

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Paralegal Studies 132 – Computer Assisted Legal Research (CALR)

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

The study of computer software programs designed specifically for use in law offices and legal environments, including but not limited to specific applications such as calendaring, and time and billing programs. The course focuses on legal research using electronic sources.

Prerequisite

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in PARA 100 or equivalent

Entrance Skills

This course will deal with a major area of substantive law and how it relates to other areas of the law, so an understanding of substantive and procedural law is critical. Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, any student entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Have a basic understanding of the legal system.
- 2) Be familiar with basic legal concepts and basic legal language.
- 3) Knowledge of the state and federal court systems.

Course Content

- 1) Introduction to Computer Assisted Legal Research (CALR)
 - a. Definitions
 - b. Demographics in law offices
 - c. Basic CALR search techniques
 - d. Search operation functions provided by Westlaw and LexisNexis
 - e. Legal research, malpractice, unauthorized practice of law, ethics
- 2) Basic "On-Line" Computer Research Services and Databases
 - a. WESTLAW Thomson Reuters) or Lexis-Nexis (Mead Data Central)
 - b. SHEPARD'S Auto-Cite or WESTLAW KeyCite
 - c. CALI
 - d. Search techniques for Internet legal research
- 3) Legal and Non-legal Databases
 - a. Legislative
 - b. SEC Information "on-line"
 - c. CCH Tax services
 - d. ABA/net
 - e. Public Records
- 4) Basic Legal Research Improved with CALR
 - a. Develop an online legal research plan
 - b. Use online finding tools such as Custom Digest

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of, and properly use, legal terminology in both oral and written communications.
- 2) Evaluate issues of ethics and professionalism faced by paralegals and attorneys in California and demonstrate the process for conducting basic electronic ethics research.

- 3) Locate, interpret and validate Federal, State and administrative statutory, regulatory and case based electronic research.
- 4) Demonstrate timely and correct completion of assignments using critical thinking and analysis skills.
- 5) Identify the jurisdiction of Federal and State Courts and the electronic legal authorities that pertain to each.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essays, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Quizzes or exams that measure students' ability to appropriately use legal terminology and identify legal concepts.
- 2) Homework assignments that measure students' ability to locate the appropriate legal authority applicable to various hypotheticals.
- 3) In-class activities or homework assignments that measure students' sensitivity to ethical situations and ability to apply appropriate ethical rules.
- 4) Quizzes, exams or homework assignments that give students' the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the Federal and State court systems and the legal authorities that pertain to each.

Special Materials Required of Student

Password for electronic legal database such as Westlaw or Lexis-Nexis

Minimum Instructional Facilities

- 1) Smart classroom with document camera
- 2) Access to computer lab

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture and discussion
- 2) Demonstration and practical application of programs and research problems

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative example): Bouchoux, Deborah. Legal Research and Writing for Paralegals. 10th edition. Wolters Kluwer, 2024.
- 2) Supplemental: None

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of, and properly use, legal terminology.
- 2) Evaluate issues of ethics and professionalism faced by paralegals and attorneys in California and demonstrate the process for conducting basic electronic ethics research.
- 3) Locate, interpret and validate Federal, State and administrative statutory, regulatory and case based electronic research. (Work Based Learning Outcome)
- 4) Identify the jurisdiction of Federal and State Courts and the electronic legal authorities that pertain to each.