I. Course and Instructor

Format: This course will be conducted entirely online.

Instructor Information:

Name: Susan Laatsch, J.D.

Phone: (Cell) (970) 379-1871 (Home) (970) 963-3605
Fax: (Home) (970) 963-1681
Email: (Office) slaatsch@coloradomtn.edu (Home) jlaatsch@aol.com

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Course Information:

Course Title: Legal Ethics
Course Code: PAR-127-DS21
Semester: Spring, 2013
Meeting Times and Days: n/a
Class Location: n/a
Start Date: 01/14/13
Refund Date: 01/30/13

Synonym Number: 71362
Credits: 3
Prerequisite: College Level Reading

End Date: 05/03/13
Withdraw Date: 04/07/13

Orientation Note: Each of you will be receiving an e-mail from me that will orient you to the course.

Do not hesitate to call me if you are having trouble understanding something; I am more than willing to help you if I can. But please note two things: (1) when you call me, you are reaching me at home; please respect the office hours shown above; and (2) you can try to reach me on my cell phone, but I generally don't pay any attention to it, so you are taking your chances – and your chances aren't very good.

Computer Access:
Online courses require frequent computer use and access to the internet. It is highly recommended that students have a personal computer for use in online courses. If you need to use a computer at your local Colorado Mountain College location, you will be able to do so during open lab hours. Please check with your local site for times. Labs will not be available for Collaborate web conferencing sessions; they may be included as part of your course, due to the verbal interaction involved.

If you have general questions about online learning, please contact **Colorado Mountain College Online Learning** at 800-621-8559, extension 8341 or virtual@coloradomtn.edu.

No-show reporting and financial aid: If you have not completed your introductory assignment(s) in Canvas by Tuesday, January 22nd you will be reported as a no-show and dropped from the course. The resultant loss in credit hours may cause a reduction and/or cancellation of your financial aid award. Neither financial aid awards nor class reinstatement can occur after this point without significant documented extenuating circumstances. If you have questions or concerns about this please contact your campus financial aid specialist. (**www.coloradomtn.edu/web/departments/financial_aid**)

II. Course Description:

This course explores the parameters of professional responsibilities and value systems for paralegals and related occupations.

III. Student Learning Outcomes, Competencies, and Skills:

- Understand the Code of Professional Responsibility
- Understand the relationship between ethics and legal malpractice
- Learn how to research and brief cases
- Increase critical thinking and analytical skills.

IV. IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction:

1. *Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).*
2. *Developing skill in expressing oneself in writing.*
3. *Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.*
4. *Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.*
5. *Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.*

V. Methods and Class Management:

This course will consist of reading assignments, written assignments, case briefing, research, online discussions, **perhaps** a final exam (I am not a big fan of exams – more on that later) and possible unscheduled quizzes. There may be extra credit assignments as well.

The Discussions are our online "classroom;" **your participation in the Discussions is expected – and required in the substantive Discussions. The Rubric for these Discussions is attached as Attachment A to this Syllabus.** There will also be a discussion for each chapter (or module) called "Any Questions;" that will be exactly what

it sounds like – a place for you to ask any questions about the material covered in that assignments. While these are not required, it should be fairly obvious that your participation is *strongly* suggested. A word to the wise. . . .

There may be other ungraded Discussions. For example, this summer we had a spirited ungraded discussion during the past summer term about the Supreme Court's decision on Obamacare. It was something interesting that was going on around us and it gave us (me included) the opportunity to voice our opinions. I do check the Discussions daily, but do not necessarily post my responses immediately. I like to see how you are working with each other first, so don't think I'm not reading your posts, because I am.

