SYLLABUS

CLASS: Ethics and the Paralegal Profession, (Course PLS 425), Lincoln Campus

INSTRUCTOR: Edward “Ed” Hoffman
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   Wk Phone: (402) 477-2233


When purchasing the textbook you will have access to an accompanying video library with multiple videos outlining and highlighting issues concerning the various ethical topics covered in this textbook. You are required to watch each of the videos and to select one or more videos from each topic area to write your papers on (see below Assignment and Reading Schedule Outline). Please see the inside cover of your textbook for information on how to access these videos online. Videos are available to view at www.pearsonhighered.com/careers.

OVERVIEW: This course introduces students to the study of legal ethics. You will study the concepts and rules associated with “legal ethics” as opposed to the study of “morals” and “being ethical.” Your textbook covers the various rules of professional responsibility that pertain to paralegals, lawyers and the public. Ethical issues are covered in a real-world context in your textbook and are applied in this context in the videos. Each student will be required to learn the legal vocabulary used in ethics and use this vocabulary and their critical/analytical thinking skills as demonstrated in your papers.

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be expected to master materials covered in the assigned textbook by author Debra K. Orlik to include, but not be limited to, an understanding of the applicable State statutes and regulations that apply to attorneys and the broader study of ethics in general. Students will learn about the moral ethical requirements that attorneys and their staff are required to follow both in and outside the law office as well as discussing various State and American Bar Association guidelines dealing with legal ethics.

Through this course students develop knowledge and understanding of the ethical and legal responsibilities that have been established by statutes, court decisions and court rules affecting paralegals/legal assistants and lawyers, including conflict of interest, confidentiality, competence, solicitation, fees and billing, obligations of attorneys to clients, and protection of client funds.
**COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:** This course uses a “three before me” policy in regards to student to faculty communications. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these three sources for an answer before asking me to reply to your individual questions:

1. Course syllabus
2. Announcements in Blackboard
3. The “Water Cooler” discussion board

This policy will help you in potentially identifying answers before I can get back to you and it also helps your instructor from answering similar questions or concerns multiple times.

If you cannot find an answer to your question, please first post your question to the “Water Cooler” discussion board. Here your question can be answered to the benefit of all students by either your fellow students who know the answer to your question or the instructor. You are encouraged to **politely** answer questions from other students in the discussion forum when you know the answer to a question in order to help provide timely assistance.

If you have questions of a personal nature such as relating to a personal emergency, questioning a grade on an assignment, or something else that needs to be communicated privately, you are welcome to contact me via email or phone. My preference is that you will try to email me first. I will usually respond to email and phone messages from 8am to 5pm on weekdays, please allow at least 24 hours for me to respond.

If you have questions about the technology being used in the course, please contact the UTO Help Desk for assistance (Contact information is listed below).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** This class follows the Doane College Academic Honesty Policy. All materials submitted for this class are expected to be original by the student and should not have been submitted for credit to any other course. Academic integrity is expected for all interactions and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, original work on assignments, accountability and completion of requirements, maintenance of confidentiality for individuals, and accurate citation of and references to original work. Specific information about Academic Honesty and Plagiarism may be found in the Doane Student Handbook. When applicable, assignments must be typed and adhere to the APA 6th Edition guidelines. This includes crediting authors when paraphrasing, summarizing, or directly quoting the work of other individuals. Resources for APA formatting are available on Blackboard. Mechanics of writing are considered in the grading of assignments. Therefore, it is expected that you will proofread all work for accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation before submitting assignments and projects. Depth of thought, application, and analysis demonstrated in the assignment will be considered in the grading process. All work is expected to be of highest quality. Work may be turned back to the student for review and revision.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Online Course:
This is an online course and therefore there will only be one face-to-face class session which is scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2016. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies.

B. Computer Requirements:
This course requires that you have access to a computer that can access the internet. You will need to have access to, and be able to use, the following software packages:
- A web browser (Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox).
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (Free).
- Adobe Flash Player (Free).
- Microsoft Word.

You are responsible for having a reliable computer, printer and internet connection throughout the course.

C. Email and Internet:
You must have an active Done College e-mail account and access to the Internet. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your Doane College e-mail account. Please plan on checking your DC email account regularly for course related messages.

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades. The Blackboard Course Site can be accessed at http://bb2.doane.edu

D. Campus Network or Blackboard Outage:
When access to Blackboard is not available for an extended period of time (greater than one entire evening – 6pm till 11pm) you can reasonably expect that the due date for assignments will be changed to the next day (assignment still due by midnight).

E. Attendance/Participation:
Preparation for class means reading the assigned readings & reviewing all information required for that week. Attendance in an online course means logging into the Blackboard and on a regular basis participation in all of the activities that are posted in the course.

F. Studying and Preparation Time:
The course requires you to spend time preparing and completing assignments. A three-credit course requires 135 hours of student work. Therefore expect to spend approximately 9 hours a week preparing for and actively participating in this course. (15 week course) Adjust this for 8 week term.

G. Late or Missed Assignments:
All assignments must be finished and turned in to complete the course. All assignments turned in after the due date will have points reduced for each day they are late, no exceptions. Pursuant to Doane policy, if you have not handed in seventy-five percent (75%) of your assignments by the end of the term, you will not be eligible to receive anIncomplete and you will receive an “F” in the course.

