



Legal Studies Program
Department of Political Science

Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies
Paralegal Studies Certificate Program
Mediation Certificate Program

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I. Introduction

A. Mission Statement:

The Legal Studies Program supports the mission of the University and the College of Liberal Arts to foster the intellectual, professional, and ethical development of students while developing the competencies necessary for an effective career as a legal professional. The program combines practical applications of law with underlying theory as a means of preparing graduates for lifelong intellectual and professional development that contributes to the legal community and the advancement of justice.

B. Program Goals and Objectives:

Upon completion of the program, graduates should be able to:

1. Enter the workforce as a paralegal.
2. Possess the skills necessary to perform adequately as an entry-level paralegal, including:
 - a) legal research,
 - b) legal writing,
 - c) critical thinking,
 - d) interviewing and investigation,
 - e) technological,
 - f) organizational,
 - g) communication, and
 - h) Interpersonal skills.
3. Perform ethically and professionally in the legal working environment.

C. Available Programs

The Department of Political Science at Texas State University—San Marcos offers the following legal studies programs:

- Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies (M.A.)
- Paralegal Studies Certificate Program (PSCP)
- Mediation Certificate Program

The **Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies** is a non-thesis, 36 semester credit hour program, consisting of a core of 21 required hours, including a cumulative research project and an internship, and fifteen hours of electives. Students may choose a specialization in one of three areas: legal

administration, alternative dispute resolution, or environmental law. However, specializations will not appear on the student's diploma or transcript.

The **Paralegal Studies Certificate Program** is a post-graduate certificate program that requires 24 semester credit hours, including an internship. This program offers entry-level preparation for the paralegal field.

The **Mediation Certificate Program** is designed to provide entry-level skills for mediators. This program is especially suited for people who would like to mediate employment, landlord-tenant, neighborhood, and other interpersonal disputes.

Both the M.A. and Paralegal Studies programs have been approved by the American Bar Association, and all three programs offer graduate instruction. None of these programs qualifies persons to practice law.

The specifics of each program follows.

II. The Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies

A. General Information

The Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies will allow students to increase their level of competency in selected areas while giving them an in-depth understanding of both underlying theory and practical applications of law. The program emphasizes analytical and conceptual thinking, legal research and writing, the evolution of various legal theories, substantive areas of law, and the role of law in society. It also allows students to take courses in a variety of departments throughout the University so that students may develop a solid knowledge base in selected specializations such as alternative dispute resolution, legal administration, and environmental law.

B. Objective of Major in Legal Studies

This degree will allow students to obtain a more thorough understanding of the history and nuances of various areas of law, as well as practical application in each area. Students may take electives that specifically focus on substantive areas of the law, thus increasing the breadth and depth of their legal specialty education. In addition, students will have the ability, with the approval of the Director, to select up to six hours of electives outside of the program in order to meet any specific career goals they may have. For example, a student may want to concentrate on computer science, foreign languages, international studies, or the health professions. Each of these areas has applications in various legal career fields.

C. Objectives of Specializations

Legal Administration

The objective of the Legal Administration specialization is to prepare students to create, administer, and manage processes and personnel in a variety of legal environments, including administration of private law firms, corporate legal departments, and legal divisions within federal, state, county, and municipal agencies and entities. In addition to the core courses, this specialization will require a series of elective courses that will allow the student to choose between private and public sector focused administration and to integrate law and management in several areas. These areas include financial planning and analysis, personnel issues and decisions, law library management, marketing strategy, equipment and supply inventory and control, and new technology, including hardware and software.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The objective of the Alternative Dispute Resolution specialization is to prepare students to participate in various forms of alternative dispute resolution including arbitration, mediation, and grievance resolution within private and public entities, as well as the accompanying administrative and legislative processes. In addition to the core courses and an elective course in Alternative Dispute Resolution, this specialization will require students to take elective courses in Psychology and Communications. These electives will focus on group processes and interpersonal dynamics, communication skills, and conflict management and negotiation.

Environmental Law

The objective of the Environmental Law specialization is to allow students to gain necessary background information to understand, utilize, create, interpret, and apply environmental regulations and requirements. This knowledge will enable students to participate in administrative agency hearings, legislative drafting and debate, as well as assist attorneys in preparing clients for the impact of environmental laws. In addition to the core courses, this specialization will require students to take elective courses in the areas of biology and geography, so as to gain a more in-depth perspective of the purposes and requirements of environmental regulations.

