



ABA Approved Paralegal Program

SPRING 2015

PLS 4 – PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP

TUESDAYS – 5:30 p.m. – CE-205 – Section 4638

**Instructor:** Nikki Mehrpoo Jacobson  
Professor of Law & Attorney at Law

**Telephone:** 310-963-8534 (cell)

*I require that you contact me on my cell phone and not my campus phone. You may also text me. If you text me, please include your full name and class, for example: **Jane Doe, PLS 4, Section 4638***

**Email:** [professor@nikkijacobson.com](mailto:professor@nikkijacobson.com)

*I require that you contact me on my personal email address and not my school email address. If you email me, you must include the following information in the subject: full name and class, for example: **Jane Doe, PLS 4, Section 4638***

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., 8:15- 9:15 p.m.  
Also By Appointment

**Office:** CE Building

**PARALEGAL:** *A paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

150 hours of volunteer or work experience in a law office or under the supervision of an attorney is required during the semester. You must be in your last semester of the Paralegal Studies Program or have the program director's permission.

This work-study course reinforces education and professional growth in a student's academic major through coordinated field experiences. The student, instructor, and work site supervisor work together to determine specific learning objectives for each student. The student is then evaluated based on documentation of satisfactory completion of the learning objectives and work assignments.

**\*\*You must complete 150 internship hours\*\***

**Through your internship you should, at the very least, try to obtain the following:**

1. To gain practical law office experience.
2. To gain insight into the daily functioning of the law office and its interpersonal relationships.
3. To apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.
4. Become thoroughly acquainted with business, legal, or governmental work environments.
5. Gain an understanding of attitudes and work habits that ensure a successful career.
6. Develop professional-level skills in oral and written communications.
7. Acquire a sound, contextual understanding of legal and professional ethics, such as regarding client confidentiality, conflict of interest, and the unauthorized practice of the law.
8. Learn to interact effectively with supervisors, co-workers, clients, and professionals outside of the internship office.
9. Develop a first-hand understanding of law-related office organizations and their internal systems, such as for timekeeping, billing, and file management.
10. Gain first-hand insights into current career options.
11. Acquire a wider range of professional contacts for future career development.
12. Create a portfolio of work samples (or writing samples) for your future job search.
13. Learn to manage time effectively and to account for time worked in an office setting.
14. Obtain a professional reference and recommendation for future employment.

## COURSE TEXTS

There is no required text for this class.

There will be various handouts and texts that you will be required to read through out this semester.

**OPTIONAL BOOK:** INTERNSHIPS THROUGH EMPLOYMENT By BOUHOUX  
ISBN:9780735562479

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

This course will help students achieve the following institutional Student Learning Outcomes:

- A. Critical Thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences.
  - Assessment: The student will determine and prepare necessary forms and documents for each case appropriately.
- B. Ethics: Practice and demonstrate standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness; apply ethical principles in submission of all college work.
  - Assessment: The student will read articles and handouts about legal ethics and prepare outlines and summaries to gain knowledge of necessary legal ethics.
- C. Communication: Effectively communicate thought in a clear, well-organized manner to persuade, inform, and convey ideas in academic, work, family and community settings.
  - Assessment: The student will communicate via letters, e-mail and telephone with internship site clients.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Your attendance will be recorded for each class. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance roster. **The instructor has the discretion to drop any student who has more than 5 absences (excused or unexcused) in the semester.** Attendance and Participation will be 20% of your overall grade.

Attendance means more than simply being in class. It includes both preparation and participation. Incorrect participation answers will not affect your grade; Non-participation or lack of preparation will. Ask questions, be prepared to answer questions, participate in class activities and always respect other students and instructors.

## **GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS – 1300 points**

This course is graded on participation in an internship, supervisor evaluations, journal and term paper, and various miscellaneous assignments. Grading is A-F based on college performance standards.

Final Internship Paper & Folder **600 points**

**\*\*EVERYTHING** YOU DO FOR THIS CLASS MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR FINAL FOLDER. INCLUDING ALL CONTRACTS, SAMPLE WORK PRODUCT, RESUME DRAFTS AND FINAL RESUME, COVER LETTER DRAFT AND FINAL COVER LETTER, AT LEAST 6 WORK EXAMPLES, ETC, ETC, ETC..... EVERYTHING MUST BE ORGANIZED. INCLUDING IN A TABLE OF CONTENTS AND TABS.