H. Rewrites:
Students may submit their assignments ahead of their due date for review by the instructor. The instructor will provide feedback on the assignment for consideration by the student. Said feedback may occur after the initial due date but students will be given time to resubmit assignments.

I. Submitting Assignments:
All assignments, unless otherwise announced by the instructor, MUST be submitted via Blackboard. Each assignment will have a designated place to submit the assignment.

J. Drop and Add dates:
If you feel it is necessary to withdraw from the course, please contact your advisor for full details on the types of withdrawals that are available and their procedures.

K. Subject to change notice:
All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

GRADING: Your grade will be based on a combination of your scores on your papers as well as satisfactory completion of exams. Exams and papers will each make up 50 percent of your grade. Extra credit will be given to students that submit articles to the Professor (scanned/emailed preferably) which discuss timely legal issues. No more than 10 percentage points of extra credit will be allowed.

ONLINE/DISTANCE LEARNING DISCUSSION: Welcome to the online/distance learning format for Ethics and the Paralegal Profession. You will note below there is an assignment and reading schedule outlining the requirements of this course. I did, however, want to elaborate further on the assignments, reading schedule and overview of the course outlined below with some guiding principles and thoughts from the instructor. First, this course will provide you with outstanding materials and a challenging curriculum that will allow you to gain knowledge, a strong vocabulary and an understanding of Ethics for the Paralegal. These outcomes are limited of course only by the amount of time and effort you are willing to put into this course. In the initial meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2016, at Doane College, Lincoln, it is my intention to discuss the papers that are due and the format that I will expect the papers to be in. We will also discuss my grading requirements and what is necessary to successfully complete this course.
1. **Exams:** Your examinations are taken directly from topics covered in your textbook. Each of the exams will be comprised of a mix of True/False, Multiple Choice, and Short Answer Essay. Your exams will be due no later than the dates outlined in the below Assignment and Reading Schedule. If you would like to turn the exams in prior to that date you are certainly welcome to do so. **ALL TESTS TURNED IN AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL HAVE 10 POINTS REDUCED FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

2. **Papers:** As previously commented on herein, your papers must discuss one or more of the videos and the Ethical rule(s) they cover. The papers are to be at least two pages, double spaced, one inch margins on all sides. Please include your name, the date submitted and the Ethical rule(s) covered. Again, I would like you to discuss the Ethical issue that was presented in the video(s), the fact pattern presented in the video(s), the Ethical rule and your thoughts on how best to handle the situation in the video(s). The papers are due on the date noted on the Assignment and Reading Schedule below but you can certainly turn them in prior to that date. **ALL PAPERS TURNED IN AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL HAVE 10 POINTS REDUCED FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:**

- Check your Doane College email regularly
- Log in to the course web site daily
- Communicate with your instructor
- Create a study schedule so that you don’t fall behind on assignments

**STUDENT CONDUCT STATEMENT:**

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the [Doane College Policy Manual](#).

Appropriate classroom behavior is defined by the instructor. This includes the number and length of individual messages online. Course discussion messages should remain focused on the assigned discussion topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board messages may be deleted if an instructor feels it is necessary. Students will be notified privately that their posting was inappropriate.
Student access to the course Send Email feature may be limited or removed if an instructor feels that students are sending inappropriate electronic messages to other students in the course.

**SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:**

The instructor views the course syllabus as an education contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus change necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes face-to-face, via email or in the course site Announcements. Please remember to check your Doane College email and the course site Announcements often.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONTACT INFORMATION:**

For technical assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please contact the Doane College Technology Office Help Desk:

- Phone: 402-826-8411
- Email: helpdesk@doane.edu
- Web: [http://www.doane.edu](http://www.doane.edu)

**ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT:**

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at Doane College facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Doane College staff coordinate transition from high schools and community colleges, in-service training for faculty and staff, resolution of accessibility issues, community outreach, and collaboration between all Doane College regarding disability policies, procedures, and accommodations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT AND READING SCHEDULE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Meeting at Doane College, Lincoln Campus, to discuss online course requirements and reading schedule. Exams and paper topics/requirements will be discussed. Regulation of the Legal Profession (Ch 1).</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Unauthorized Practice of Law (Ch 2). <strong>Paper on UPL due April 7, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Confidentiality (Ch 3). <strong>Paper on Confidentiality due April 7, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Conflict of Interest (Ch 4). <strong>Paper on Conflict of Interest due April 7, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Advertising and Solicitation (Ch 5); <strong>TEST (Ch 1-4) Exam due by this date, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Fair Fees and client Trust Accounts (Ch 6). <strong>Paper on appropriate fees due by April 28, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Competence/Negligence (Ch 7). <strong>Paper on Competent Representation due by April 28, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Diligent Representation and Duty of Integrity (Ch 8-9); <strong>FINAL EXAM Due by this date, no later than 5pm.</strong></td>
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Please note: The dates on the above left hand column are simply the dates I would suggest you work towards completing your assignments by. The actual due dates for the assignments are noted in bold under the above assignment column. Please govern yourself accordingly. Thank you.