

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
**LEGAL ASSISTANT TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**  
**LGLA \_\_\_\_\_ - TEXAS CIVIL LITIGATION**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course presents the fundamental concepts and procedures of civil litigation with emphasis on the Paralegal's role. Civil Litigation I together with Civil Litigation II covers litigation from the pretrial stage to the post trial phase in Texas.

**PREREQUISITES**

None

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course will involve the study of the Texas Supreme Court System and the Federal Court System. Included will be lectures involving distinction between criminal and civil litigation processes and discussion into the various types of jurisdiction applicable to each. The subject of venue will be covered as will the issue of removal from state courts to Federal Courts. The student will be introduced to the subject area of substantive law. An analysis of Texas Rules of Procedure and a limited analysis into the Federal Rules of Procedure will be discussed. CREDIT: 3 Semester hours (3 hour lecture).

**SCANS (Secretary's Commission Addressing Necessary Skills) OBJECTIVES**

The Department of Labor has identified skills set that U.S. employers want most in entry level employees. It is our commitment to prepare every student with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in today's dynamic environment. Toward this end the following skills will be included in this course:

**Definitions of Competencies Skills**

**Resources**

- Allocates time – Selects relevant, goal- related activities, ranks them in order of importance, allocates time to activities, and understands, prepares, and follows schedules. Competent performance in allocating time includes properly identifying tasks to be completed; ranking tasks in order of importance; developing and following an effective, workable schedule based on accurate estimates of such things as importance of tasks, time to complete tasks, time available for completion and tasks deadlines; avoiding wasting time; and accurately evaluating and adjusting a schedule.

## **INFORMATION**

- Acquires and Evaluates Information- Identifies need for data, obtains them from existing sources or creates them, and evaluates their relevance and accuracy. Competently performing the task of acquiring data and evaluating information includes posing analytic questions to determine specific information needs; selecting possible information and evaluating its appropriateness; and determining when new information must be created.
- Organizes and Maintains Information – Organizes, processes, and maintains written or computerized records and other forms of information in a systematic fashion. Competently performing the tasks of organizing and maintaining information includes understanding and organizing from computer, visual, oral and physical sources in readily accessible formats, such as computerized data bases, spreadsheets, microfiche, video disks, paper files, etc; when necessary =, transforming data into different formats in order to organize them by the application of various methods such as sorting, classifying, or more formal methods.
- Interprets and Communicates Information- Selects and analyzes information and communicates the results to others using oral, written, graphic, pectoral, or multimedia methods. Competently performing the tasks of communicating and interpreting information to others includes determining information to be communicated; identifying the best methods to present information (e.g. overheads, handouts)(; if necessary, converting to desired format and conveying information to others through a variety of means including oral presentation, written communication, etc.

## **INTERPERSONAL**

- Participates as a Member of as Team- Works cooperatively with others and contributes to group with ideas, suggestions, and effort. Demonstrating competence in participating as a member of a team includes doing own share of tasks necessary to complete a project; encouraging team members by listening and responding appropriately to their contributions; building on individual team members' strengths; resolving differences for the benefit of the team; taking personal responsibility for accomplishing goals; and responsibly challenging existing procedures, policies, or authorities.
- Works With Cultural Diversity- Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds. Demonstrating competence in working with cultural diversity involves understanding one's own culture and those of others and how they differ; respecting the rights of others while helping them make cultural adjustments where necessary; basing impressions on individual performance, not on stereotypes; and understanding concerns of members of other ethnic and gender groups.

## **SYSTEMS**

- Understands Systems-Knows how social organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively within them. Demonstrating competence in understanding systems involves knowing how a system's structures relates to goals; responding to the demands of the system' organization; knowing the right people to ask for information and

where to get resources; and functioning within the formal and informal codes of the social' organizational system.

- Monitors and Correct Performance- Distinguishes trends, predicts impact of actions on system operations, diagnoses deviations in the function of a system/organization, and takes necessary action to correct performance. Demonstrating of competence in monitoring and correct performance includes identifying trends and gathering needed information about how the system is intended to function; detecting deviations from system's intended purpose; troubleshooting the system; and making changes to the system to rectify system functioning and to ensure quality of product.
- Improves and Designs Systems- Makes suggestions to modify existing systems to improve products or service and develops new or alternative systems. Demonstrating competence in improving or designing systems involves making suggestions for improving the functioning of the system/organization, recommending alternative system designs based on relative feedback; and responsibly challenging the status quo to benefit the larger system.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

- Selects Technology- Judges which set of procedures, tools, or machines including computers and their programs, will produce the desired results. Demonstrating competence in selecting technology includes determining desired outcomes and applicable constraints; visualizing the necessary methods and applicable technology; evaluating specifications; and judging which machine or tool will produce the desired results.
- Applies Technology to Task- Understands the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and operating machines, including computers and their programming systems. Demonstrating competence in maintaining in how to apply technology to tasks includes understanding how different parts of machines interact and how machines interact with broader production systems; on occasion installing, machines including computers; setting up machines or systems of machines efficiently to get desire results; accurately interpreting machine output; and detecting errors from program to output. Computers will be used in the class for the PRO DOC instruction.

