

**MIAMI DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

COMPETENCY STATEMENT

PLA 2931: Seminar on Legal Ethics

Course Description:

This seminar introduces students to the types of ethical dilemmas that they will face in the workplace. The course meets for eight hours on two consecutive Saturdays. Students are required to attend both entire sessions. The course provides an examination of the ethical rules developed by the American Bar Association and those adopted by the state of Florida for the regulation of attorney and paralegal conduct. It also compares the ethical rules set forth by the National Association of Legal Assistants and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations. Students will learn how to research and respond to ethical dilemmas.

Credits: 1

Prerequisites and Co-requisites:

The student must have completed PLA 2003, Fundamentals of Law; PLA 2104, Legal Research; PLA2114, Legal Writing.

Course Competencies:

Competency 1: The student will understand the ethical rules developed by the American Bar Association for the regulation of attorney conduct.

The student will be able to:

Describe the ethical rules for attorneys and sanctions for violations of those rules for the following areas:

- A. The unauthorized practice of law
- B. Confidentiality
- C. Conflicts of Interest
- D. Advertising and Solicitation
- E. Fees and client funds
- F. Competence and Malpractice
- G. Diligence
- H. Communication

Competency 2: The student will understand the different provisions of the Florida Bar Code of Professional Conduct.

The student will be able to:

- A. Recognize potential conflicts and everyday ethical dilemmas faced by attorneys and paralegals in Florida.
- B. Utilize research skills in writing a case brief based upon a Florida case with regard to the unauthorized practice of law.
- C. Analyze a fact pattern, which includes an ethical violation, assess the facts, and identify the corresponding Florida Bar Rule for Professional Conduct.
- D. Write a memorandum of law assessing whether or not attorneys can bill for the time that a paralegal spent working on a case.

Competency 3: The student will understand the ethical code of conduct promulgated by the National Association for Legal Assistants and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations.

The student will be able to:

- A. Recognize the obligations imposed upon paralegals by the ethical codes of the national paralegal organizations NALA and NFPA.
- B. Discuss the major differences between the ethical codes of NALA and NFPA and the resulting responsibilities placed on paralegals.
- C. Evaluate ethical scenarios from the perspective of the involved persons such as the supervising attorney, adversary, paralegal and the client.