D. Curriculum

The Master of Arts with a Major in Legal Studies requires a total of 36 semester credit hours, including a cumulative research project, an oral comprehensive examination, and an internship. The 21 hours of required courses are as follows:

- [POSI 5387 Legal Research](#)
- [POSI 5386 Legal Theories](#)
- [POSI 5394 Litigation](#)
- [POSI 5379 Legal Drafting](#)
- [POSI 5381 Advanced Legal Research](#)
- [POSI 5383 Advanced Litigation](#)
- [POSI 5389 Internship](#)

Students may select any 15 hours out of the following elective courses:

- [POSI 5390 Administrative Law](#)
- [POSI 5391 Family Law](#)
- [POSI 5392 Business Organizations](#)
- [POSI 5393 Estates and Trusts](#)
- [POSI 5395 Real Estate](#)
- [POSI 5376 Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)
- [POSI 5396 Law Office Management](#)
- [POSI 5377 Criminal Law](#)

- [POSI 5378 Social Legislation](#)
- [POSI 5374 Intellectual Property](#)
- [POSI 5373 Issues and Problems in Law](#)

The elective course requirements for the individual specializations are as follows:

Legal Administration Specialization (will not appear on diploma or transcript)

Prescribed electives:

- [POSI 5396 Law Office Management](#)
- [POSI 5392 Business Organizations](#)

along with 9 hours of electives selected out of the following courses:

1. Private Sector Administration:

- ACC 5361 Financial and Managerial Reporting & Analysis
Prerequisite: ACC5303
- MKT 5321 Marketing Management
Prerequisite: MKT 5303
- MGT 5314 Organizational Behavior and Theory
Prerequisite: MGT 5304

OR

2. Public Sector Administration:

- POSI 5317 Management Practices in Public Personnel Administration
- POSI 5347 Public Finance Information Systems
- POSI 5314 Organization Theory

Environmental Law Specialization (will not appear on diploma or transcript)

Prescribed Electives:

- [POSI 5395 Real Estate Law](#)
- [POSI 5390 Administrative Law](#)
- POSI 7330 Environmental Policy, Politics and Law
- POSI 5333 Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity
- GEO 5314 Geographic Elements of Environmental Law
- BIO 5362 Environmental Impact Analysis

Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialization (will not appear on diploma or transcript)

Prescribed Electives:

- [POSI 5376 Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)
- [POSI 5390 Administrative Law](#)
- [POSI 5391 Family Law](#)
- PSY 5317 Group Processes and Interpersonal Dynamics
(or COMM 5318 Seminar on Interpersonal Communication)
- COMM5347 Seminar in Small Group Communication

E. Admission

Regular Admission

Students will normally be granted regular admission status under the following standards:

1. A grade-point average of 2.75 or above (on a 4.0 scale) calculated on:
 - the last 60 hours of undergraduate work before receipt of the baccalaureate degree,
 - the last 60 hours of undergraduate work before receipt of the baccalaureate degree plus any graduate course work taken at an accredited college or university,
2. A Graduate Record Examination (GRE) preferred test score of 300 (verbal and quantitative) on file and a preferred score of 4 on the Analytical Writing section of the GRE in the Office of the Graduate College. If you took the GRE within the last five years and prior to the new examination, the following preferred scores will be considered – a preferred score of 900 (verbal & quantitative combined) and 4 on the analytical. GRE scores must be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, to our Graduate College. The college code for Texas State is 006667. The Educational Testing Service can be contacted at www.ets.org/gre. Texas State students are only required to take the General Test.

3. All applicants must complete an interview with the Director of Legal Studies. Students who otherwise qualify for Regular Admission and have successfully completed the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) with a score of 140 or higher, or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) with a score of 450 or higher, may petition the Director of Legal Studies to accept these test scores as a substitute for the GRE score. The Director of Legal Studies and the Dean of the Graduate College will make the determination of an acceptable test score.

Conditional Admission

Students with complete admission documents (transcripts, application, and test scores) who do not meet the above minimum requirements but who have at least a 2.5 minimum grade-point average (as calculated above) may apply for conditional admission.

The Conditional Admissions Review Committee (CAR) in the Department of Political Science reviews conditional admission requests. The request should include a personal statement explaining any special circumstances which would otherwise qualify the student for admission to the program and letters of recommendation from persons who could comment upon the applicant's ability to perform in their requested area of study. CAR will recommend the stipulations and requirements for conditional admission.

