Paralegal Studies Program

Los Angeles Mission Colleg

Syllabus

Law 17 – Legal Writing – 3:00 Units

Spring 2013

Spring 2013 – Section # 3304

Instructor: Valerie Lopez – Attorney at Law
Office: Faculty Offices
Office hours: Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm or by appointment.
Phone: 310-382-4712
Email: profvalerielopez@gmail.com

Moodle Page: http://moodle.lamission.edu

Textbook: There is no required textbook for the class

Classwiki: http://legalwriting.pbworks.com/w/page/16131590/FrontPage

Course Description: This course explores legal drafting and writing, including legal memoranda, motions, pleadings, demand letters, a research brief, and special projects including a final legal research and writing paper. .

Course Organization: Law 17 is organized into assignments, quizzes, a final legal research and writing project, and forum discussions. **Read "Where to Start"**

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Brief law cases in various legal subjects to improve students' understanding of the law and improve their legal analysis, argumentation, and legal writing required by a paralegal in a law firm.

2. Critically analyze and argue issues of various legal subjects and topics as listed in #1 above.

3. Prepare legal documents, forms or papers including a legal demand letter, a legal memorandum, various types of motions, a mandatory settlement conference, trial brief, and other legal documents required by a paralegal in a law office.

Also students will prepare a final legal research and writing paper. See format of the paper athttp://profjordan.pbworks.com/format . The final legal writing and research paper will be in the form of a position or argumentative paper. It will train the student in legal analysis, finding of law cases, and improving legal argumentation. The paper will be graded by using the following grading rubric -http://missionparalegal.pbworks.com/rubric-finalpaper

Students will various cases and write a case brief demonstrating their understanding and application of the essential facts and rules of law and legal principles of the case. see case brief rubric at http://missionparalegal.pbworks.com/briefing

Skill Level: College level reading and writing; ability to access the internet. Necessary skills include proficiency using a word processing program, including spell checker, using a web browser, sending and receiving email, saving documents as RTFs (rich text format), uploading and attaching documents.

Estimated Time per Week: 10 hours (see Carnegie Rule)

Class format: The class is an entirely online class. We use the Moodle Course Management System. Carefully read our policies.

The class follows a weekly format. If you click on "Section Links" in upper left corner of your moodle class, you will see the weekly

assignments, quizzes, forums and activities. There are many opportunities for you to participate and earn points to attain a good grade.

Online classes require your attention and effort. If you fail to log into the class during the first two weeksyou will be excluded from the class. There are activities and assignments each week; you will need to log into the class several times a week.

To be a successful online/hybrid student, you need to do schedule a regular time for studying, read and complete on line activities, and more.

Technical Requirements: The minimum computer requirements are: Computer, either a Macintosh or IBM compatible; modem, minimum 28.8, broadband or high speed internet access is preferred and is required to view the videos. Software: Web browser software, preferably Firefox 3.5, or Google Chrome or Internet Explorer 8, an e-mail address and a word processing program.

Get Firefox: http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/all.html

Get Google Chrome - http://google.com/chrome

Get Internet Explorer: http://www.microsoft.com/windows/Internet-explorer/default.apx

Get a free email account at: www.mail.google.com
Students who do not have regular computer access may use computers in the campus Learning Resource Center. Be sure to save all your papers and assignments on a flash drive.

Course Login: http://moodle.lamission.edu

First Assignment: Introduce yourself to the class under the forum discussions for the first week. This is where you will get to know your classmates. Post your introduction by Sunday evening, 11:55 pm,

2/10/13. You may be withdrawn from class if you do not post your introductions by the end of the 2nd week of class.

Contacting Your Instructor: I check my email several times a day and respond to emails within 24 hours. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions; email me at: profvalerielopez@gmail.com , in the subject line put: Law 17 #3304. I am also available in-person or by telephone on Tuesdays, 5:00 - 6:00 pm on campus in the faculty offices.

Discussion Forums: The discussion forums are the main area for class participation. The weekly discussions open on Mondays and close the following Sunday at 11:55 PM. Initial posts are due by Wednesdays at 11:55 pm. Initial posts should be at least two paragraphs in length (approximately 120-150 words), respond directly to the topic in a reflective manner, referencing the topic link and content provided, and applying the law or case materials. Respond to at least two students to each forum by Sunday evening at 11:55 pm.