Resume Drafts and Final Resume **100 points**

Cover Letter Drafts and Final Cover Letter **100 points**

Mock Interview & Attire **100 points**

5 Current Events (Summary & Presentation) **250 points** (50 Points Each)

Class Attendance & Participation **150 points**

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

You are all in professional training. In the Legal Profession there are no excuses for missed deadlines, failure to appear at hearings, lack of preparation or failure to read footnotes. In order to assist in this development I will decide whether a late assignment will be accepted. IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE YOUR 150 HOURS BY THE REQUIRED DATE, YOU WILL RECEIVE A "F" GRADE IN THIS CLASS. I DO NOT GIVE INCOMPLETES.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERNSHIP FOLDER

YOU MUST BUY A WHITE, THREE-RING VIEWBINDER, AT LEAST 2 INCHES THICK. THIS FOLDER WILL BE YOUR INTERNSHIP FOLDER. EVERYTHING YOU DO FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THIS FOLDER. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THE FOLDER YOU TURN IN TO THE INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR WILL NOT BE RETURNED TO YOU AND THAT YOU WILL KEEP A SECOND COPY FOR YOURSELF.

1. Your folder must have a **Table of Contents** and **dividers** for the different sections.

### 2. INTERNSHIP FOLDER

a. **The folder must consist of at least the following sections:**

b. Completed Contracts #1 & #2

c. Daily Time Sheets: Keep a **DETAILED** time sheet of your internship hours

i. You **MUST** log every minute of your internship

ii. Your time sheets must be in increments of 15 minutes

iii. Log the assignments/activities you were assigned - what they involved - degree of difficulty - whether or not previously done in course work - whether or not you liked or disliked the work.

iv. Personal feelings about the internship and about specific tasks (feelings of inadequacy, apprehension, confidence, etc.)

v. Specific problems confronted and how you dealt with it.

vi. Ways the Paralegal Program has properly prepared you for the law office and ways it might better prepare you.

vii. The time sheet must be signed by your supervising attorney and submitted in your folder.

d. Final Paper: Submit a well written summary of the entire internship experience based on your daily journal. This paper should be well organized, thoughtful, and at least eight (8) typewritten pages in

length. paper detailing your experiences working as a paralegal intern. Your paper will be typewritten in 12 point font.

- i. Explain in detail where you interned. Office atmosphere, Location, Office Size, Attorneys, Staff, Practice Areas, Clients, etc... MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I AM AT YOUR PLACE OF INTERNSHIP.
- ii. Who was your supervising attorney (what is their position in the office)?
- iii. How frequently did you have contact with the supervising attorney?
- iv. How frequently did you receive feedback regarding your job performance? Did you receive it from the supervising attorney or from other co-workers? Who were the persons that you worked with that provided you with feedback?
- v. Did you receive any training or guidance on the activities of the office? If so, what kind of training or guidance? Be sure to indicate the person (and position) in the office that provided you with the training or guidance. Was it helpful?
- vi. What types of administrative activities did you perform on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis? (Please indicate how frequently you carried out these activities, and be sure to give specific examples of projects that you worked on for the organization.)
- vii. What types of legal activities did you perform on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis? (Please indicate how frequently you carried out these activities, and be sure to give specific examples of projects that you worked on for the organization.)
- viii. How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the legal system?
- ix. What sorts of contact, and how much of it, did you have with the courts on a daily basis?
- x. What was the most important work that you carried out? What was the least important job you carried out?
- xi. What sorts of contact did you have with other legal personnel (lawyers, staff, assistants, paralegal assistants, etc.)?

- xii. What did you learn about the legal system that you did not know before?
  - xiii. What are your impressions of the judicial system, as well as your opinion of other legal personnel involved in the judicial system?
  - xiv. What legal skills do you believe you gained? What legal skills do you wish you had learned?
  - xv. Did you feel prepared to handle the kinds of activities you handled for the organization?
  - xvi. How quickly did you grasp the nature of the tasks required? How capable were you of following directions from supervisors?
  - xvii. What would you do differently to improve the quality of the internship experience?
  - xviii. What do you feel you have learned from the internship experience and course? What did you expect to learn from the experience?
  - xix. What do you feel West Los Angeles College should be aware of as it relates to the internship sponsor? (For example, did you think you received fair treatment by the sponsor, or did you feel like there were unethical or illegal activities that you were required to do?)
  - xx. Based on your performance, what grade would you give yourself, and most importantly, why?
  - xxi. The overall grade should be (please circle one): A B C D F
- e. Work Samples: At least 6 of your internship work samples. The samples must be redacted.
  - f. Three (3) Evaluations: Your supervising attorney should complete an evaluation of your job performance upon completion of 50 hours, 100 hours and 150 hours.
  - g. Resume & Cover Letter: You must include 3 drafts and your final version of your Resume and Cover Letter. You MUST participate in a resume and cover letter workshop.

