



## **Education & Training Plan**

### **PARALEGAL/LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

#### **MyCAA Information**

Tuition: \$2,049.00 (including exam)

MyCAA Course Code: MSU-PARA02

Program Duration:

**(Please note these courses are approved as one course block)**

#### **Program Description**

This paralegal training course focuses on the legal concepts, procedures, and skills that are used in a wide variety of legal environments. It is designed to teach the functions and processes of institutions in the U.S. legal system, roles and issues in the paralegal field, legal ethics, and selected specialties of law.

The course includes a listing of important skills, including legal analysis, communication, legal research, computer knowledge, legal drafting, investigation, interviewing witnesses, client relationships, and office organization. If you complete it, you should be prepared for a challenging and responsible career in the legal environment. This Program provides the most effective way to start the process of becoming a paralegal (also known as “legal assistant”). It includes the full range of courses needed to pass the CLA certification exam and has the required minimum 900 hour duration.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this course you will be able to:

- Describe the responsibilities and career possibilities of a paralegal.
- Relate the development of the U.S. Constitution and statutory and administrative law.
- Explain jurisdictional determination of cases.
- Differentiate substantive and procedural law.
- Analyze the process and procedures of a lawsuit, including pleading, discovery, and litigation process.
- Discuss ethical considerations or concerns in relation to the legal team, client relations, and billing/fees.
- Clarify the importance of good interviewing techniques to focus, test, and expand on initial information.
- Apply rules of English grammar to legal writing.
- Examine the structure of opinions and properly research and analyze cases.

#### **Course Outline:**

## **Orientation and Introduction**

### **Module 1: The Profession**

- Introduction
- What You Will Need for the Course
- What is a Paralegal?
- Paralegal Functions
- Paralegal Employment
- Career Opportunities
- Personal Assets and Skills
- Education
- Regulation, Ethics & Professional Responsibility
- Licensing

### **Module 2: The Law**

- Introduction
- The Origins of American Law
- Case Law and Common Law Tradition
- U.S. Constitution – The Law of the Land

### **Module 3: The Court System**

- Jurisdiction
- Venue
- Standing to Sue
- Judicial Procedures
- Choosing a Court
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Selection Process
- On-line Research Assignment

### **Module 4: Civil Litigation**

- Substantive and Procedural Law
- Commencement of a Lawsuit
- Early Stages of a Suit
- Middle Stages of Suit
- The Trial – Last Stage of the Lawsuit
- Internet Research on Court Trials

### **Module 5: The Law Office**

- Overview - Types of Law Offices
- The Legal Team
- Code of Ethics – Client Relationships
- Billing

- Marketing
- Policies and Procedures
- Document Maintenance and File Systems
- Law Libraries / References
- Special Assignment

### **Module 6: Interview and Investigation**

- Interviewing
- Litigation Review
- Preparation and Techniques
- Investigation

### **Module 7: Legal Writing**

- English Grammar 101
- Nouns
- Possessive Nouns
- Abbreviations
- Verbs
- Verb and Subject Agreement
- Contractions
- Homonyms or Confusing Words
- Punctuation
- Exercises in Grammar
- Latin – Language Origins and Adaptations - Etymology
- Writing
- Effective Brief Writing
- Dictation, Word Processing & File Organization
- Typing Rules
- Electronic Files

### **Module 8: Research and Citation**

- Overview
- Legal Research
- Case Briefing
- Citations
- Shepardizing

### **Final Examination**

There are lesson quizzes, with a final exam of 80 multiple choice and true/false questions that requires an 80% passing rate.

### **Paralegal – Citation Workbook**

## **Course Description**

Knowing how to research and cite effectively is a key function for any paralegal and this course provides a comprehensive look at the craft of legal citation. Being fluent in this language of abbreviations and special terms allows precise references to legal authorities.

Learn how to identify documents and document parts; provide sufficient information for someone else to understand (and locate) the document you are referencing; and furnish additional information to help readers determine if the reference is worth pursuing.

### **Lesson 1 – Citations**

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define citation terminology
- Research statutory law effectively through Shepardizing
- Explain proper citation formatting
- Relate citation basics
- Discuss the purpose and principles of citation
- Reference source media effectively

### **Lesson 2 – Citing**

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance and use of judicial opinions to the legal system
- Relate the elements of statutes and similar citations
- Discuss formatting differences with regulations, agency material, and arbitration decisions
- Cite court rules and books correctly

### **Lesson 3 – Internet Research**

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal research on the Internet
- Determine effective web searches
- Navigate effectively around a web site
- Answer questions based on web research

Both Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 have quizzes. Lesson 3 has self-assessments based on effective web research.

The course has no final examination.

## **PARALEGAL ADVANCED**

### **Course Description:**

This course focuses on law specialties, complete with samples of pleadings, formats, and citations. It is designed to teach the functions and processes of institutions in the U.S. legal system, roles and issues in the field, and selected specialties of law. It discusses employment opportunities and

provides dozens of websites for research purposes to enhance your educational skills on-line and build your own personal Cybrary.