Procedure for Admission

The following requirements must be completed by the admission deadline specified in the Graduate Catalog:

- Applicants should apply on line through the Apply Texas Application, found at https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX and allow 2 working days for the application to be received by Texas State.
- The required non-refundable fee (\$40.00 application fee for the Masters, \$10 application fee for the Paralegal Certificate) can be submitted with credit/debit card information during the application process. If preferred, applicants may submit the non-refundable fee by check or money order in U.S. currency made payable to Texas State. The mailing address is:
The Graduate College
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Please note: Students who change their admission status must pay the fee associated with the new application. Degree-seeking students changing

majors and/or seeking multiple degrees are required to complete a new application and pay the associated fee.

An additional international evaluation fee of \$50.00 (U.S. currency) is required if the application is considered for admission based on foreign credentials.

- Applicants that are Texas State University –San Marcos degree recipients or are currently enrolled at Texas State only need to request transcripts from any colleges NOT listed on the Texas State transcript. The Graduate College will provide the Texas State transcripts.
- Applicants who are not a Texas State University-San Marcos degree recipient or are not currently enrolled at Texas State, need to provide one official transcript from each college or university attended. These transcripts must be mailed directly from the university or college attended or submitted in a sealed university envelope with the university's registrar's signature on the back of the envelope.
- All applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university. A minimum of a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 undergraduate semester hours of letter-grade work earned before receipt of their Bachelor's (plus any previously completed graduate or professional work) is required.

III. The Paralegal Studies Certificate Program

A. Paralegal: A Professional Career Option

A "paralegal" is a professional who is trained to handle certain law-related responsibilities as an integral member of a legal staff. A paralegal is not admitted to the practice of law in Texas but has, through education, training, and experience, demonstrated knowledge of the legal system, legal principles and procedures and uses such knowledge in rendering paralegal assistance to an attorney in the representation of that attorney's clients. The functions of a paralegal are limited only to the extent that they are limited by law. The properly trained paralegal may, under the supervision of a lawyer, perform a variety of functions, which include researching legal issues, drafting documents, managing complex files, developing legal practice systems, interviewing witnesses, conducting fact investigations, summarizing depositions, and assisting the attorney in and out of the courtroom.

The "paralegal" concept has been endorsed by the legal community as a result of recommendations made by the American Bar Association's Special Committee on Availability of Legal Services. The Committee's recommendation is, in part, "that the legal profession recognizes that there are many tasks in serving a client's needs

which can be performed by a trained non-lawyer” and “that the profession encourages the training and employment of such assistants.”

The State Bar of Texas recognizes paralegals as specialists in specific areas of law through an examination administered by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. The State Bar of Texas also sponsors continuing education seminars for paralegals, has appointed a standing Committee on Paralegals, and has set up a special Paralegals Division of the State Bar. The support of the State Bar continues to benefit both the Bar membership and the paralegal profession.

As a result of the increasing recognition and professional training of paralegals, private law firms, public interest law firms, administrative agencies, business organizations, insurance companies, and banks are utilizing the skills of professional paralegals to aid them in delivering competent legal services to their clients. The utilization of a competent paralegal results in improving and expediting legal services. It also allows legal services to be offered to the public at a reduced rate, thus making them more readily available.

A paralegal, as opposed to a member of the clerical staff, is not merely a necessary overhead expense for the firm or business. A paralegal, effectively utilized, is an income-producing asset to the employer. The paralegal profession is a promising field for an individual interested in pursuing a career in the legal working environment. It can offer variety, excitement, stimulation, security, challenge, and flexibility for a properly trained, professional paralegal.

B. Paralegal Studies Certificate Program: Summary

Types of Training Programs Available

There are over 500 paralegal programs in the United States. Each program is designed to meet the needs of various geographic areas and students. Some programs are designed for the high school graduate entering a junior college for a two-year degree.

Other programs offer a four-year degree with a major or concentration in paralegal studies. Still others are located within continuing education divisions. The program at Texas State is a graduate study program in which a student, after receiving a bachelor's degree, enters a concentrated post-graduate course of study and earns a professional certificate.

Paralegal Programs can be distinguished as either a “proprietary” school, which is a business and not connected with an educational institution or funded by tax revenue, or an educational program connected with a college or university whose curriculum, faculty, and goals are regulated by the state.

Texas State University – Paralegal Studies Program

Our program is unique because we have one of the few professional certificate programs offered by a university at the graduate level. Our program is offered through the Department of Political Science and the Graduate College. We must comply with strict requirements regarding our curriculum, our faculty, and the type of student entering our program. The program consists of 24 graduate level hours and may be completed in two or more semesters.

