



ABA Approved Paralegal Program
Fall 2013
PLS 4 – PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP
Tuesdays – 5:30 p.m. - AT-A214 – 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 14, Section 4638

Email: nikki@jacobsonhan.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 1, Section 4638

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:30 – 5:30 p.m., 8:15- 9:15 p.m.
Wednesdays 5:30 – 6:30 p.m AND By Appointment

Office: Although my office is in A9 (the Paralegal Office), THIS SEMESTER I WILL HOLD OFFICE HOURS IN AT-A214

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.*

REQUIRED FOR THIS CLASS: YOU MUST BRING A RED, THREE-RING VIEWBINDER, AT LEAST 2 INCHES THICK, ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. THIS FOLDER WILL BE YOUR INTERNSHIP FOLDER. EVERYTHING YOU DO FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THIS FOLDER. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE FOLDER I TURN IN TO MY INTERNSHIP INSTRUCTOR WILL NOT BE RETURNED TO ME AND THAT I WILL KEEP A SECOND COPY FOR MYSELF.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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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.

Paralegal Program Objectives

1. The Paralegal Studies Program is designed to prepare the student to assist the attorney in both private and public sectors in all phases of legal work and to equip the student with the knowledge necessary to enter the legal service fields as an entry-level paralegal.
2. To insure quality paralegal education at the community college level.
3. To familiarize students with the legal system and the role of the paralegal in the delivery of legal services in the public and private sectors.
4. To train students to be prepared to use and apply the most current paralegal skills.
5. To educate students to intelligently and ethically serve the legal community.
6. To train students in critical paralegal skills such as investigation, legal research, interviewing, written and oral communications.
7. To educate, train and provide students with the theoretical background to perform the paralegal's tasks in substantive areas of law and legal specialties.
8. To educate and train students in areas of procedural law emphasizing the paralegals role in litigation, mediation and arbitration.
9. To educate students about the general principles of ethical legal practice as defined by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, and California's Business & Professions Code §6450.
10. To encourage students to contribute to the advancement of the legal profession.
11. To provide counseling during the program and to assist students in preparing for and obtaining meaningful careers in the paralegal field.

Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law.

COURSE TEXTS

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

There will be MANY, VARIOUS handouts for this class. You will be responsible to be in class and obtain these handouts.

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.
- D. **Civic Responsibility:** Apply the principles of civility to situations in the contexts of work, family, community and the global world.
 - **Assessment:** The student will attend a local court of law and *give a written account of what you learned from the experience.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student, at the successful completion of this course, should be able to:

1. Have experience in common law office duties and procedures.
2. Understand and recognize standard law office forms, books, manuals, filing systems, correspondence forms, and accounting procedures
3. Have the ability to begin work in a law office with knowledge and experience in common law office duties and procedures.
4. Have knowledge of and practice in using machinery, hardware, and software common to law offices.
5. Demonstrate the ability to follow a contracted learning experience
6. Demonstrate the ability to communicate with instructor and the site supervisor to develop a functional student contract.
7. Demonstrate the ability to follow schedules and instructions.
8. Plan and complete a summary report of progress made in all contract areas.
9. Plan and complete a summary report of progress made on objectives assigned.
10. Record events and transactions in journal form.
11. Demonstrate professionalism by following a schedule, attending required meetings and submitting timely, completed assignments.

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 10% 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 – 1500 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.

Internship 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, ETC, ETC, ETC..... EVERYTHING MUST BE ORGANIZED. INCLUDING IN A TABLE OF CONTENTS AND TABS.

Resume Drafts and Final Resume **200 points**

Interview Workshop **100 points**

5 Current Events (Summary & Presentation) **500 points** (100 Points Each)

Class Participation **100 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.**

INTERNSHIP LOG

Your internship requires a minimum of 150 hours documented in an Internship Log (see next page) with dates and time periods detailed. The journal must be turned in at the end of the semester with the final paper. ***EACH PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE SIGNED BY YOUR SUPERVISOR INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR 150 HOURS.***

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

LAW 4 – PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP
Internship Log

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

(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
(2 months required)**

STUDENT: _____ SSN: _____

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 (signed) _____ Name (typed or printed)

Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERNSHIP BINDER/FOLDER

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1. Your folder must have a **Table of Contents** and **dividers** for the different sections.
2. The following different sections will be included in your folder at a minimum:
 - a. Contracts
 - b. Supervisor Monthly Evaluation Form
 - c. Final Paper/Report
 - d. Sample Work Products
 - e. Resume Drafts and Final version
 - f. Five (5) Current Events, Summary and Article Attached

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FINAL PAPER TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR FINAL FOLDER

Final Paper Assignment

Write a 7-12 page college-quality paper describing your experience. You should discuss your accomplishments and critically analyzing your experience from the perspective of the conclusion of the internship.

