

**ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR LEGAL ASSISTANTS - LAH 115
Fall 2002
Tuesday 7:45 - 9:20 p.m.**

Instructor: Deborah D. Boyle, Registered Paralegal

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Legal Assistants, Third Edition (1999),
Therese Cannon (hereinafter referred to as "Cannon").

Rules of Professional Conduct (American Bar Association as adopted by the Connecticut
Bar Association).

Numerous other handouts provided in class.

SUMMARY OF COURSE: The Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Legal Assistants course provides an overview of ethical considerations and responsibilities regulating the paralegal profession. The focus will be on evolving issues within the industry with special emphasis on the unauthorized practice of law, attorney-client privilege and conflicts of interest. There will also be discussions and investigations into the paralegal career and its regulation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the various ethical issues impacting the legal profession today and specifically how they relate to paralegals;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of organizations in regulating the paralegal profession, such as Bar Associations and Paralegal Organizations; and
3. Apply the appropriate regulations to situations that may occur in daily assignments of a paralegal which constitute ethical violations.

COURSE OUTLINE:

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| Class 1 | Introduction to Kinds of Regulations - discussion of paralegal profession, CCPA, NFPA, NALA, CBA and ABA and lecture on various regulatory bodies and model codes of ethics.
<u>Assignment:</u> Read Cannon, Chapters 1 and 2 |
| Class 2 | Unauthorized Practice of Law - discussion of regulations regarding UPL and how they are applied. View video tape on real life UPL questions.
<u>Assignment:</u> Read Cannon, Chapter 3 |
| Class 3 | Confidentiality and Attorney-Client Privilege - discussion regarding what constitutes confidential information and its relation to the Attorney-Client |

Privilege. Work in small groups on role playing exercise.
Assignment: Read Cannon, Chapter 4

Class 4 Conflicts of Interest - discussion on what constitutes a conflict of interest and ways a conflict can be avoided. Work in small groups on case studies.
Assignment: Read Cannon, Chapter 5 and Mid-Term Examination due.

Class 5 Competence and Professionalism - discussion of competency codes and classroom presentations for Interview Assignment.
Assignments: Read Cannon, Chapters 8 and 10 and Interview of practicing paralegal assignment due.

Class 6 Fees and Client Funds - discussion of codes regarding the handling of clients' funds and attorney fees. Guest speaker: Bobbi Shorthouse, Cummings and Lockwood, Hartford, CT to discuss the Notary Public Code of Ethics.
Assignment: Read Cannon, Chapter 7

Class 7 Group classroom presentations for Video Assignment.
Assignment: Written film review of one of the assigned films outlining and discussing at least five ethical issues presented.

An additional assignment constitutes presenting an oral briefing of one case from the Cannon book which will be assigned during the semester.

GRADING:	Class Participation/Brief Case	20%
	Mid-Term Examination	30%
	Interview and Presentation	20%
	Video Assignment and Presentation	30%

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:

Methods will include: brief lectures, class discussions, small group projects and presentations, role playing, videos, interview with practicing paralegal, individual presentations, guest speakers, written assignments, internet assignments, blackboard discussions, group presentations and individual oral briefing of cases.

RULES OF THE COURSE:

1. Students are expected to attend all seven class sessions. Because of the accelerated nature of this course, attendance is mandatory. Please see me immediately if you cannot attend all sessions. If more than one class session is missed it will be reflected in the student's final grade.
2. Reading assignments are expected to be completed before the class meets that day. All

written assignments are due at the beginning of the class and must be typed and in the proper form as described in class. Assignments turned in late, without my prior consent, will be graded down one full grade and assignments turned in more than one week late shall be graded down two full grades.

3. Students should be familiar with the honor code at Hartford College for Women and any other academic honor standards at the University.
4. If you have any special learning needs I should be aware of, please let me know at the beginning of the course.
5. Tape recording of class sessions is permitted although guest speakers must be given the option as to whether or not they allow taping.

Changes may be made to this syllabus at the instructor's discretion.