As a result of the inherent structure of our program, we offer one of the best professional paralegal programs in the state of Texas and in the United States. Our program is superior for at least three reasons:

1. The type of student entering the program (see admission requirements).
2. The balanced curriculum offered.
3. The faculty teaching in the program. (Each of our faculty instructors has had experience as a practicing attorney, and all have experience working with paralegals.

Also, our program has been approved by the [American Bar Association](#) (ABA) and is an institutional member of the ***American Association for Paralegal Education*** (AAfPE).

Objectives of the Paralegal Studies Program

- Each student will acquire fundamental knowledge and practical skills in legal theory, legal research, litigation, and in substantive areas of law.
- Each student, in every course, will acquire a working knowledge of relevant legal theory and practical skills necessary to perform professional paralegal functions in that area of law, including computer research skills.
- Each student will be encouraged to develop a professional attitude about the responsibilities of a paralegal in the legal working environment and, at the same time, recognize the worth of all other professional and staff members of the work team.
- Each student will be instructed concerning the ethical use of paralegal training and skills in the legal working environment.
- Each student, in the course of classroom study, will develop practical skills that will allow them, upon receiving a certificate and proper utilization, to become an income-producing asset to an employer.
- Placement assistance will be available to assist each student in locating and securing a satisfying position in the legal working environment.

Underlying each of the aforementioned objectives is the dedication of the University, the Graduate College, the Department of Political Science, and the Legal Studies faculty to the effective utilization of competent paralegals. This dedication helps to ensure the availability of legal services to the public, to fulfill the needs of the citizens of Texas, and to develop and maintain a high quality educational program for the students at Texas State University—San Marcos.

C. Admission

Requirements

There are three requirements for admission into the Texas State post-graduate certificate program:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited university.
2. A 2.75 grade point average in the last sixty hours of course work.
3. A personal interview with the director.

Procedure for Admission

The following requirements must be completed by the admission deadline specified in the Graduate Catalog:

- Applicants should apply on line through the Apply Texas Application, found at https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX and allow 2 working days for the application to be received by Texas State.
- The required non-refundable fee (\$40.00 application fee for the Masters, \$10 application fee for the Paralegal Certificate) can be submitted with credit/debit card information during the application process. If preferred, applicants may submit the non-refundable fee by check or money order in U.S. currency made payable to Texas State. The mailing address is:
The Graduate College
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Please note: Students who change their admission status must pay the fee associated with the new application. Degree-seeking students changing majors and/or seeking multiple degrees are required to complete a new application and pay the associated fee.

An additional international evaluation fee of \$50.00 (U.S. currency) is required if the application is considered for admission based on foreign credentials.

- Applicants that are Texas State University –San Marcos degree recipients or are currently enrolled at Texas State only need to request transcripts from any colleges NOT listed on the Texas State transcript. The Graduate College will provide the Texas State transcripts.
- Applicants who are not a Texas State University-San Marcos degree recipient or are not currently enrolled at Texas State, need to provide one official transcript from each college or university attended. These transcripts must be mailed directly from the university or college attended or submitted in a sealed university envelope with the university's registrar's signature on the back of the envelope.
- All applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university. A minimum of a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 undergraduate semester hours of letter-grade work earned before receipt of their Bachelor's (plus any previously completed graduate or professional work) is required.

Post-Graduate Certificate Requirements

To earn a certificate of completion of the program, the student must complete the 24 semester credit hour curriculum in the Paralegal Studies Certificate Program with a 3.0 overall grade point average. In addition, students must make at least a "B" in each of the five required courses.

Paralegal Studies Certificate Program Courses–Application to Graduate Degrees

After a student is granted regular degree-seeking admission, the Graduate College allows students to petition for degree credit for up to six (6) hours of post-graduate coursework with a grade of "B" or better. Therefore, all new students who enroll in the Paralegal Studies certificate program **will not be able to transfer more than six hours of coursework toward the M.A. degree**. If a student wishes to obtain an M.A. with a Major in Legal Studies, then that student should enroll in the M.A. program prior to or in their first semester of study.

Curriculum

A student must complete 24 semester credit hours in the Paralegal Studies Certificate Program curriculum, including 15 hours of required courses and 9 hours of elective courses.

