

COURSE SYLLABUS

PLGL 426: PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP (3 semester hours)

Online Course

Live Lecture: Mondays, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Instructor: Cameron Lenahan
Office Location: Online
Office Hours: Available by email or phone M – F, during normal business hours. (If an email is sent after 5 pm on a Friday, I will respond by the following Monday.)
Office Phone: 903-213-2243
Email: cameron.lenahan@etamu.edu

Required Texts

Deborah E. Bouchoux and Susan M. Sullivan, *Internships Through Employment*
ISBN: 9780735562479

Course Description

Basic internship for paralegals who lack experience in the legal field. Course integrates practical experience with the student's academic program through supervised work in an appropriate legal environment. Prerequisite: Completion of at least 18 hours of paralegal specialty or consent of the program coordinator. Requires a minimum of 160 working hours.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to enable the student to:

- Understand the role of the paralegal as a legal professional;
- Use practical skills obtained in coursework;
- Identify ethical dilemmas, if any, and apply the rules of professional conduct while working as a paralegal;
- Identify areas of interest within the legal field;
- Gain real world experience in the legal field with feedback regarding the student's work product and job performance;
- Understand strengths and identify weaknesses;
- Build and improve upon weaknesses identified while working as a paralegal.

Attendance/Participation Policy

Students are expected to know how to navigate and use the D2L platform by utilizing the training made available by the University. Students are expected to attend and participate in the online live meetings each week they are scheduled. If there is a conflict, contact the instructor immediately.

Grading Policy

All written work will be graded not only on content, but also on writing style, **including punctuation and grammar**. Homework, case briefs, memos, take-home exams and any other written assignment **will NOT** be accepted late or by email. If an assignment is turned in late, a grade of zero will be given.

Grades will be evaluated by consideration of the following: attendance at all class/supervisor meetings; evaluation of your work by the internship sponsor; compilation of weekly timesheets and weekly journals; mock interview; resume and cover letter; final paper; and final oral presentation.

Evaluation of Student Work: The internship sponsor will complete a written evaluation of paralegal job performance at the end of the semester. Areas of evaluation will include appearance, punctuality, attitude, work product, and overall performance. The sponsor will be contacted periodically throughout the semester. The instructor reserves the right to drop one grade level based on inadequate performance as determined by the internship sponsor in the aforementioned areas of evaluation.

A final evaluation of the internship must be submitted upon completion of the internship.

Time Sheets: Completed work hours must be recorded on a time sheet. The time sheet must be signed by the intern's supervisor and submitted to the Program Director at the completion of the internship.

Daily Journal: Over the course of the internship, a daily journal recording of job activities in the office where the intern is working and reflections on those activities must be kept. The legal issues or matters researched or handled on a daily basis, the personnel with whom interactions occur, and other legal work the office performs must be tracked. Journal entries should be neatly typed and dated. A full journal must be submitted at the completion of the internship.

Final Paper: A 5-page paper detailing experiences working as a paralegal intern is required. The paper will be typewritten in 12-point font. A cover page must be attached. Please see the attached list of questions designed to help think about the experiences had over the course of the internship. Not all questions are expected to be answered, but at least 14 questions should be addressed throughout the course of the narrative. All questions denoted with an asterisk (*) must be answered.

Final Paper Presentation: An oral summary of the paper is required at the last class meeting as indicated on the syllabus. It must be 10-15 minutes in length. Appearance will be evaluated as well. Please dress appropriately.

Resume and Cover Letter: Participation in a resume and cover letter workshop during one of the online meetings is required.

Mock Interview: Participation in an online mock interview is required. Evaluation will be based on appearance, speech, ability to answer questions clearly, resume, etc. Feedback on the interview will be provided.

The following are the **required** documentation that must be completed and turned in to the Program Director by the intern:

Resume
Internship Information & Training Agreement
Internship Time Sheet
Internship Journal
Student Intern Final Evaluation
Intern Sponsor Final Evaluation

Attendance at class and submission of assignments on time is expected. Exceptions will be granted only under the most EXTREME, verifiable circumstances.

Grade Calculation:

Weekly timesheets & weekly journals	25 points
Participation in mock interview	25 points
Resume and Cover Letter	10 points
Final paper	15 points
Final oral presentation	<u>25 points</u>
Total	100 points

Grade Distribution is as follows:

A = 90-99

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 65-69

F = 64 and below

(No extra credit work will be allowed unless given as a bonus to the entire class.)

