

**BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DIVISION OF BUSINESS, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES**

LGL-200 Business Communications for Paralegals

INSTRUCTOR:

Email:

OFFICE:

CREDITS: 3 Credits

PRE-REQUISITE: LGL-101, LGL-103

COURSE DESCRIPTION: LGL-200 Business Communications for Paralegals is a course in the communications skills of writing, speaking, and listening, with particular applications to Paralegals. Emphasis is placed on effective techniques to be used in interviews and meetings. Students learn how to prepare letters, memos, and reports. Oral presentations and writing by use of Word are included.

TEXTBOOK: Basic Legal Writing for Paralegals, Samborn & Yelin, Little Brown, 2010 (or most recent edition).

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS: Legal Memos, Legal Correspondence, Firm Newsletters and other forms of communication utilized in the legal workplace environment.

GENERAL PURPOSE:

- A. To provide the students with an awareness of the need to communicate effectively in his business and personal life in order to survive and grow.
- B. To arrive at an understanding of how instructions, decisions, and attitudes will be conveyed to business associates.
- C. To encourage students to be objective and analytical.
- D. To study effective methods for communication.
- E. To constantly apply the proper rules of grammar to all writing.

SPECIFIC AIMS:

- A. To demonstrate the involvement of mass media in office communications.
- B. To help students distinguish between the various techniques of face-to-face communications and the expansive demands of legal communication.
- C. To help students speak effectively, concisely and accurately.
- D. To develop the ability to speak in a correct and appealing manner completely conveying the intended message.
- E. To constantly apply the proper rules of grammar to all speech and writing.
- F. To provide a variety of situations in which a student will be required to communicate with individuals and groups of varying sizes.
- G. To stress composition techniques through business situations which require written messages.
- H. To present and apply good listening techniques.
- I. To develop an attitude of physical and mental preparation for effective listening.
- J. To help the student recognize situations where communications fail because of a breakdown in listening or speaking.
- K. To improve proficiency in critical self-evaluation of written material evaluated as acceptable standards of readability.

- L. To provide an awareness of the importance of blocking factors; and clarity of communications.
- M. To improve the proficiency of student’s use of language.
- N. To teach the basis understanding of the content, tone and mechanics of written correspondence.
- O. To teach effective letter writing.
- P. To understand the role of persuasion in communicating.

MEASURE: Students will take examinations and submit and present projects during intervals during the course. These projects will relate to practical legal communication and writing assignments pertaining to the paralegal including memos, legal correspondence and oral presentations.

STANDARD: At least 80% of all students will receive an average grade of “70” or better on examinations and/or projects. The submissions will be reviewed with students and concepts reinforced.

COURSE CONTENT:

WEEK PART I Foundations of Legal Writing

1 & 2 Ch. 1 & 2 – Reading as Background
(6 hours) **ASSIGNED HOMEWORK PROBLEMS #1 & 2**

3-5 PART II Writing Fundamentals

(9 hours) Ch. 3 – Pre-writing Process
Ch. 4 – Writing Fundamentals
ASSIGNED HOMEWORK PROBLEMS #3 & 4

6-7 PART III Writing Formats

(6 hours) Ch. 5 – Casebriefs
Ch. 6, 7, 8 – Legal Memos
ASSIGNED HOMEWORK PROBLEMS #5 & 6

8-9 PART IV Organizing Your Writing

(6 hours) Ch. 9 – IRAC
Ch. 10 – Synthesizing Authorities
Ch. 11 – Outlining
ASSIGNED HOMEWORK PROBLEMS #7 & 8

10-14 PART V In-Office Communications

(15 hours) Ch. 13 – Client Interviewing, File Memos, Deposition Summaries
Ch. 14 – Foundations of Letter Writing
ASSIGNED HOMEWORK PROBLEMS #9 & 10

15 PART VI Semester Summary – Review

(3 hours)

TEACHING TECHNIQUES: Lecture; Discussion; Role-Playing; Group Interaction

EVALUATION PROCEDURES: Project 1 (legal memo)..... 30%
Project II (persuasive writing)..... 30%
Project III (oral communications).....30%
Homework10%

Students are required to have all projects submitted by due date. Late submissions shall be penalized a full grade for each day the project is late. For any project or submission not submitted by the final project due date, student shall receive an F grade for that assignment.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all class sessions of courses in which they are enrolled and are responsible for all material presented in class and all homework assignments. Grades are based on the quality of work completed in meeting the requirements for a particular course as stated in the course syllabus and catalog description. Students should notify the professor in advance of all known absences and are responsible for the material covered in the missed class. Excessive absence (defined as more than two unexcused absences) will result in penalty and possible loss of credit for the course. All projects must be completed and handed in by the end of the semester. Any project not handed in by the due date of each respective project shall be penalized a quarter grade for each day the project is late. Any project not handed in by due date for final project shall be assessed and F grade for the respective project not handed in.

FACULTY ABSENCE PROCEDURES: IMPORTANT!

A daily listing will appear in the glass case located in the administrative wing of the main building which will indicate all classes which are cancelled. Another listing will appear in the glass case adjacent to the Hotel/Restaurant bulletin board in East Hall and the Bergen Community College website. A listing of cancelled classes may also be obtained through the Bergen Community College website. Students can consult these bulletin boards and website before going to class. If such a class does not appear on the day's cancellation notice, this information may be conveyed either to the Evening & Saturday Office (L-113) or the Division Office (A-306C).

SUBMISSION OF LATE PROJECTS SHALL BE ASSESSED A QUARTER GRADE PENALTY (i.e. B+ to a B) FOR EACH DATE THAT THE PROJECT IS LATE. ALL PROJECTS (INCLUDING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS) MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SEMESTER'S END FOR THE STUDENT TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE COURSE. IF ALL PROJECTS ARE NOT SUBMITTED BY THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE, STUDENT SHALL RECEIVE AN "F" GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION WILL BE REQUIRED FOR COURSE CREDIT AS ASSIGNED AND REQUIRED BY THE PROFESSOR.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: TO BE PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR IN BOOKLET AND HANDOUT FORM. EACH STUDENT SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING A COPY OF THESE MATERIALS AND THE COMPREHENSION OF THESE MATERIALS.

CELL PHONES and CLASS RECORDING: CELL PHONE USE IS NOT PERMITTED IN CLASS. CELL PHONES SHOULD BE OUT OF SIGHT AND EITHER TURNED OFF OR ON VIBRATE MODE. RECORDING OF CLASS LECTURE IS PROHIBITED.

LEGAL STUDIES NOTE: THIS COURSE IS CONSIDERED A LEGAL SPECIALTY COURSE. ALL LEGAL STUDIES STUDENTS MUST ATTAIN A "C" GRADE OR BETTER IN ALL LEGAL SPECIALTY COURSES AS A PREREQUISITE TO REGISTERING FOR REQUIRED COOP COURSE (LGL-462).

CLASS CONDUCT: STUDENTS ARE BOUND AND SUBJECT TO THE BCC CONDUCT RULES.