The required courses include:

- [POSI 5387 Legal Research](#)
- [POSI 5386 Legal Theories and Analysis](#)
- [POSI 5394 Litigation](#)

- [POSI 5379 Legal Drafting](#)
- [POSI 5389 Internship*](#)

*A student with prior law office experience, may, with permission from the director, participate in a special emphasis practicum 5388 in lieu of an internship.

The student may select any 9 hours out of the following elective courses:

- [POSI 5390 Administrative Law](#)
- [POSI 5376 Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)
- [POSI 5392 Business Organizations](#)
- [POSI 5377 Criminal Law](#)
- [POSI 5391 Family Law](#)
- [POSI 5396 Law Office Management](#)
- [POSI 5395 Real Estate](#)
- [POSI 5378 Social Legislation](#)
- [POSI 5393 Estates & Trusts](#)
- [POSI 5374 Intellectual Property](#)

IV. The Mediation Certificate Program

The Mediation Certificate Program is offered at the graduate level and is designed to provide entry-level skills for mediators. The program is especially suited for people who would like to mediate employment, landlord-tenant, neighborhood, and other interpersonal disputes.

The centerpiece of the program is the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) course offered by the Legal Studies Programs of the Department of Political Science. Students learn a “conference” mediation model that emphasizes direct communication and negotiation between parties to a dispute. Because the course is offered by the Legal Studies Program, students also become familiar with the “caucus” mediation model commonly used in litigated cases.

The ADR course combines lectures with practical assignments and role play. Students not only learn negotiation and mediation theory, they also acquire the practical skills necessary to mediate interpersonal disputes. Assignments and role play focus on communication and negotiation skills, active listening, appropriate questioning, generation and evaluation of options, reality testing, and agreement making.

To earn the mediation certificate, students must enroll in the Alternative Dispute Resolution course (POSI 5376), attend at least forty hours of class, and complete all course requirements with a grade of “B” or higher.

V. Course Descriptions

A. Required Courses

POSI 5387 Legal Research/Computer Research Law–Westlaw Campus

Objective:

The student will be familiar with the American legal system, including the courts and the legislatures; primary and secondary sources of the law, including finding tools; judicial reports, including federal and state court reports and citation forms; case finding aids, including federal, state and supreme court digests and encyclopedias; citators such as Shepard's Citations and KeyCite; digests; annotated law reports; legal periodicals, including periodical indexes and research procedure; the nature, function and characteristics of treatises; research procedures; state and federal administrative law; federal, state and local court rules; miscellaneous research aids and non-legal research aids.

POSI 5386 Legal Theory and Analysis

Objective:

To familiarize the student with basic theory including tort law, contract law and evidence law. This course will also assist the student in gaining critical thinking and legal reasoning and analysis skills.

POSI 5394 Litigation

Objective:

The student will be able to assist the lawyer to prepare case profiles based on information in files, read attorney briefs to check accuracy and citations, organize and index documents obtained through discovery, interview witnesses, trace physical evidence, examine public records, make a preliminary draft of deposition questions, arrange for clients to be interviewed and witnesses to appear in court, digest transcripts of depositions and trial testimony, index documents and exhibits for trial, do legal research and prepare briefs, memos and bibliographies of source materials.

POSI 5379 Legal Drafting

Objective:

This course will familiarize the student with legal drafting styles, forms, and techniques, including legal document drafting, objective information document

drafting, and persuasive drafting of trial and appellate briefs. *Prerequisite:* [POSI 5387 Legal Research](#).

POSI 5381 Advanced Legal Research and Writing
(Required only in M.A. Degree)

Objective:

There are four related components to this course: (1) Refinement of skills in computer-assisted and manual legal research; (2) Legal analysis, legal writing, and organizing complex legal documents; (3) Techniques of persuasive argument; (4) Applied research project, persuasive brief and oral examination of coursework. *Prerequisites:* [POSI 5387 Legal Research](#) and [POSI 5379 Legal Drafting](#).

POSI 5383 Advanced Litigation
(Required only in M.A. Degree)

Objective:

This course investigates the use of the American legal system to resolve disputes between individuals and entities. Emphasis will be on trial advocacy planning, analysis, preparation, and strategy. Students will develop skills necessary to understand and to participate as an advocate in the trial process. *Prerequisites:* [POSI 5387 Legal Research](#) and [POSI 5394 Litigation](#).

POSI 5389 Law Office Internship

Objective:

This course allows the student to gain experience as a paralegal in a legal working environment.

