

# PL-2991: PARALEGAL CAPSTONE

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## Cuyahoga Community College

**Viewing: PL-2991 : Paralegal Capstone**

**Board of Trustees:**

May 2024

**Academic Term:**

Fall 2024

**Subject Code**

PL - Paralegal Studies

**Course Number:**

2991

**Title:**

Paralegal Capstone

**Catalog Description:**

Capstone course in Paralegal Studies. This course is designed to ready the student for entry into the legal community through intensive study of the paralegal profession and additional development of the student's organizational, communication and critical analysis skills using modalities such as portfolio preparation and mock interviews.

**Credit Hour(s):**

1

**Lecture Hour(s):**

1

## Requisites

**Prerequisite and Corequisite**

Departmental approval: completion or in process of completion, or all required courses and completion of all program requirements.

## Outcomes

**Course Outcome(s):**

Identify career opportunities in the paralegal profession which cater to the student's unique skills and interests.

**Objective(s):**

1. Discuss the qualities required to enter the workplace.
2. Discuss a paralegal's tasks in a law office setting.
3. Discuss and provide solutions to on-the-job challenges of the paralegal profession.
4. Discuss interpersonal skills required for professional performance.
5. Prospect for leads for job openings in the workplace.
6. Demonstrate standards regarding professional appearance and conduct.
7. Explore continuing education opportunities and requirements
8. Discuss professional credentials and testing offered by national paralegal organizations.

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**Course Outcome(s):**

Develop a professional resume, cover letter, and portfolio (which includes the LexisNexis Paralegal Student Certificate of Mastery) to pursue a career in the paralegal profession.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

**Objective(s):**

1. Write a professional resume, cover letter, and portfolio to pursue a career in the paralegal profession.
2. Develop a professional portfolio for use in job interviews and self-awareness of practical paralegal skills and knowledge base.
3. Obtain LexisNexis Paralegal Certificate of Mastery for inclusion in professional portfolio.
4. Create a professional-quality LinkedIn profile for usage in pursuit of a career in the paralegal profession.

**Course Outcome(s):**

Utilize effective oral communication skills and interviewing techniques to complete a mock interview as preparation for pursuit of a career in the paralegal profession.

**Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:**

Oral Communication: Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication for an intended audience that is clear, organized, and delivered effectively following the standard conventions of that language.

**Objective(s):**

1. Practice interviewing techniques/responses through mock job interviews.
2. Develop and improve oral communication skills through mock job interviews.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

1. Participation in classroom discussions and activities
2. Professional Portfolio
  - a. Resume
  - b. Cover Letter (based on actual job posting)
  - c. Academic Work Samples (Legal Research Projects, Pleadings, Forms, Drafting Assignments, and other work completed as part of Paralegal Studies courses)
  - d. Practicum Work Samples (examples of actual work completed during Practicum that has all necessary client information redacted)
  - e. Academic Transcript (unofficial)
  - f. LexisNexis Paralegal Student Certificate of Mastery
  - g. Other Awards\Certifications (optional)
3. Mock Interview\Elevator Pitch Assignment: Students will deliver an "elevator pitch" to the instructor and conduct a mock interview with the instructor. Both the "elevator pitch" and mock interview will be recorded. Students will watch the video and reflect upon their performance
4. LinkedIn Profile Assignment: Students will create a professional-quality LinkedIn profile for usage in real-life employment searches
5. Notary Public\Paralegal Certification Assignment: Students will complete a short assignment that provides information about how to become a Notary Public and provides insight into two paralegal certifications that they can obtain in the future
6. Paralegal Ethics Brief Activity: Students obtain the text of an Ohio state-level decision that deals with ethical issues involving paralegals and\or the unauthorized practice of law and brief it
7. Paralegal "Soft Skills" Podcast Assignment: Students obtain a podcast that deals with the importance of developing "soft skills" that are necessary for success in the legal profession. Students use the content of the podcast to answer a series of questions regarding the importance of "soft skills" and the way in which the podcast helped them learn more about "soft skills" that are needed for success in the legal profession
8. Legal Technology Certification Assignment: Students obtain a certification in a legal technology program such as Smokeball or Clio
9. Next Educational Steps Assignment: Students use information about local four-year colleges and law schools in order to answer a series of questions about how they can pursue these opportunities in the future
10. Court Prediction Assignment\Continuing Legal Education Debriefing Assignment: Students either attend a trial in person, attend an oral argument in person, or listen to\view a video of an oral argument. After they do so, they research the relevant law involved, secure the pleadings that were filed (if available), and write a prediction about how the court will rule in the matter. If the court decides the matter before the end of the semester, they need to obtain the text of the decision and discuss how their predictions compared to the ultimate decision in the matter. Alternatively, students may attend OR listen to a continuing legal education program\event that pertains to their supervising attorney's practice areas or to a topic of interest to them. They will draft a paper that chronicles what they learned at the event, explains how the new material\content that they learned at this event builds upon and relates to their prior educational and employment endeavors, and discusses how attending the event will make them a more effective and successful paralegal

**Course Content Outline:**

1. Discussions pertaining to ethical dilemmas and solutions, interpersonal considerations, stresses of office environments
2. Preparation for job searches and promotional interviews
  - a. Resume and cover letter preparation
  - b. Professional portfolio preparation
    - i. Compile and organize coursework
    - ii. Document accomplishments
  - c. Interviewing techniques
  - d. Electronic job searches
3. Role, responsibilities, professional conduct of a practicing paralegal

**Resources**

Cannon, Therese A. *Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Legal Assistants*. 8th ed. Wolters Kluwer Law & Business, 2017.

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Mongue, Robert E. *The Empowered Paralegal: Effective, Efficient and Professional*. 2nd ed. Carolina Academic Press, 2018.

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Wagner, Andrea. *How to Land Your First Paralegal Job*. 5th ed. Pearson, 2008.

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Goldman, Thomas F. *The Paralegal Professional*. 5th ed. Pearson, 2016.

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Newman, Virginia Koerselman. *The Complete Paralegal Certification Handbook (MindTap Course List)*. 5th Ed. Cengage Learning, 2020.

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McClurg, Andrew. *1L of a Ride: A Well-Traveled Professor's Roadmap to Success in the First Year of Law School (Career Guides)*. 4th Ed. West Academic Publishing, 2021.

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Garwin, Arthur H. *The Paralegal's Guide to Professional Responsibility*. 5th Ed. American Bar Association, 2020.

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Trivium Test Prep. *Paralegal Study Guide 2021-2022: Comprehensive Review with Practice Test Questions for the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (PACE)*. Trivium Test Prep, 2020.

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Lockwood, Ellen et al. *The Paralegal Ethics Handbook*. Thomson Reuters, 2023.

**Resources Other**

- A. "Paralegal Voice" podcast - <https://legaltalknetwork.com/podcasts/paralegal-voice/>
- B. LinkedIn (Professional Profile Website) - [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)
- C. Indeed (Employment Search Website) - [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)
- D. National Association of Legal Assistants - [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)
- E. LexisNexis University - [www.lexisnexis.com/university](http://www.lexisnexis.com/university)
- F. National Federation of Paralegal Associations - [www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)
- G. Notary Information from Ohio Secretary of State - [www.ohiosos.gov/notary](http://www.ohiosos.gov/notary)
- H. Livebinders (Electronic Professional Portfolio Resource) - [www.livebinders.com](http://www.livebinders.com)
- I. Google Sites (Electronic Professional Portfolio Resource) - [sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)
- J. Paralegal Bootcamp - [paralegal-bootcamp.com/](http://paralegal-bootcamp.com/)

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