The law specialties covered in detail include Bankruptcy Law, Business Law, Law of Contracts, Family Law, Torts and Tortfeasors, Litigation, Criminal Law, and Real Estate Law.

### **Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course you will be able to:

- Analyze the different ways of proceeding with a bankruptcy and list the people involved in the process
- Describe the development of business law
- Explain how consumer law protects consumer interests
- Define the five major legal structures for a business and explain their differences
- Identify examples of intellectual property and the legal protection available for each
- Classify contracts and distinguish their differing elements
- Summarize the legal contracts surrounding family law including protection of property, provisions for maintenance and support, and the right of inheritance
- Relate the four basic elements common to all torts
- Review the civil litigation process
- Explain the processes involved in criminal law
- Compare the responsibilities of landlords to the responsibilities of the tenant
- Describe the different kinds of trusts

### **Course Outline**

#### **Module 1: Bankruptcy**

- Overview
- Filing for Bankruptcy
- Types of Bankruptcy
- The Current System
- Dismissal
- Liquidation
- Wage Earner
- Chapter 7 v 13 Options
- Trustee
- Exemptions

#### **Module 2: Business Law**

- Commercial Law
- Consumer Law
- Business Organization
- Business Client Representation
- Formal Structure and Forms
- Intellectual Property

### **Module 3: Contract Law**

- Contract Definition
- Classification of Contracts

### **Module 4: Family Law**

- Family Law Introduction
- Marriage Formalities
- Annulment
- Breach of Promise
- Spousal Separation
- Divorce or Dissolution
- Divorce Process
- Child Support and Custody

### **Module 5: Torts & Tortfeasors**

- Introduction – Tort Elements
- Intentional Torts
- Negligence & Product Liability

### **Module 6: Litigation**

- Civil Litigation Processes

### **Module 7: Criminal Law**

- Overview
- The Process

### **Module 8: Real Estate Law**

- General Description
- Title
- Deeds
- Mortgages
- Recording
- Real Estate Sales & Related Contracts
- Landlords and Tenants

### **Module 9: Wills and Trusts**

- Traditional & Living Wills
- Trusts
- Wills
- Bankruptcy Law

- Includes hundreds of practice questions to build knowledge and experience.

### **Final Examination**

112 Multiple Choice and True/False questions; requires 80% passing rate.

## **Paralegal: Using Computers in the Law Office**

### **Course Description**

From basic computer concepts to more complex skills, this textbook-based course provides up-to-date information regarding the use of technology by paralegals in all types of legal organizations.

The Delmar Cengage Learning textbook, *Using Computers in the Law Office* (5th edition), by Brent D. Roper provides students with a comprehensive grounding in the use of computers in legal organizations.

Important topics include electronic discovery, Internet legal/factual research, legal timekeeping and billing, litigation support software, and case management and docket control software. Mobile computing, document management, security, ethics, the electronic courthouse and many other trends in legal computing are thoroughly discussed. Topics are presented clearly and in a well-organized manner, concentrating on how computers are actually used by the paralegal on-the-job.

With hands-on tutorials, students have the opportunity to practice using computers to complete and manage legal work.

### **Textbook Chapter Details**

#### Chapter 1: Computers in the Law Office

- Identify how computers are being used in legal organizations
- Explain what software is.
- Identify what an information system is.
- Explain what electronic discovery is.
- Discuss what docket control and case management software are and why they are important.
- Identify three ways legal research can be conducted using a computer.
- Explain what an automated courtroom is.

#### Chapter 2: Computer Hardware and Software

- Discuss the different types of storage devices.
- Identify several different kinds of mobile computing devices.
- Identify basic local area network concepts.
- Explain what operating system hardware does.
- Discuss the penalties for illegally copying software.
- Understand basic legal organization security issues and why good security measures are imperative in a legal organization.

#### Chapter 3: Word Processing, PDF File Creation, and Document Assembly

- Describe centralized and decentralized word processing.
- Describe major features found in word-processing programs.
- Explain how word processors are used by legal assistants.
- Discuss ethical problems related to word processing.
- Identify what a PDF file is and how PDF files are created.
- Explain what document assembly is and how it works.

#### Chapter 4: Spreadsheet Software

- Explain what a spreadsheet is.
- Describe how rows and columns make up the structure of a spreadsheet.
- Explain what text, values, and formulas are.
- Describe the common types of graphs found in spreadsheet programs.
- Explain how copying formulas can simplify the use of a spreadsheet.
- List and describe the ways spreadsheets can be used by legal assistants.

#### Chapter 5: Database Management Systems

- Define a database.
- Explain what a field is.
- Define a record and a table.
- Explain relational and logical operators.
- List how databases can be used in the legal environment.
- Explain how to plan a database.
- Define a relational database.
- Discuss database management-related ethical considerations.