Course Approach:

This course includes lecture and seminar discussion on procedures, interpersonal dynamics, ethics, time management, and potential problems in the working environment. The experiential component of the internship consists of 90-135 hours in a legal working environment doing paralegal tasks. The student may also be required to complete a special project that is individually designed to assist students in reaching their individual career goals. With permission from the director, a student may, in lieu of the special project, complete an additional 45 hours in the workplace.

NOTE OF CAUTION: This course is required unless the student has prior law-related experience and has, with permission of the director, elected to take a practicum in lieu of an internship.

B. Elective Courses

POSI 5390 Administrative Law

Objective:

To expose the student to administrative law theory and the practical aspects of administrative law practice, both within and outside the administrative agency. To equip the student to understand, apply, and research relevant statutory and regulatory provisions at the federal and state level; to draft proposed rules and regulations; to assist in preparation for administrative law hearings; to make preliminary drafts of documents, briefs, opinions; to assist at the appellate stage of an administrative law proceeding.

POSI 5376 Alternative Dispute Resolution

Objective:

The primary focus of this course will be mediation, one of the most popular forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution. The course will meet all of the curriculum requirements promulgated by the Texas Mediation Trainer roundtable. This course will also provide an in depth study of procedural and substantive legal principles of alternative dispute resolution with an integration of ethical and policy issues.

POSI 5392 Business Organizations

Objective:

The student will be familiar with the various business entities and will be able to prepare initial and amended articles of incorporation, satisfy state filing requirements, prepare drafts of stock certificates and securities, maintain stock ledgers and books, draft resolutions authorizing cash and stock dividends and stock splits, draft employment agreements, draft qualified stock option plans and agreements, draft buy-sell agreements, prepare registration materials for regulatory agencies, closing binders, make preliminary draft of partnership and limited partnership agreements.

POSI 5377 Criminal Law and Procedure

Objective:

To familiarize the student with state and federal statutory and case law relating to the criminal justice system. The course will include a study of criminal litigation process and procedure with emphasis on the development of practical, paralegal skills.

POSI 5391 Family Law

Objective:

To expose the student to common law developments in the domestic relations area and the codification of family law in the Texas Family Code. To equip the student to conduct initial client fact gathering interviews, to make preliminary drafts of legal documents, including divorce petition, adoption petition, and separation agreement. The student will also become familiar with the community property system, marriage, dissolution of marriage, parent-child duties/responsibilities, termination of parent-child relationship, paternity, adoption, legitimization proceedings, juvenile delinquency, legal documents and procedures required in different types of litigation in the family law area.

POSI 5396 Law Office Management

Objective:

To familiarize the student with management concepts of various law firm structures and the systems utilized in law office management. The student will be exposed to time keeping procedures, filing systems, filing procedures, ethics, library maintenance, computer services and retrieval systems.

POSI 5395 Real Estate

Objective:

The student will be able to assist the lawyer to obtain and record basic information from the client on real estate transactions; draft preliminary purchase and sale agreement; conduct a title search in the records office; arrange for the purchase of title insurance; review title and prepare curative documents; prepare all required documentation in a typical transaction; arrange closing date; allocate property taxes for closing, prepare closing statement, attend closing and record all documents.

POSI 5378 Social Legislation

Objective:

To familiarize the student with laws at the state and federal level which are designed to remedy various social problems, includes worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, bankruptcy, and commercial transactions.

POSI 5393 Estates and Trusts

Objective:

The student will be able to assist the lawyer in the preparation of documents relating to administration of estates, in the collection of assets; maintenance of records; notification of beneficiaries; preparation of draft wills and trusts for review; completion of federal and state tax returns; application of income and principal rules to estates; drafting of court forms from account records; preparation of periodic statements for estates, trusts, and individuals; transfer of securities into names of people entitled to them; drawing checks for signatures of executors; and following through on collection and delivery.

POSI 5374 Intellectual Property

Objective:

Intellectual property has attained enormous importance in post-industrial economies and is important not only for its role in commercial life and legal practice, but also for its effects on technical innovation, democratic debate, cultural formation and international politics. This course will examine those effects as well as analyze the (1) basic options for preventing others from copying work products (2) the use of trademark and related laws to prevent others from making source and other commercially harmful misrepresentations and (3) limitation to those rights. Because IP is both shield and sword, people need to also know when and what they have a right to copy.

POSI 5373 Issues and Problems in Law

Objective:

Emphasis will be placed on examining current legal issues and problems through legal analysis and conceptual aspects of legal research and writing. Students will have the opportunity to perform literature reviews on current topics and develop research questions. Prerequisite: A grade of "B" or better in POSI 5387.