Please note that I am somewhat ferocious when it comes to good written English. You do not want to bring out the tigress in me. The **Writing Rubric** for your written assignments and any essay question on any potential exam or quiz is attached as Attachment B. **This is a college level class and good writing not only contains proper spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, but is also clear, concise and appropriate for the audience to which it is addressed. It is an essential skill for success in your future paralegal career.**

I expect your written work (not your Discussions) to be done in Word or a Word compatible program and uploaded into Canvas. I will then download it, grade it and upload a red-lined version of your work, with my comments and suggestions. **Please do not try to submit any work done in Word Perfect; it will completely lock up my computer.**

Note also that, barring extraordinary circumstances, I will *not* accept any work that is e-mailed to me.

Please pay attention to both Rubrics; they are important and will affect your grade – one way or the other.

At the outset, I do not intend to weight your particular assignments (*e.g.*, discussions are worth more than written assignments), but that may change as we move along. You will be notified immediately if it does.

The term will be divided into Modules. A module may be as little as one week or as long as four weeks, depending on the importance and complexity of the material being covered in each. The Modules are as follows:

Module 1:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 1, Regulation of Lawyers Chapter 2, Regulation of Paralegals and Ethics Guidelines for Paralegals Chapter 3, Unauthorized Practice of Law
Written Assignments:	To Be Announced on January 14, 2013
Due Date:	All assignments in this Module will be due no later than 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, February 4, 2013

Module 2:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 3, Confidentiality
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, February 5, 2013
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, February 17, 2013

Module 3:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 5, Conflicts of Interest
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, February18, 2013
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 4, 2013

Module 4:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 6, Advertising and Solicitations
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, March 5, 2013
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March10, 2013

Spring Break: March 11 through 15

Module 5:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 7, Fees and Client Funds
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, March 18, 2013
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April1, 2013

Module 6:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 8, Competence
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, April 2, 2013
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 14, 2013

Module7:

Reading Assignment:	Chapter 9, Special Issues in Advocacy Chapter10, Professionalism
Written Assignments:	TBA on Monday, April 15
Due Date:	11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 29, 2013

Module 8:

This is the final week of the term (it ends on May 3). There is nothing specific in the way of assignments for this week. I am hoping that we can devote this last week in a general review of all of the material that we have covered this term. (But it's still possible that there may be a final exam this week. We shall see.)

Please be aware that this schedule may change as we move along. Much of that depends on you and how I feel about your comprehension of the material. If this schedule changes, you will be notified.

You may wonder why there are no exams scheduled. It's because I know that some people just do not test well. In addition, any exam that would be given would be an "open book" test since there is no way I could restrict you. Lastly, in my view, objective questions only require you to know one fact in order to answer the question correctly. The kind of material we will cover requires analysis, comprehension and the ability to apply your new knowledge to a fact situation – in other words, essays. We will do that in some written assignments.

There are a number of cases at the end of each chapter. They are very well chosen to illustrate the way that courts have applied the material in the chapter. I expect you to read them, and you will be asked to brief some of them. You will find an example of a case brief in the Files tab in Canvas. As an aside, this is an excellent text and you are fortunate to be using it.

As to any research assignments (and there will be several) we have Westlaw available, but there are a limited number of passwords, and they will be distributed on a first come-first served basis. Westlaw is a wonderful tool and I strongly suggest that you use it. If you want to have access to Westlaw, *let me know immediately.* In addition, your text should have come with a card giving you access to Loislaw, and you can access Lexis/Nexis through the CMC Virtual Library.

I expect assignments to be turned in on time, i.e. by the due date shown for any given Module. Any late assignment will be graded down by what I feel is fair under the circumstances. That said, I recognize that we are all adults in this class, and sometimes life happens when we least expect it. ***In the event of a legitimate emergency, you must contact me prior to the due date of the assignment so that we can reach a plan so that may be able to submit it late.*** I am generally very understanding if you are ill, if there has been a death of someone close to you, family issues, etc., but must let me know.

Similarly, if you have planned a vacation during the duration of this class, please let me know as soon as possible. We will arrange something that will work for both of us. (I'm not opposed to taking a vacation!)