CLASS BIOGRAPHIES/INTRODUCTIONS : You will find your instructor's autobiography posted in the "Discussion Board" of the class website. Please post your bio in the discussion board by Friday of week one. In your bio, please be sure to include:
Your name (firstname only),
Academic/Career GoalsExpectations of the class
How you found out about the class/program
Other items of interest, and
Include any preliminary questions or concerns you have at this point.

DISCUSSION FORUMS: Every week a discussion questions posted to the website "FORUMS." You are required to post a answer to each discussion question by Wednesday of the forum week. Further, you are required to post, at least, one response to two or more of your classmates' initial responses. You are not required to respond to every classmate. You may, although this is a decision each student will make.

Minimum THREE different days per forum week. As we begin our online work together I want to discuss an important aspect of online learning, namely participation**. Participation** is an important part of

this collaborative online learning environment. It is well documented that participation and collaboration does enhance learning & whether it be in-class or at a distance. You are encouraged to initiate and respond regularly and make sure **your ideas are presented clearly and are substantive.** **Postings that lack substance will receive little or no credit. For example, "I agree," "Good posting," or similar messages that add little or nothing to the discussion will receive few, if any credits.** Discussions posted to the website are an important part of the learning that takes place in this class. In essence, we learn from each other. Share ideas or questions with your colleagues. Ask them questions. Share your own experiences.

SOME SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION:

Class Meeting Discussions:

- **Please read, review, and reflect on each message PRIOR to posting to the forums.** Remember: Others cannot get visual clues as to meaning, therefore, be careful in what and how you communicate. **Once posted, messages cannot be deleted!**
- All postings to any meeting in this class are to be considered CONFIDENTIAL and for consideration and discussion only by members of this class.
- Ask questions about areas of the subject that you wish to better understand or for clarification and/or amplification.
- Read your classmates comments and presentations, and respond constructively.
- Offer personal/professional experiences/observations relevant to the items being discussed.

Participation Rubric:

Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Exemplary

A minimum of 3 postings per forum on at least 3 separate days.	Less than 3 **substantial postings**.	Three required**substantial postings.**	More than the 3**substantial required posting.**
Answers by Wednesday – – – – – – – – – – – – – – Respond to classmates by Sunday	Posting answers after Wednesday	Posting answers on Wednesday	Posting answers before Wednesday
Well reasoned with appropriate analysis.	No response or lacks applicability.	Response is applicable, but may not be thorough or lacks depth.	Thorough response with appropriate depth.
Appropriate dialog with classmates	Responses do not clearly relate to topic.	Responses relate to topic.	Responses clearly relate to topic.

Appropriate grammar, spelling, and APA references.	Spelling and/or grammar errors.	No spelling or grammar errors..	No spelling, grammar errors, or punctuation errors.

Student deliverables should be submitted on the specified date by midnight of the student's time zone. For purposes of scheduling, each week or module begins on Monday 12:01 AM and concludes the following Sunday at Midnight.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK:

VOCABULARY – You are expected to read and understand the material presented in the assigned text and articles you locate.

FORMAT – Papers submitted should be written in accordance with the **APA**, **Bluebook**, or **other recognized formatting style**.

GRAMMAR – Use active voice in your writing. Also use the spelling and grammar check feature of your Word Processor before submitting your papers.

Homework Assignments: Assignments require you to read and brief law cases. Read the information on"briefing law cases". Below is the grading rubric for your case "briefs"

CASE BRIEF GRADING RUBRIC

	Outstanding A	Proficient B	Adequate C	Inadequate D/F

Case Name and Citation	Complete case name and properly formatted citation appear at the top of the case brief	Complete case name is provided but citation is incomplete	Complete case name is provided but no citation is give	Neither the case name nor the citation appears at the top of the case brief OR both case name and citation are incorrect.
Operative Facts	Operative facts are relevant to the issue being examined by the court and are logically organized.	Facts are relevant to the question being answered but lack coherence or organization.	Irrelevant facts are included. Lack of logical organization.	Relevant facts are omitted or lost in discussion of unrelated information.
Procedural Facts	Procedural history of the case is clearly and logically presented in proper chronology.	Procedural history of the case is presented but chronology is confusing.	Some procedural history is presented.	No procedural history is presented.
Issue / Short Answer	Includes all elements (applicable law, issue being examined and relevant facts) in a well crafted, grammatically correct question. Answer responds to question being posed.	Issue is separately articulated, but does not include all elements; applicable law, issue being examined and relevant facts. Answer responds to question being posed.	Issue is not separately articulated, but implied through description of facts or discussion of law. Answer does not respond to question being posed.	Issue is not articulated No answer is given.
Law	Law is correct and is relevant to the question being answered. Rule(s) of law succinctly paraphrased rather than quoted.	Law is correct and is relevant to the question being answered, but is not paraphrased	Rules of law are used in providing answer, but it is unclear if writer understands the law and is properly applying it.	Rules of law are omitted from answer or incorrect law is used.
Rationale	The court's reasoning is presented in a clear and logical fashion, leading the reader to an understanding of the rationale behind the law.	Law is applied to the facts, but the underlying rationale is not clear.	Analysis is unclear, causing the reader to question whether the law is correct.	No analysis of the law is given.