VI. Projected Course Rotation Schedule

The following table provides a projected summary of the anticipated course offerings each semester. It is offered to provide general guidance in your overall course schedule planning but does not serve as a binding course rotation schedule. It is subject to change as necessary to meet the overall curricular needs of the students.

POSI 5387 Legal Research	Fall (D)	Spring (N)	Summer (N)
POSI 5386 Legal Theories	Fall (N)	Spring (D)	
POSI 5394 Litigation	Fall (D)	Spring (D)	Summer (N)
POSI 5379 Legal Drafting	Fall (N)	Spring (D)	
POSI 5381 Advanced Legal Research	Fall (N)	Spring (D)	
POSI 5383 Advanced Litigation		Spring (N)	Summer (N)
POSI 5389 Internship	Fall (D)	Spring (D)	Summer (D)
POSI 5390 Administrative Law	Fall		
POSI 5391 Family Law		Spring	
POSI 5392 Business Organizations		Spring	
POSI 5393 Estates and Trusts		Spring	
POSI 5395 Real Estate		Spring	
POSI 5376 Alternative Dispute Resolution	Fall	Spring	
POSI 5396 Law Office Management			Summer
POSI 5377 Criminal Law	Fall		
POSI 5378 Social Legislation	Fall		
POSI 5374 Intellectual Property	Fall		
POSI 5373 Issues & Problems in Law			Summer

(N) – denotes Night Classes

(D) – denotes Day Classes

VII. Computer Components

Students will be required as a part of the program to become familiar with computerized research techniques. A computer research lab has been created which offers the Westlaw Campus database. In addition, the computer lab offers word processing and various types of law-practice-related software.

VIII. Responses to Common Questions

How much will it cost to complete the program?

For the most current tuition and fee estimates see the following Texas State web site: <http://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/sa/index.htm>

Do you offer courses at night?

*We currently offer courses during two different time periods:
(1) 2:00-4:45 p.m. and (2) 6:30-9:15 p.m. Many of our students work during the day and complete the program by taking night classes.*

How do I register for courses?

The Texas State University—San Marcos Registrar's Office directs the registration process for the entire university. A student in either program may register for fall, spring and summer semesters through internet registration. Once you have been accepted into the program, you will be sent registration materials including semester schedules and instructions on how to successfully complete registration.

When I complete either program, will I be a "Certified Legal Assistant (C.L.A.)?"

No! The National Association of Legal Assistants (N.A.L.A.) has copyrighted the title C.L.A (Certified Legal Assistant). It simply means you have paid for and passed a test created and graded by the N.A.L.A. The exam contains questions relating to clerical skills (answering the telephone, filing, etc.) as well as questions relating to substantive areas of law. Depending on the program in which you are enrolled, you will receive a certificate and/or degree from the university upon graduation. A certificate means that you are certificated, NOT "certified." Many employers are not aware of this distinction. When they advertise for a "certified" legal assistant, the desired qualification is usually a certificate of completion of a paralegal training or educational program.

Do you teach practical skills that will prepare me for a specific job?

Yes. In each of our courses you will receive information concerning very basic legal theory. You will have enough legal theory to understand the area of law, do research in that area of law, and understand terminology in that area of law. However, the emphasis in all of our courses is to assist you in the development of the practical skills you will utilize in a legal environment.

Are there employment opportunities for graduates in the program?

*Yes. Our annual surveys indicate a variety of employment opportunities for our graduates. We will be glad to share this information, salary ranges, and our placement statistics with you at your convenience. Also, we offer resume and interview workshops, newsletters, and instant email "job alerts" to assist you in your employment search. However, we do **not** guarantee you a job. It still takes hard work and an active job search.*

Is a paralegal really a glorified legal secretary?

No! A professional paralegal who has received graduate-level training should be employed as an income producing employee of the firm.

The purpose of the Texas State Legal Studies Program is to train an individual to do solely paralegal tasks as a paraprofessional employee of the law firm, legal aid society, bank, insurance company, corporation or administrative agency at the state or federal level.

IX. Graduate Faculty

All regular faculty members have a law degree and have practiced law. The following individuals are members of the regular Legal Studies Programs faculty and are either tenured or tenure-track at Texas State University—San Marcos.

Vicki S. Brittain, J.D.

*Chair, Department of Political Science
Professor of Political Science
B.A. Southwestern College
J.D., Washburn University*

Walter A. Wright, J.D., LL.M.

