLS 300 and PLS 320, each with a grade of C or better.

This is a survey course designed for paralegal students interested in acquiring a basic understanding of constitutional law and civil rights litigation. Although we will focus on principles of constitutional law, the course is important for anybody seeking a career in the legal profession. We will cover contemporary topics currently before the Supreme Court as well as other important topics including equal protection, freedom of speech and religion, executive authority, separation of powers, due process, and the right to privacy.

Students completing the course will have an understanding of important current issues as well as a grasp of the fundamental constitutional rules and concepts that underlie and affect all legal topics, whether local, state, or federal.

PLS 395 Pleadings (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better

This course covers the theoretical and practical legal skills necessary to draft pleadings and motions in civil cases. Thorough analysis of the courts, jurisdiction and venue and parties to a suit as they relate to pleadings are included. Students draft complaints, motions, answers, and other pertinent documents used in all aspects of a lawsuit.

PLS 410 Real Estate Practice (Units: 3)

This course focuses on understanding the documents, law, and institutions involved in all types of real estate transactions. The course provides an overview of the real estate transaction area and an introduction to the purchase and sale of single-family homes, commercial properties, and construction transactions. Basic real estate principles are included. Materials used consist of the text, hypothetical problems, and selected readings from the Civil Code and class handouts.

PLS 414GW Introduction to Professional Legal Writing - GVAR (Units: 3)

This course may be taken concurrently with PLS 300 and PLS 320. It is required for all certificate students who do not have a B.A, and is also required for non-native English speakers. This course is highly recommended as an elective for students interested in an intensive writing course designed to improve their professional written communication skills. Effective written communication is important in every professional interaction. This writing course moves well beyond undergraduate composition courses to focus on understanding grammar and style.

Course Attributes:

- Graduation Writing Assessment

PLS 425 Torts (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

Designed to supplement the procedural knowledge of the paralegal, this course addresses selected topics of the substantive law of torts, contracts, and remedies. The subject matter has been chosen to familiarize paralegals with concepts frequently utilized in litigation and is aimed at raising the level of paralegal sophistication in understanding litigable issues.

PLS 426 Contracts (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

This course is designed to introduce students to contract law. Substantively the course will examine one of the three major areas of civil litigation. Contracts will be examined from formation, through defenses and discharge to performances and remedies. Students will read and analyze case authority, create pleadings, engage in provisional pretrial remedies and solve drafting problems.

PLS 430 Computer Application in Law Practice (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: PLS 300 (may be taken concurrently) or permission of the instructor.

Examine standard business applications used in the law office and essential litigation and practice management software. Learn effective strategies for Internet-based legal research.

PLS 435 Patents (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320.

Introduction to patent law and related intellectual property (IP) matters. The role of paralegals in patent acquisition; enforcement and licensing of patents and other related forms of IP rights; and trade secret protection. Particular attention is paid to U.S. patent filing and prosecution procedures in the context of technology development, portfolio management, and commercial transactions.

PLS 436 Trademarks and Copyrights (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: PLS 300 and PLS 320; all completed with a grade of C or better.

This course offers a practical approach to trademark and copyright law for paralegals. The procedures by which an applicant secures federal trademark and copyright registrations are covered, along with an overview of the Lanham Act, as modified by the Trademark Law Revision Act of 1988, copyright as covered by the U.S. Constitutional and Federal Codes. Trademark and copyright infringement and remedies for infringement are also covered.