General Format

1. Typewritten.
2. Double spaced.
3. Spell and grammar checked.
4. Title Page.

Contents

Discuss in detail all technical aspects of your internship. Information should include educational preparation and how it complemented or detracted from actual work assignments. This paper should not merely be a log of daily task, but should reflect research methods, problem solving and analysis, application of knowledge to projects, etc.

Include:

1. Part 1 - Overview

As an introduction, describe how you got your position and what you do. Include:

1. Your Name
2. Your Title

3. The name of your organization
4. Your supervisor's name
5. The Date of your internship
6. A Description of the work environment, including the type of company and the hours of work.
7. A list of task assignments, including:
 - A description of your Co-Op assignments, including your main duties and responsibilities, any extra tasks beyond the scope of daily routine, and any special accomplishments and/or training.
 - A description of human relations, including the type of supervision you received, the attitude of your coworkers and supervisors toward you (and/or other interns), and company policies, procedures, or practices which enhanced or inhibited learning.
 - A description of the technical content of the job, including a list of technical aspects important to your career development, and the relationship between your course work and your job assignments.
8. Recommendations. Would you recommend an internship to other students in your major (why/why not)? Would you recommend interning with your company? Did your internship meet your expectations? Provide any comments useful to future interns.

2. Part 2 - Education

Critically analyze what you have learned during the internship by addressing the following:

- What have you learned about yourself?
- What have you learned about your employer and your job?
- What have you learned about the value of your education in preparing you (or not preparing you) for the internship?
- What have you learned about this occupation or profession? The organizational culture or industry?
- What have you learned about the job search process?

3. Part 3 - Future Goals

Reflect on your internship experience and think about how it will have an impact on your future by addressing:

- Now that the internship is complete, what would you have done differently?
- How does the internship experience fit into your long-range career goals?

- How will you maintain or foster professional relationships that will aid your future career development?

4. Part 4 – How to Make a Better Experience

Identify how you, your employer, the internship syllabus, and/or your advisor could have made this a better experience.

Be sure your final paper is very complete and self-explanatory.

Below is a general outline of your folder and items to be included in your folder. Below is not a complete outline of all the items you must include, this outline is to get you started.

- I. Describe the office you work in and the nature of the law practice at the office.
 - a. Describe how your supervising attorney fits into the office structure.
 - b. Describe the legal work your supervising attorney does.
 - c. Identify the size of the law office. How many attorneys, how many secretaries and other support staff.
 - d. Describe the relative division of responsibilities among the different levels of staff in the office.

- II. Describe the work you perform, and how it fits into the overall work of the office.
 - a. Do you work directly with an attorney or office manager? Do you work along with other support staff?
 - b. Describe the actual duties you performed. What level of work is it? Is it more like a law clerk or more like a secretary?
 - c. Identify any duties you learned or performed which a legal secretary could not do. Were there any?
 - d. Attach at least five (5) samples of your work

- III. Describe any benefits from the WLAC Paralegal Program you enjoyed in performing work in the law office.
 - a. Have any of the classes you have taken taught you practical skills which assisted your supervisor extend his services or made you a more valuable office assistant?
 - b. Are there any courses you have taken which you think were unnecessary, or did not prepare you for work in a law office?
 - c. Can you think of any skills the program should teach that we do not currently teach?

- IV. Reflecting back on your work experience over the semester, have you learned anything in this internship?
 - a. Did the internship experience provide you with a greater understanding of the practical skills you need to be an effective legal assistant? What specifically did you learn?
 - b. Did the internship experience help you decide what area of law you would like to work in after you receive your degree? How did the experience help?
 - c. What was good and bad about your internship experience?
 - d. Do you think WLAC can change the program to better prepare paralegals to work in the community? What could we do better?

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 Professional Development/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.