*Associate Professor of Political Science
B.A., J.D., University of Houston
LL.M., New York University*

Lynn Crossett, J.D.

*Director, Legal Studies Programs
Associate Professor of Political Science
B.B.A., University of Texas at Austin
J.D., Texas Tech University*

Michelle Evans, J.D.

*Assistant Professor of Political Science
B.S., The University of Texas,
San Antonio
J.D. St. Mary's University School of Law*

Christopher Brown, J.D.

*Assistant Professor of Political Science
B.A. Northwestern University; M.P.A.,
J.D. University of Texas at Austin*

In addition, the Legal Studies Programs utilize local members of the legal profession, including practicing attorneys and judges, as adjunct faculty to meet specific needs.

X. Placement Following Receipt of Certificate

Although we do not guarantee job placement for our graduates, we do provide placement assistance. The following assistance is available:

- Announcements through email “job alerts”.
- On-campus interviews upon request from prospective employers.
- Resume and interview workshop conducted in the Internship course.
- Placement assistance through Texas State’s Career Services office.
- Job files listing employers within the state who have hired our graduates.
- Placement statistics are maintained and anonymous salary information is available upon request.

XI. Tuition, Books and Related Fees

For the most current tuition and fee information, consult the Texas State web site at the following link:

<http://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/sa/index.htm>

The estimated textbook cost is \$75 - \$150 per course.

For information concerning financial aid and scholarships, please contact the financial aid office at (512)245-2315 or <http://www.finaid.txstate.edu>

XII. Evaluation of Programs

We desire and solicit feedback from students concerning our program courses, instructors, and procedures. Before the close of each semester, evaluations are given to each student. We also send evaluations to all of our graduates. On these forms, the students are encouraged to analyze and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the instructors, courses and/or format. Based on the information received during the evaluation process, the programs are revised and modified to ensure their continued strength and viability.

XIII. Advisory Committee

An advisory committee composed of practicing lawyers, paralegals, legal administrators and managers, members of the general public, faculty, legislators, and university administrators has been created. The advisory committee assists in developing admissions standards, evaluating and establishing program objectives and curriculum, securing competent faculty, surveying the needs of the local community, participating in job market assessments and exploring career opportunities for our graduates. Members of the Advisory Committee are listed on the next two pages.

Legal Studies Advisory Board

Membership List

Spring 2012

Jeff Caldwell

Community Member
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Jdc_78666@yahoo.com

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Dr. Paula Williamson

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Renate Yanity

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Laura D. Porterfield

Student Representative
Email: auraporterfield524@gmail.com

XIV. What Some of Our Graduates Have to Say about Our Programs

"Thank you both, Dr. Crossett and Dr. Wright for helping me get to this point in my career. My portfolio and ARP actually blew me past my competition and I was offered my new position on-the-spot!"

Tanya Leisey, Master of Arts 2009, Paralegal and Advisory Board Member

"Completing the Legal Studies program at Texas State was easily one of the best decisions I have ever made. The curriculum prepares students to engage in complex legal tasks, and the professors are incredibly knowledgeable and supportive. Whether you desire to become a Paralegal or go to law school, the Legal Studies program will provide you with a competitive advantage that is second to none."

Casey Hartle, Spring 2009, Paralegal Studies Certificate, currently attending law school

"I accepted a position yesterday at the Department of Public Safety working for their General Counsel as a Legal Assistant I. Without the program, none of this would be possible! What I learned from you has already proven to be invaluable. I am certain that value will only increase as time goes on."

Misty Martin, Summer 2008, Paralegal Studies Certificate

"Your concern for the educational well-being of your students is exceptional and your knowledge and teaching skills are what all faculty should strive for."

Robert Dickens, Spring 2006, Master of Arts Contracts Manager, UTSA

"I can't imagine that there is a better program in the country. I am extremely proud to have it on my resume."

Sheryl Caldwell, Spring 2002, Master of Arts

"Excellent program with quality teachers. Provided the knowledge base I needed to work effectively as a paralegal. Thanks."

Kathryn Black, Fall 2001, Master of Arts

"One of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

**Monte Blaylock, Spring 1999, Master of Arts
Facility Director, 33rd Judicial District CSCD-ISF**

"This is a wonderful program with a solid course of studies and outstanding teachers."

Mary Mensch, Spring 1999, Master of Arts

XV. Additional Information

Students desiring additional information or seeking entry into a Legal Studies Program should contact:

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Legal Studies Programs
Department of Political Science
Texas State University—San Marcos
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or

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