Technology Requirements LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Access and Navigation

Students will need their campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If students do not know their CWID or have forgotten their password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication

If students have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact the Instructor.

Technical Support

If experiencing technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace (D2L), please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Classroom Etiquette

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) Students are expected to exhibit respect for the instructor and fellow students at all times. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from the online course.

Please be respectful of others' opinions even when not agreeing with them. The instructor looks forward to reading a variety of thoughts and opinions and wants students to express themselves, but please be respectful.

Disability Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If there is a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone: (903)886-5150 or (903)886-5835

Fax: (903)468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu

Nondiscrimination Statement

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> (and/or consult event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all ETAMU campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or call 9-1-1.

Counseling Statement

The Counseling Center at ETAMU, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel.

Plagiarism Statement

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.” (www.plagiarism.org)

If students plagiarize, student will receive an F for the assignment in question and the matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The instructor reserves the right to amend, modify, or alter this syllabus as the situation may require.

Fall 2025 Paralegal Internship Meeting Dates and Assignments

08/25/2025 Meeting: Internship Overview

09/15/2025 Meeting: Resume/Cover Letter Session

Assignment: Prepare a cover letter and resume using information from Chapters 3 and 5 of your textbook. You can also find sample resumes and cover letters in Appendices B and C of your textbook. **Have this ready and available for you to refer to and ask questions about for the session on 09/15/2025.**

*After this meeting you will revise the resume and cover letter using the information you learned from the session. **You must submit the revised resume and cover letter in the appropriate drop boxes no later than 10/01/2025.***

10/06/2025 Meeting: Review of Revised Resumes and Cover Letters

11/03/2025 Meeting: Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas presentation

11/10 – 11/21 Participation in Mock Interview (We do not have a class meeting during this time. The attached dates indicate the timeframe you have to complete these assignment)

Assignment 1: Do the "Fast Track" on Big Interview and schedule a virtual ZOOM mock interview with Career Development on campus. Here are the instructions for the mock interviews. **Both must be completed by 11/21/2025.** You will email me the confirmation of your completion of Big Interview.

- You can access "Big Interview" at etamu.biginterview.com.
 - Once you are there you will need to register before you can login.
 - Once you are logged in you will click on the "Learn" tab at the top of the screen.
 - You will then select "Fast Track."
 - Complete the Fast Track lessons.
- If you are using a smartphone you can download the Big Interview App.
 - It takes you straight to the learning tab when you log in.
 - If you click on the recording tab, the first thing you will see is the fast track.
 - If you have trouble recording or otherwise, you may need to click "switch to flash" to use the webpage on your phone.

Assignment 2: Schedule an appointment with the Student Career Preparedness office on campus to undergo a virtual mock ZOOM interview. Do not wait to schedule this appointment. Please read and utilize Chapter 6 of your textbook in preparation for the mock interview.

11/24/2025 Meeting: Review of Internship and Mock Interview

12/08/2025 Meeting: Final Papers Due; Oral Presentations

ALL MEETINGS ARE MANDATORY.

Final Paper: Questions to Think About

You must answer the questions that are denoted with an asterisk (*)

1. *Who was your supervising attorney (what is their position in the office)?
2. *How frequently did you have contact with the supervising attorney?
3. *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?
4. *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?
5. *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.)
6. * 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.)
7. *How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the legal system?
8. *What sorts of contact, and how much of it, did you have with the courts on a daily basis?
9. What was the most important work that you carried out? What was the least important job you carried out?
10. What sorts of contact did you have with other legal personnel (lawyers, staff, assistants, paralegal assistants, etc.)?
11. What did you learn about the legal system that you did not know before?
12. What are your impressions of the judicial system, as well as your opinion of other legal personnel involved in the judicial system?
13. *What legal skills do you believe you gained? What legal skills do you wish you had learned? Did you feel prepared to handle the kinds of activities you handled for the organization?
14. How quickly did you grasp the nature of the tasks required? How capable were you of following directions from supervisors?
15. *What would you do differently to improve the quality of the internship experience?

16. *What do you feel you have learned from the internship experience and course? What did you expect to learn from the experience?
17. What do you feel Texas A&M University – Commerce 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?)
18. *Based on your performance, what grade would you give yourself, and most importantly, why?
- a. The overall grade should be (please circle one): A B C D F