A note as to the Due Date for any Module: the Due Date is the absolute *last* date on which you can participate in a Discussion and receive credit for it, or to submit any written work. It is **not** intended to be the only date on which you discuss/submit anything for that

Module. Work your way through each Module, and do the assignments as you read the chapters. That will make our lives – yours and mine – much easier. I do not want everyone's participation/submissions all falling in on me on the last day. Beware the dozing tigress.

Attendance is measured by your active participation in this class. I am able to tell exactly when an assignment is submitted or when you participate in a Discussion. You will be expected to comply with the Discussion Rubric attached in order to achieve full grade points for any Discussion.

As to the Discussions, you should check them at least two or three times per week so that you can see my comments on other students' posts, as well as replies by other students to either their fellow students' posts or mine. And **please** be sure that you are posting on the correct board! Remember, the Discussions are our classroom, and we will be talking about many concepts, some of which are difficult.

Your continued failure to submit your assignments or participate in Discussions in a timely manner may result in an administrative withdrawal, at my sole discretion.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Assignments (including Discussions) will total approximately 1,000 points. There is no "weighting "of assignments, so that the Discussions, the written assignments, quizzes (maybe) and exams (maybe) will count equally toward your final grade.

Final grading is as follows:

A	=	921-1000
A-	=	891-920
B+	=	861-890
B	=	821-860
B-	=	791-820
C+	=	761-790
C	=	721-760
C-	=	691-720
D+	=	651-690
D	=	591-650
F	=	0-590

And I will say it again: I am very particular when it comes to written English. If you want to work in a law office, you must be able to write. I will tolerate a misspelled word or two, a misplaced comma, the misuse of semi-colons, etc. in your work (at least most of the time), but if I am forced to grade an assignment that winds up being entirely redlined, neither of us will be happy, since you will have awakened that sleeping tigress and she is angry. Use your spell and grammar checker! That's what it's there for.

Please be sure to include your name on every written assignment. I will open the document that you have uploaded, grade it with my comments and upload the redlined version of your work in Canvas so that you can see what I have to say about it.

NOTICE:

A student judged to have engaged in academic misconduct as defined in the "Academic Policies and Requirements" section of the Colorado Mountain College Student Handbook will, at a minimum, receive a "zero" for the work in question. The student may also be removed from the class, resulting in a failing grade. All student course material may be submitted to Turnitin (or another anti-plagiarism program) at the instructor's discretion. "Academic Expectations," the "Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Process" and more information about academic misconduct can be found in the Student Handbook, online version at: **www.coloradomtn.edu/File/student_handbook.pdf.**

Students are responsible for course materials from assigned text(s) and reading, lecture notes, and other assignments as required.

The instructor may alter any, or all, of this syllabus during the semester as the learning environment requires. Students will be notified of changes in the Canvas course shell.

If you have a disability protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and feel you may need classroom accommodations based on the impact of your disability, please contact the Disability Services Coordinator on your campus.

- Edwards and Steamboat Springs: Deb Farmer at 970-870-4450
- Aspen, Carbondale, Glenwood Springs (including Spring Valley), and Rifle: Dr. Anne Moll at 970-947-8256
- Breckenridge, Dillon, Leadville, and Chaffee County: Sandi Conner at 719-486-4200

Students wishing to withdraw from this course must INITIATE the course withdrawal/drop process at the site Registration Office.

This class could be cancelled one week prior to the census date if a sufficient number of students are not enrolled by that date.

VI. Grading System & Options:

Information about grading is available in the Colorado Mountain College catalog. You will receive a grade report for current semester courses at the end of each term. This grade report is mailed to your permanent mailing address. Reports are mailed approximately two weeks after the end of the academic term. Additional information is available at:
http://catalog.coloradomtn.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=620#Grading_System_and_Options_

VII. Required Course Material:

The required text for this class is *Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Paralegals*, Therese A. Cannon, Wolter Kluwer Law and Business, ISBN 978-0-7355-9867-6

Ordering Books:

Colorado Mountain College has chosen to partner with Follett Virtual Bookstores to operate textbook services. You will find the official textbook list at **www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com**. If you ever have any online bookstore questions, you can email coloradomtn@fvb.follett.com or call 800-621-4088.