## **FOUNDATION SKILLS**

### **BASIC SKILLS**

- Reading- Locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and documents- including manuals, graphs, and schedules- to perform tasks; learns from text by determining the main idea or essential message; identifies relevant details, facts, and judges the accuracy, appropriateness, style, and plausibility of reports, proposals, or theories of other writers.
- Writing-Communicates through ideas, information, and messages in writing; records information completely and accurately; composes and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, proposals, graphs, flow-charts; uses language, style, organization, and format appropriate to the subject matter, purpose, and audience; includes supporting documentation and attends to level of detail; and checks, edits, and

revises for correct information, appropriate emphasis, form, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- Arithmetic- Performs basic computations; uses basic numerical concepts such as whole numbers and percentages in practical situations; makes reasonable estimates of arithmetic results without a calculator; and uses tables, graphs, diagrams, and charts to obtain or convey quantitative information.
- Mathematics- Approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques; quantifies data to construct logical explanations for real world situations; expresses mathematical ideas and concepts orally and in writing; and understands the role of chance in the occurrence and prediction of events.
- Listening- Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues such as body language in ways that are appropriate to the purpose; for example, to comprehend, to learn, to critically evaluate, to appreciate, or to support the speaker.
- Speaking- Organizes ideas and communicates oral messages appropriate to listeners and situations; participates in conversation, discussion, and group presentations; selects an appropriate medium for conveying a message; uses verbal, language and other cues such as body language appropriate in style, tone, and level of complexity to the audience and listener feedback; and asks questions when needed.

## THINKING SKILLS

- Creative Thinking- Uses imagination freely, combines ideas or information in new ways, makes connection between seemingly unrelated ideas, and reshapes goals in ways that reveal new possibilities.
- Decision Making- Specific goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks and evaluates and chooses best alternative.
- Problem Solving- Recognizes that a problem exists (i.e., there is a discrepancy between what is and what should or could be); identifies possible reasons for the discrepancy; devises and implements plan of action to resolve it; evaluates and monitors progress; and revises plan as indicated by findings.

## PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Responsibility- Exerts a high level of effort and perseverance toward goal attainment; works hard to become excellent at doing tasks by setting high standards, paying attention to details, working well and displaying a high level of concentration even when assigned an unpleasant task; and displays high standards of attendance, punctuality, enthusiasm, vitality, and optimism in approaching and completing tasks.
- Self Esteem – Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self; demonstrates knowledge of own skills and abilities; is aware of impact on others; and knows own emotional capacity and needs and how to address them.
- Social- Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in new and on-going group settings; asserts self in familiar and unfamiliar social situations; relates well to others; responds appropriately as the situation requires; and takes an interest in what others say and do.

- Self Management- Assesses own knowledge, skills and abilities accurately, sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; monitors progress toward goal attainment and motivates self through goal achievement; exhibits self-control and responds to feedback unemotionally and non-defensively; and is a “self-starter”.
- Integrity/Honesty- Can be trusted; recognizes when faced with making a decision or exhibiting behavior that may break with commonly-held personal or societal values; understands the impact of violating these beliefs and codes on an organization, self, and other; and chooses an ethical course of action.

## **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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## **TEXTS AND/OR REFERENCES**

The Litigation Paralegal: A Systems Approach, James W.H. McCord  
Texas Rules of Civil Procedure (Latest Edition) – Check HCC Bookstore  
Scantrons for all quizzes and exams  
A number two (2) pencil

## **LAB REQUIREMENTS (if any)**

To be assigned by instructor if needed.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students who require accommodations for disabilities are encouraged to report to Room 102 SJAC, or call (713) 719-6164 to make necessary arrangements. Faculty is only authorized to provide accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office.

Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office.

For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165 or the Disability Counselor at your college. To visit the ADA Web site, please visit [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu) then click Future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY/SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY**

Houston Community College System students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. "Scholastic Dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to: cheating on a test; plagiarism; and collusion.

Cheating on a test includes:

- Copying from another student's test paper.
- Using materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
- Collaborating with another student during a test without authority
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part, the contents of an unadministered test.
- Bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered

Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit.

Collusion means the unauthorized collaboration with another person on preparing written work offered for credit.

Due to the stringent level of ethics of institution employees a student guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive a grade of "F" for the course. Students who wish to appeal the penalty should notify the instructional supervisor within thirty working days of the incident. A standing committee appointed by the Dean of Instruction will convene to sustain, reduce, or reverse the penalty. The committee will be composed of two students, two faculty members, and one instructional administrator. A majority vote will decide the appeal.

A recommendation for suspension or expulsion will be referred to the Dean of Students for disposition under Section 203.

## **ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES**

A student may be dropped from a course for excessive absences after the student has accumulated absences in excess of 12.5% of the hours of instructions. For this lecture that equates to 7 ½ of instruction, or five (5) absences.