- h. Proof of Participating in a Mock Interview: You will participate in a mock interview. You will be evaluated on appearance, speech, ability to answer questions clearly, resume, etc. You will be given immediate feedback and proof of participation.

***General Format of ALL Written Assignments***

1. Typewritten.
2. Double spaced.
3. Spell and grammar checked.



# Five (5) Required Current Events

A major goal of this course is to promote the importance of being able to get hired as a paralegal. Knowledge of current events related to LEGAL resumes, interviewing, professional development, law office diplomacy, etc... is crucial to your success. You are expected to familiarize yourself with important issues related to finding a job. **YOU WILL BE TEACHING THE CLASS BY PRESENTING YOUR CURRENT EVENTS.**

**Your assignment is to do current events on each of the following topics and acquire the necessary background knowledge to develop some expertise in that topic and HOW TO DO IT BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE.**

1. How To Get My First Paralegal Job
2. Writing Resumes for Paralegal/Legal Employment
3. Writing Cover Letters for Paralegal/Legal Employment
4. Law Firm Interviewing/Legal Interviewing
5. Paralegal Continuing Legal Education

- From the popular press, choose an article (published within the last 18 months) related to the topics above
- Read the article for understanding.
- Write an in depth one page summary (who, what, when, where, why and how) about the article.
- How is your article related to this class and your ability to find a job
- Give your opinion about the topic of the article.
- What Changes will you make?
- **Attach** a copy of the article to your submission.
- Make sure everything is spelled correctly and the grammar is correct.

# REMINDERS

**CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY:** It is of utmost importance that the names of the office's clients and the subject matter of their legal concerns be held in the strictest of confidence. Refrain from discussing such matters with your friends, relatives, or others. A breach of such confidence could cause very serious consequences for yourself and especially your supervising attorney.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** When a situation arises in the office where you are asked to perform a task that creates for you either the appearance of or an actual conflict in personal allegiance to the client, you should immediately discuss this with your supervising attorney. The client expects and the law requires zealous allegiance to the client's case.

**LEGAL ADVICE:** Under no circumstances are you to give legal advice of your own to clients or others. To do so is a criminal violation in Ohio and Kentucky and the giving of such advice could place your supervising attorney in breach of significant ethical requirements.

**ATTORNEY SUPERVISION:** Initially all legal documents and correspondence prepared by you should be reviewed by an attorney prior to mailing. Eventually your supervisor may authorize you to send out correspondence under your signature. However, all legal documents must be reviewed and signed by the attorney.

**YOUR TITLE:** While interning you should identify yourself to clients and others as a student paralegal intern. It should be made clear that you are not an attorney.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Attendance is required and roll will be taken at every class. If you miss more than two (2) classes, I reserve the right to drop you from the course. If a student leaves before the end of class, it will be considered 1 absence.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** All written assignments, including daily journals, will be graded on the basis of their organization, quality of analysis, accuracy, thoroughness, grammar, and evidence of careful proofreading.

## **FREQUENTLY ASK QUESTIONS**

Q. Is it okay to get paid for my internship?

A. Yes, but certainly not required.

Q. Can I get credit for work I have done in the past?

A. Only if it is recent enough to meet the intent of the course and is relevant to your career plans.

Q. What if I have no idea what I want to do?

A. Call your professor immediately for help.

Q. What if I can't find a placement within the first 3 weeks?

A. Call your professor as soon as you realize you have difficulty.

Q. What if I forget the instructions or lose this syllabus?

A. Get a copy from another student.

Q. What if I have an idea for work experience not mentioned in the syllabus?

A. Great! Call the professor and discuss your idea.

Suggested Format

**PLS 4 – PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP – DAILY TIME SHEET**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Telephone)

Date	Amount of Time	Detailed, Detailed, Detailed, Detailed Description

Total hours this page: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Attorney's Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Attorney's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP – SUPERVISOR MONTHLY EVALUATION FORM**  
**(3 REQUIRED)**

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

MONTH & YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT EVALUATING STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

For the month contained above, the student's performance deserved the following grades:

1. TIMELINESS / PUNCTUALITY ( did the student regularly show up for work at the scheduled time and was he/she punctual in performing work assignments?)

A B C D or F

2. ATTITUDE / COOPERATION ( did the student display a positive attitude toward their work and cooperate willingly with their supervisor(s) and other office employees? )

A B C D or F

3. QUALITY OF WORK ( did the student perform her/his work in a manner that demonstrated the competency and professional skills of a trained legal assistant? )

A B C D or F

4. Overall, how would you evaluate this student's performance during the month covered in this evaluation ?

A B C D or F

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT PREPARING THIS EVALUATION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (typed or printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (signed)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_