

**Ethics and Paralegals**  
**Spring 2009**  
**PARL 236**

**Syllabus**

**Time:** Tuesdays, 5:30 to 8:15 pm  
**Place:** SSB 223  
**Instructor:** Pamela R. Kelley, J.D.  
**Office Location:** LIB 213, Justice Center  
**Phone:** 786-1822  
**E-mail:** afprk@uaa.alaska.edu  
**Office Hours:** M/W, 4-5 pm; T/R, 1-2 pm.  
Other times by appointment

**Required Text:** Deborah K. Orlik, Ethics for the Legal Professional (2007).

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to develop the student's understanding of the ethical issues and professional responsibilities faced by working paralegals. Students will study the rules of professional conduct governing Alaska bar members, as well as ethics opinions promulgated by the Alaska Bar Association. Students will learn to apply the Model Rules of Professional Conduct by addressing practical problems designed to simulate common law office experiences.

**Course Objective:**

The goal of this course is to establish in you an acute awareness and understanding of the ethical issues that commonly arise in the legal profession, as well as to develop an analytical framework with which you can address and resolve ethical issues in conformity with the Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

**Course Requirements:**

**Attend class and participate** in discussions. There is no attendance component to your grade, however. I simply expect it of you as a measure of the professionalism you bring to your studies in the program.

**Monitor the course Blackboard site** weekly at a minimum. Announcements will be posted here altering the material for which you're responsible at the next class meeting. Every day it seems I see examples of cases, articles and ethics opinions relevant to an aspiring paralegal. I add these to our course material as I keep current in the field. You should read them with the goal of keeping current too.

**Read the required text and additional materials assigned.** You are expected to read the assigned text in advance of the class for which they are assigned.

**Complete all assignments by the deadlines noted** in the schedule or on BB. Deadlines are critical in our business, and unless you've made arrangements with the instructor a late

assignment will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. You're required to make a request an extension of time (just like Rule 77) within the assignment deadline to have a longer period to do the assignment.

**Complete all of the tests.** Because we've got so few sessions to cover such important material, Blackboard will be utilized as much as possible for assessment. This requires a measure of trust on my part -- that you will take the tests individually and that you will do so without your Rules open if those are the instructions. This is, after all, a course in ethics.

### **Course Grades:**

You will be evaluated based upon assignments, the periodic quizzes and a final examination. There are no opportunities for extra credit in this course. The following grading scale will apply:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Grade</b>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

The testing in this course is worth 90% of your final grade. An assignment on fees is worth 10%.

### **Schedule of Topics & Readings:**

**Please complete the readings prior to class!**

January 13, 2009	Introduction <b>Thinking Critically About Legal Ethics</b> Film: <i>And Justice for All</i> (1979). Discussion: Ethical duties in litigation
January 20, 2009	Assigned Reading: Text, Chapters 1 - 2, 6 Topic: <b>Regulation of the Paralegal Profession</b> Topic: <b>Unauthorized Practice of Law</b> Topic: <b>Fair Fees and Client Trust Accounts</b> Discussion: UPL, Supervision and Professionalism Exercise: Ethical Billing Practices See Blackboard for due date on Exercise summary.
January 27, 2009	Assigned Reading: Chapters 3 - 4 Topic: <b>Confidentiality</b> Topic: <b>Conflicts of Interest</b> Discussion: The Duty of Loyalty

February 3, 2009

Assigned Reading: Chapter 7 - 9

Topic: **Competence and Negligence**

Topic: **The Umbrella Duty of Integrity**

Discussion: Continuing education, workload, liability, Reporting misconduct, substance abuse.

### **Blackboard Utilization**

In this course, we'll be using Blackboard for all assignments, quizzes and perhaps even submission of the final exam. UAA recently completed a substantial upgrade that makes Blackboard easier to use in support of this course, particularly because of our limited schedule. As a result, all quizzes (one each week) will be conducted via Blackboard. If you have an unreliable internet connection, I strongly recommend that you use one of the computer labs on campus when taking a quiz. Better yet, come to the Justice Center at LIB 213 -- check out our new location and use our computer lab. Furthermore, if you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with computer usage, I recommend that you take one of the Blackboard courses from eMedia Services to gain confidence and skill. This is your responsibility.

All written assignments must be submitted by you through Blackboard's Assignments feature. This guarantees that I receive your assignment in typed form, and that there is no question that you've gotten your assignment in on time. It also prevents your assignment from being mislaid.

### **Blackboard Confusion**

I'm happy to assist you in learning how more about how BB applies in this course, but there is a specialized unit on campus – professionals to help you with just exactly that. As you would expect, they've made all kinds of on line tutorials available to you. In addition, at the start of each semester they usually host trainings of value – taught by real human beings with humor and sensitivity. I recommend you attend one the first week if you fall in this category.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is a basic principle that requires that you take credit only for ideas and efforts that are your own. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are defined as the submission of materials in assignments, exams, or other academic work which is based on sources prohibited by the faculty member.

In this course, your writing assignments are individual efforts. Quizzes are individual efforts. The final exam is an individual effort. This is a course about ethics in the profession; a demonstrated ethical lapse in the area of academic honesty will result in disciplinary action. Cheating on assignments, quizzes or exams will result in a grade of zero for that item.

### **Campus Safety**

We care about your safety on campus. While relatively safe, our campus is NOT a sanctuary from crime, and accidents occur no matter how hard we try to prevent them. You are encouraged to be responsible for your own safety, and to bring safety concerns to the attention of UAA faculty or staff, or to contact Campus Police at 876-1120 when you observe an unsafe

environment. For your own safety, please also take the time to locate the nearest exit and emergency telephone when you are in campus buildings.

### **Reservation of Rights**

The syllabus in Professor Kelley's courses is akin to her contract with you as to what the course will hold. From time to time, it becomes apparent that the schedule of assignments or topics will move too quickly or slowly depending upon an individual class composition. Therefore, Professor Kelley reserves the right to change the terms set forth in this syllabus at any time. Such changes will be posted on Blackboard at the first available opportunity to provide you with adequate notice. Suggestions for changes from students are welcome, and will be considered. Decisions regarding implementation of such changes, however, rest with Professor Kelley.