## **DROPPING CLASSES**

The State of Texas has begun to impose penalties on students who drop courses excessively. For example, if you repeat the same course more than twice, you have to pay extra tuition. In 2007, the Texas Legislature passed a law limiting students to no more than **six** total course withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

To help students avoid having to drop/withdraw from any class, HCC has instituted an Early Alert process by which your instructor will "alert" you and HCCS Student Services of the chance you might fail a class because of excessive absences and/or poor academic performance.

You should visit an HCC counselor or HCC Online Student Services to learn about what, if any, HCC interventions might be offered to assist you – tutoring, child care, financial aid, job performance, etc, - to stay in class and improve your academic performance.

You **MUST** visit a counselor or online student services prior to withdrawing (dropping) the class and this must be done prior to **A DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR OR FOUND IN THE CURRENT HCC CALALOG** to receive a “W” on your transcript. After that deadline, you will receive the grade you are making in the class which will more than likely be an “F”.

Weeks:

Two – Six	Instructors initiate “Early Alert” process – to let students know they may be in danger of failing the course and informing them of actions they need to take.
Seven – Ten	Students Services should send Instructors a report on actions taken or not by students.
Week Twelve	Drop Deadline –
TBA Week Sixteen	Grade

### Assignment **INCOMPLETE**

The grade of “I” (incomplete) is conditional. A student receiving an “I” must arrange with the instructor to complete the course work by the end of the following term (excluding summer). After the deadline, the “I” becomes an “F”. All “I’s” must be changed to grades prior to graduation.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Each student is expected to have read the assigned materials before it is to be discussed in class. In addition, the students are expected to define all terms assigned by the instructor (definitions can be found in Black’s or Ballentine’s Law Dictionary) and be prepared to discuss any and/or all definitions requested by the instructor. Each student is responsible for all of the information presented in each assigned chapter even if the information is not discussed in the classroom and each student is responsible for the information provided in the lecture. There will be assignments given, a midterm exam and final exam.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course has basic learning and teaching requirements. The following are the Student Learning Outcomes for this course as basic instruction requirements and learning requirements for the students enrolled in the Class:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate how to calculate answer day in a civil lawsuit.
2. Students will be taught how to calculate the due date for Motions and Hearings.
3. Students will be able to articulate or write the Court system in Texas and the requirements for filing in each forum.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate five (5) basics of Courtroom etiquette.
5. Students will be able to tell the difference between Motions and Orders.
6. Students will be able to recite or write how cases are filed in Court in Harris County.

## **GRADING POLICIES**

An accumulative point system will be utilized to determine the final grade the student will receive for the course. The student's grade will be determined by adding the total points achieved during the semester from examinations, class presentations, homework, assignments, and class participation.

## **NUMERICAL GRADES RELATED TO LETTER GRADES**

Grades will be awarded in accordance with the number of points earned by the student. The following guide for points-to-grade will be utilized to determine the final assessment.

<b>Total Points Accumulated</b>	<b>Grade Earned</b>
100 to 90	A
89 to 80	B
79 to 70	C
69 to 60	D
Below 60 Points	F

## **ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

All required work must be turned in on time in order that the student may benefit from the corrections and study for future examinations. Assigned outside work is **DUE ON THE CLASS PERIOD ASSIGNED**; unless the instructor clears the circumstances with the student, **REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCE, LATE WORK MAY BE ASSESSED PENALTY POINTS (for grading purposes) BY THE INSTRUCTOR**; this subject will be a matter of instruction discretion.

## **EXAMINATION POLICY**

The instructor will administer all major examinations covering course content materials during the semester. A comprehensive final examination will be administered at the end of the semester in accordance with the College Final Examination Schedule, which is published in the semester bulletin. All students are required to take a final course examination as a prerequisite to successful course completion.

## **MAKE UP TEST**

Instructor will announce times and dates to make up examination.

## **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Houston Community College System seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, origin, sex, age, or disability. This policy extends to employment, admission, and all programs and activities supported by the college.

## **EGLSS3**

Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System at Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

This year, HCC with the help of the Faculty Senate is implementing the online EGLS3 – Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System to replace the paper SEOI, Student Evaluation of Instruction. More messages will come throughout the semester.

## **GRADING SCALE**

Grades will be based on the following percentages -

Quiz – 25%

Midterm – 25%

Final – 50%

## **COURSE CALENDAR WITH READING ASSIGNMENTS OUTLINE**

**Fall 2015**

1. Introduction/orientation to course
  - a. Assignment: Read Chapter 1
2. Assignment: Chapter 1 Quiz
3. Assignment: Read Chapter 2
4. Assignment: Chapter 2 Quiz
5. Assignment: Read Chapter 3
6. Lecture and Review for MID TERM
7. MID TERM October 6/8, 2015
8. Assignment: Read Chapter 4
9. Assignment: Chapter 4 Quiz
10. Assignment: Read Chapter 5
11. Assignment: Chapter 5 Quiz
12. Assignment: Read Chapters 6
13. Lecture and Review for FINAL EXAM
14. FINAL EXAM Check HCC Provided Time

**Schedule might change depending on circumstances of the semester.**