Writing Mechanics	Sentence structure, grammar, punctuation are substantially correct. Each component's material is logically organized and presented in a clear, concise manner.	Sentence structure, grammar, punctuation are substantially correct. Organization is logical but needs better consistency and clarity.	Adherence to rules of writing is poor. Material lacks organization and/or is unclear, making it difficult to understand.	Rules of writing are ignored or misunderstood. No apparent logic to the organization of the material. Writing lacks clarity.

**above adopted from case grading rubric – AAFPE.org website

Students who plagiarize will receive zero credit on the assignment.

Quizzes: The class is divided into weekly quizzes which are submitted under moodle (they are not timed quizzes like other classes)

Assignments: This includes creating legal documents, and briefing law cases

Forum Discussions: The class is divided into weekly discussion forums. This is 15% of your grade.

Late Assignments Our "Late Work" Policy is firm.

Dropping your class/Exclusion: May 5th, 2013 (by internet) is the last day to drop the class with a "W"

College regulations state that a student **may be excluded** from a course following accumulation of absences equal to a week of course work. The 12th week of class is the last date a student may drop a class with a "W". (or the 8th week in a "Late Start" class). Thereafter, the student must receive a grade in the class.

If a student has a accumulated score of 50 or below in the 12th week (or the 8th weeek in a "Late Start" class) , it is deemed that the student has accumulated absences in excess of a week of course work, and the instructor MAY, but is NOT required to DROP the student from class, with or without notice. **It is the sole responsibility of the student, and not the instructor, to drop the class.**

In addition, students who fail to login and post their introduction to class within the first (ten) days of class may be dropped from their online class.

Grading Policy: Letter grades will be determined based upon the following:

Grade Distribution

Tests are 30% of your grade
Assignments are 30% of your grade
Final Legal Research Paper = 25 % of your grade
Discussion Forums = 15% of your grade and entered at the end of the semester

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Grade Scale:		
	A	90-100
	B	80-89
	C	70-79
	D	60-69
	F	≤ 60

Please note that a grade of C or higher is required for each of the 12 paralegal certificate classes.

Points will be posted on the class website after each activity closes.

Reasonable Accommodations: For students requiring accommodation the DSPS office provides special assistance in areas like: registering for courses, specialized tutoring, note-taking, mobility assistance, special instruction, testing assistance, special equipment, special materials, instructor liaisons, community referrals, and job placement. The phone number for the Office of Students with Disabled Student Programs and Services is: (818) 364-7732. see their website at http://lamission.edu/dsps

Important Dates
Website opens Sunday 2/3/13 at 6 pm
HOLIDAYS (College CLOSED)

Martin Luther King – January 21
President's Day – February 15-18
Cesar Chavez Day – April 1
Spring Break – March 29-April 5
Memorial Day – May 27
Independence Day – July 4

Applications
Accepted ..... Year Round
Assessment and
Orientation ..... Year Round
Deadline for K to 8 (Young Student)
Application ..... January 25
Residency Determination
Date ..... February 3
DAY AND EVENING CLASSES
BEGIN ..... February 4
Saturday classes
begin ..... February 9
Last day to process Audit Add
Request ..... February 15
Last day to petition for Credit/No-
Credit ..... March 8
Last day for Section
Transfer ..... March 8
Deadline to petition for Spring/Summer 2013
Graduation… ..... March 29
Classes
end ..... May 25
FINAL
EXAMS ..... May 28 – June 3