#### Chapter 6: Legal Timekeeping and Billing Software

- Explain what timekeeping and billing are.
- Identify why accurate billings are important to law firms.
- Explain the computerized timekeeping and billing process.
- Describe the different types of legal fee agreements.
- Explain how management reports generated from a timekeeping and billing system can help a firm.
- Describe how timeslips are entered into a timekeeping and billing system.
- Describe the factors to determine whether a fee is reasonable.
- Explain what electronic billing is.

#### Chapter 7: Case Management and Docket Control Software

- Explain what a docket system is.
- Describe how a computerized case management system can prevent cases from being “forgotten.”
- Describe the computerized docket cycle.
- Explain what case management is.



- Discuss why docket control and case management are important to a legal organization from an ethics perspective.

#### Chapter 8: Electronic Discovery

- Explain why electronic discovery is an important aspect of litigation.
- Identify the name that the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure gives to all electronic data.
- Explain the purpose of the “meet and confer” pretrial conference parties must have pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.
- Discuss the duty of parties to preserve electronic information.
- Explain what native and image formats are.

#### Chapter 9: Litigation Support Software

- Explain what litigation support is.
- Explain why computerized litigation support methods are more successful than manual methods.
- Explain why legal organizations might use a litigation support service provider.
- Identify the three major types of litigation support systems.
- Describe the litigation support process.

#### Chapter 10: The Internet and Electronic Mail

- Explain the different types of services the Internet offers.
- Discuss problems with using the Internet for research.
- Explain what a listserv is.
- Describe the difference between a subject-oriented search engine and a metasearch engine.
- List researches for finding precise legal information on the Internet.
- Discuss the pros and cons of using electronic mail in a legal organization.

#### Chapter 11: Computer-Assisted Legal research and CD-ROM Legal Databases

- Explain why manual research and computerized research complement one another.
- Explain what is involved in planning a search query.
- Formulate simple search queries for WESTLAW or LexisNexis.
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of CD\_ROM legal databases.

#### Chapter 12: The Electronic Courthouse, Automated Courtroom, and Presentation Graphics

- Explain what the “Electronic Courthouse” is.
- Describe how an automated courtroom works.
- Describe what presentation graphics software does.
- Explain how presentation graphics software can be used in the legal environment.

#### Chapter 13: Specialized Legal Software

- Identify the many sources of legal technology information available from the American Bar Association.

Identify what the Legal Technology Resource Center (LTRC) is.

- Explain why legal-specific software might be helpful to legal organizations.
- Identify what issues should be considered when purchasing legal-specific software.

Each chapter contains reading and study assignments and a chapter quiz to test your mastery level. Most chapters also contain Hands-On Exercises that provide step-by-step training assistance. At the end of the course, you are required to pass a final examination of 200 questions.

## **PROFESSIONAL IMAGE**

### **Course Description:**

Introduction to the Professional Staff: Enhancing the Firm's Professional Image

Sometimes we get so comfortable in our jobs and with our co-workers that we overlook simple common courtesies or blend social and business interactions much too freely. Whether your office culture is conservative or casual, your firm's professional image should never be in question. Clients are impressed by a staff that knows how to treat them professionally and exceptionally. And they expect that a professional law firm will employ a professional staff. Does your staff pass the test?

- Rules & Subtleties of Professional Behavior
- Business Manners: Making the Best Impression
- The Firm's Expectations
- What To Wear
- And Most importantly, What Not to Wear

## **EMAIL NETIQUETTE**

### **Course Description:**

Email Netiquette: Making Email Work for YOU

Email is such a large part of our business lives that we can't imagine ever being without it. It's become so commonplace that we end up doing most of our communicating with it – for our prospects, clients, vendors, co-workers, and even our friends. And yet, many of us don't really know how to use email in the most efficient and effective way. Human communication is approximately 90% body language, 8% tonality, and 2% written word. With email, the first 98% is removed. If not done properly, email can actually hamper communication with vagueness, unclear requests, ineffective language, and unintentional meanings.

We'll explore the protocol of using email effectively, efficiently, unobtrusively, politely, and with rules governing socially acceptable behavior (etiquette) over the internet (net) – Email Netiquette!

- Best Practices for Writing Effective Emails
- Make Your Email Relevant & First In Line to be Read
- Learn the Difference Between Good & Bad Email
- Dealing With Flaming & Flamers
- Efficiently Read & Receive Email

## **LEGAL ETHICS FOR SUPPORT STAFF**

### **Course Description:**

Every seemingly normal firm hides a potential ethics clash – an event that changes it forever. And what is that event? A story of ignored rules, uneducated staff, inadvertent disclosures, or just plain mistakes that gives us a profile of what we need to learn from every breach of ethics.

Based on Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, Section 5.03, “Responsibilities Regarding Non-lawyer Assistants”.

Topics Include:

- Unauthorized Practice of Law
- Insider Information
- Understanding & Maintaining Confidentiality for Clients and Information
- Conflicts of Interest
- Lessons from Real-Life Scenarios
- The Staff’s Role in the Ethics Triangle
- Cause and Effect of Violations