

RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE
PARALEGAL STUDIES CO-OP LEGL-290
(REVISED)

I. Basic Course Information

- A. Course Number and Title: LEGL 290 PARALEGAL STUDIES CO-OP
- B. New or Modified Course: Modified
- C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2021
- D. Effective Term: Fall 2021
- E. Sponsoring Department: Business & Public Service
- F. Semester Credit Hours: 3.0
- G. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 0.0
Laboratory: 0.0
Out of class student work per week: 12.0-15.0
- H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: Permission of Program Coordinator Needed
- I. Laboratory Fees: None
- J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Tracy Rimple, Chair Tracy.Rimple@raritanval.edu
Patrice Marks, Dean Patrice.Marks@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisite: Program Coordinator Approval Required. A work experience whereby students are employed in law-related positions to gain the practical experience necessary for success as paralegals. Students will be supervised by practicing attorneys and graded on their ability to apply classroom acquired skills to the legal workplace. Enrolled students will work 12-15 hours per week (180-225 hours per semester). Eligibility will be determined by the Coordinator of the Paralegal Studies Program and generally will be limited to those students in their second year of study.

III. Statement of Course Need

- A. This class is an elective course for both the Paralegal Studies A.A.S. Degree and the Paralegal Studies Certificate. It is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in the field, adding a practical working understanding of the law to their classroom legal studies.
- B. This course has no lab component.
- C. This course will transfer into any school with a Paralegal Studies four year degree, which includes Montclair, Thomas Edison, and St. Elizabeth College in New Jersey. It will also

transfer to any four-year institution offering an ABA approved paralegal program of study.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective.
- B. This course serves as an elective for both the Paralegal Studies AAS Degree and the Paralegal Studies Certificate.
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

- A. **Job-Oriented Learning Objectives** (180-225 hours)
Students and employers will develop a set of five substantive legal goals for completion during the course of the semester. These goals will be approved by the program coordinator. Students will keep a log of substantive work performed on the job. Students will also keep regular time records, which will be verified by the employer, and do regular evaluations of progress on the job and toward their goals.
- B. **Ethics Training** (25 hours)
Students will be trained to recognize ethical issues as they arise in the workplace. Students will read assigned text and draft a paper describing and evaluating on-the-job examples of legal ethics in their workplace, relating these ethics issues to the NJ Rules of Professional Responsibility.

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. **General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Produce written work that reflects critical and creative thought relative to their job-related legal tasks. (GE-NJ 1)
2. Develop the ability to communicate clearly and logically, utilizing both verbal and written skills, with clients, adversaries and others in the legal environment. (GE NJ 1)
3. Analyze and evaluate ethical problems encountered in the real-life practice of law. (GE-NJ ER*)

*Embedded Critical Thinking

B. **Course Learning Outcomes:**

At completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Assess the roles and responsibilities of a paralegal working in a law office or law-related field, including such dimensions as specific tasks performed for clients, attorneys and other office staff.
2. Apply oral and written communication skills to develop a rapport with clients and other necessary parties through actual client/party contact.

3. Examine the needs of clients in various legal situations and differentiate between those that can be handled by a paralegal and those that require an attorney.
4. Analyze the organizational structure of the employer and develop strategies to deal with various office situations.
5. Prepare legal documents, do research, learn computer systems, etc., as required by the particular employer.
6. Identify ethical situations as they arise in the real-life practice of law.
7. Assess first-hand the concept of and need for confidentiality and various other legal-ethical considerations which govern those who work in the law.

C. Assessment Instruments

1. Student Log demonstrating the completion of substantive legal goals
2. Attendance and Completion of necessary hours on the job
3. Completion of monthly jobsite evaluations
4. Research & Writing of ethics paper
5. Written employer evaluation

VII. Grade Determinants

- A. Employer Evaluation
- B. Evidence of Completion of Substantive Goals
- C. Ethics Research Paper
- C. Attendance and Completion of work hours

Methods for teaching and learning:

- A. on-the-job training
- B. observation, involvement and experience in office environment
- C. mentoring by employer/supervisor
- E. student collaboration and communication with coordinator

VIII. Texts and Materials

- A. Textbook: None
- B. Internet and Web-based legal resources

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

The course will take place off-campus, at the workplace, and no special RVCC resources will be needed.