Graduation
Day ..... June 4
PRIORITY Registration Dates – Enrollment is by appointment only, through the Internet
(You may not register before your appointment date and time.)
EOPS, DSPS Foster Youth and
Veterans ..... November 26 to 28
Continuing
Students ..... Nov. 29 to Dec. 23
New and Re-entering
Students ..... December 24
ADD Dates – Late ADDs are not permitted
Deadline to add full term (16-week) classes (In
Person) ..... February 15
(Short Term Classes Have Different Deadlines-Check with Your Instructor)
DROP Dates (16-week classes)
Drop classes without receiving a "W" with refund (In
Person)..... February 18*
Drop classes without receiving a "W" with refund
(Internet) ..... February 18*
Drop classes without incurring fees or with a refund
(Registration/parking/non-resident fees – 16-week semester-length classes)
In Person/
Internet ..... February 18*
NOTE: Contact the Offi ce of Admissions & Records for deadlines on late start, short-term, and special program classes.
Drop classes with a "W" (Letter grade is required from this date forward)
In
Person ..... May 3
Internet ..... May 5

Please note that if you do not drop the class by May 5th (internet), then you must receive a grade, and cannot request to be dropped or to receive and Incomplete grade.

*PLEASE NOTE: The District required earlier and revised deadlines starting Summer 2012. A "W" will appear on your transcript record after this date.

REMINDER: There is a new LACCD enrollment limit. The limit is now three times to take a class and includes both substandard grades and withdrawals. (See Important Notice, page 3 of the College Catalog)

If you stop attending a class (or wish to drop a class), YOU MUST DROP THE CLASS YOURSELF – OFFICIALLY – on or before May 5, 2013 (Internet). Failure to do so may result in a grade of "F" in that class

New 3 Repeat Rule
IMPORTANT NOTICE
All Students Please Read
Beginning Summer 2012: New 3 Repeat Rule

EFFECTIVE SUMMER 2012, course withdrawal ("W") or a substandard grade ("D," "F," or "NP") count as an attempt at a course. Only three attempts at any one course will be allowed, with some exceptions. Listed below are the new rules that all students need to know about.

- Students who drop or are excluded after the last day to drop without a grade of "W" will have a "W" appear on their transcript. The "W" will count as an attempt for that course.
- For the Spring semester, February 18, 2013 is the last day to drop a 16-week semester length class without a "W." Students will be able to drop a class online until this date. Contact the office of Admissions and Records for deadlines on late start, short-term and special program classes.
- A course in a student's transcript which currently shows a recorded "W" counts as an attempt for that course.
- Students will not be allowed to register for any course within the LACCD if there are three recorded attempts for that course in any

combination of W, D, F, or NP grades.
• Add permits for a course within the LACCD will not be processed if there are three recorded attempts for that course in any combination of W, D, F, or NP grades.
• For courses specifi cally designated as “repeatable,” students may repeat up to three times (See Title 5 California Code of Regulations sections 55040, 55041, 58161).
• Where the student’s number of enrollments in a course exceeds the allowable amount, the student may petition for an additional enrollment in cases of extenuating circumstances.

What students should do:
• Be sure you are academically ready for classes you enroll in.
• If you must drop a course, drop before the specifi ed deadline for dropping a class without a grade of “W.”

Calendar of Activities

Distribution of Grades
Tests is 30% of your grade
Assignments are 30% of your grade
Final Legal Research Paper = 25 % of your grade
Discussion Forums = 15% of your grade and entered at the end of the semester

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A = 90% or above
B = 80% or above
C = 70% or above
D = 60% or above
A grade of C or greater is required to pass the class

Week 1 - Due 2/10/13

* Read the syllabus for the class
- Post your Introduction
- Read Dear Online Student
- Read "How to Study Law and post to moodle

- Read Good Legal Writing and post to moodle
- Read The Uses of Argument and post to moodle
- Read Analytic Thinking and post to moodle
- Read "Character Counts" and post to moodle
- Read Differences between a "Case" and a "Code" (10 Hour Law School) and post to moodle
- Read "Recognizing Plagarism" and take the test

Week 2 – Due 2/17/13

* Read Legal Writing in Plain English
- #1 Valley Forge case Assignment
- #2 New Orleans v. Dukes – "Grandfather Clause" Assignment
- Test #A – Legal Writing in Plain English Assignment
- weekly forum discussion

Week 3 – Due 2/24/13

* Read Business Letters
* #3 "Whose Dance is it Anyway" – develop school district policy
* #4 Death Penalty – Baze v. Rees case
* Test #B Legal Demand Letter
* Post the Topic for Your Final Paper
- weekly forum discussion

Week 4 – Due 3/3/13

* Read Demand Letters
* #5 Marbury vs. Madiscon case
* #6 Blakey v. Continental Airlines
* Test #C Demand Letter
- weekly forum discussion

Week 5 – Due 3/10/13

* Read Legal Opinion Letters
* #7 Stansbury v. California case
* #8 Freedom of Speech – Hazelwood case

* Test D – Legal Opinion Letter
- weekly forum discussion

Week 6 – Due 3/17/13

* Read Legal Argumentation
* #9 Post Research Topic and Preliminary Information on your Legal Writing Paper
* #10 Hudson v Michigan instructions-hudson
* #11 Jackson v Birmingham Board of Education instructions-jackson
* Test #E Legal Argumentation instructions-argumentation
- weekly forum discussion

Week 7 – Due 3/24/13

* Read How to do an A+ research paper
* NEW #12 Pennoyer v Neff
* NEW #13 case
* Test #F Post your thesis for your Legal Writing Paper
- weekly forum discussion

Week 8 – Due 3/31/13

* Read Legal Memorandum
* #14 – Erie v. Thompkins
* Test #G Legal Memorandum
- weekly forum discussion \
- Spring Break 4/1 – 4/7

Week 9 – Due 4/14/13

* Read Mandatory Settlement Conference
* NEW #15 Affirmative Action – Grutter and Fisher cases
* Test #H Mandatory Settlement Conference Statement – msc-brief
- weekly forum discussion

Week 10 - Due 4/21/13

* #16 Roper v Simmons
* Read Motion for Summary Judgment
* Test #I Motion for Summary Judgment
* Read Standard Complaints
* Test #J Standard Complaint

- weekly forum discussion

Week 11 - Due - 4/28/13

- Read Legal Writing and Research paper
- #17 - Child Custody - Nicolson v. Pappalardo
- #18 - Trademark Infringement - Sobmondo Entertainment v. Falls Media
- Test #K - Post the Outline - law17-outline - of your final legal writing project
- weekly forum discussion

Week 12 - Due 5/5/13

* Read "Putting Together End Notes"
* #19 Credit Default Swap Agreement - Citigroup case
* Test #L Post your "footnotes" or "end notes" - law17-footnotes - complete case citations, and not just internet websites

- weekly forum discussion

Week 13 - Due 5/12/13

* #20 - Dog Sniff case

- weekly forum discussion

Week 14 - Due 5/19/13

* Test # M - Post your Final Legal Writing Project - law17-final-paper

- weekly forum discussion

Week 15 - Due 5/26/13

* TBA

Week 16 - Due 6/2/13

* TBA

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations for a disability, religious holiday, or any other reason please inform your instructor(s) within the first week of the course and we will accommodate you if at all possible. For accommodations due to disability, you must consult with the Disabled Students Programs and Services Office after which we will abide by their recommendations.

COLLEGE RESOURCES FOR LAMC STUDENTS

Admissions and Records: Students can register for classes, request transcripts, file
petitions for graduation, and drop classes at this office. For more information call 818-833-3322 or visit:http://www.lamission.edu/admissions/

Assessment Center: Offers student assessments in English, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and Mathematics. Please contact the Assessment Center at (818) 364-7613 for more information or visithttp://www.lamission.edu/assessment/

Bookstore: For hours of operation, book availability, buybacks, and other information call 818-364-7767 or 7768 or visithttp://eagleslanding.lamission.edu/default.asp

Counseling Department: For appointments and information call 818-364-7655 or visit
http://www.lamission.edu/counseling/

Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S): For appointments, eligibility and
information call 818-364-7732 or visit http://www.lamission.edu/dsps/

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S): For appointments, eligibility and information call 818-364-7645 or

visit http://www.lamission.edu/eops/

Financial Aid: For information and applications call 818-364-7648 or visit
http://www.lamission.edu/financialaid/

Library: For information on hours, resources, workshops, and other services contact 818-364-7106 or visithttp://www.lamission.edu/library/

STEM Office: For information on free tutoring, resources and academic counseling for
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Technology) students visit: http://www.lamission.edu/stem

Tutoring Services in Learning Center: Laboratories for Learning, Writing, Math &
Science. Walk-in and appointment services offered. Call
818-364-7754 or visit
www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/

Three Attempt Limit

A new state policy in effect as of 2012 limits students to **three attempts per course**.
Receiving a grade or a "W" for a course counts as an attempt, **regardless of when the course was taken**. Withdrawal by the deadline to avoid a "W" will not count as an attempt. For Spring 2013 the deadline to avoid a "W" is Monday, February 18th.

updated: 1/5/13