Students can sell back books anytime online or in-person at Follett's CMC buyback events. Sign up for the online store's email list at **www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com/email** for more information on future buyback dates/times and to receive other important messages from Follett.

Ordering Textbooks with Financial Aid:
Students wishing to use their Financial Aid to purchase their textbooks from the Colorado Mountain College Online Bookstore (Follett) may be set up with a *CMC Flex Pay account*. Contact your local CMC Accounts Manager for instructions and your specific username and password information. If you are not close to a CMC site contact CMC Online Learning at 970-947-8341 or virtual@coloradomtn.edu.

VIII. Other Information:

Canvas

Canvas by Instructure is the online learning management system (LMS) used by Colorado Mountain College. You access Canvas via your web browser, i.e.: Mozilla/Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera, etc. Students, faculty and staff members use the CMC Canvas site to access course announcements, documents, research links and library resources, to receive and deliver completed assignments, take tests, and to communicate with each other via email, discussion boards and chat.

For instructions on How to Access your Canvas Account, Canvas How To's, and who to contact for all your Canvas questions and support needs, please visit: **www.coloradomtn.edu/web/departments/faq-for-students**.

Student Email
All CMC students enrolled in a credit-based class (0.5 hour credit class or more) will be assigned a CMC student email address through Google mail (Gmail). Please allow at least 48 hours after you register for this account to be activated. For more information on your CMC student email account, please visit the Student page of the MyCMC Portal: **mycmc.coloradomtn.edu**.

A Few Words About Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is the standard word processing program for the majority of CMC instructors. Students without Microsoft Word may use the free software from **www.OpenOffice.org** to create Word-compatible documents. The program also includes spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, and database applications. The program is available for Windows, Macintosh, or Linux operating systems. Microsoft Word is installed on computers available in computer labs at CMC locations.

Virtual Library Information

http://library.coloradomtn.edu/content.php?pid=349163&sid=2891178

The Virtual Library has its doors open 24/7, providing access to thousands of online journals and newspapers, books and art images, downloadable videos and audio books, career resources and practice tests.

If you need help with the Virtual Library, email reference@coloradomtn.edu or call us at 800-621-8559, extension 2926.

Colorado Mountain College Online Learning

Information is available at: **www.coloradomtn.edu/online_learning/.**

Attachment A

Discussion Rubric

Goal for Discussions in this Course: In this class online, you will learn the fundamental principles of legal ethics. It is interesting and diverse, and can create lively discussions. Please remember that this is our "classroom" and this is the place where we are able to talk about whatever you may be learning (or confused by). We are aiming for you to start thinking like the attorneys you will be working with.

You will be expected to post at least twice a week in the Discussions by posting your thoughts about the initial posting that I make. Each post should be 150 words – 200 is preferable. You are also expected to respond to a posting at least once. I suggest that you have your book and/or notes nearby so you can draw from them in the Discussion. Be sure to check if you are required to post in more than one topic in that Module.

The point value of the Discussions will vary, but each will be graded as follows:

For full grade point value: One initial post, 150-200 words long, at least three sentences. It must contain thoughtful, substantive ideas concerning the Discussion topic. You must also respond to at least two of your classmates' posts, or mine, with detailed remarks about that individual's posting. A simple "I agree with you" or "I think you're off base" doesn't count.

For half grade point value: One initial post, 150-200 words, substantive in nature, and one thoughtful response to your classmates' posts, or mine.

For one-quarter grade: One post only.

No posts, no points.

Here are a few tips for the Discussions:

- First, **be sure you are in the right Discussion.** This sounds simple, but I have seen numerous posts which would make perfect sense if only they were in the right place. Even if you post the greatest entry in the history of Canvas in the wrong forum, it's just as though you had posted nothing.

- **Extend the conversation.** Don't repeat what has already been said (joining the Discussion early helps this one). Make sure that your post has a purpose. Phrases like "I agree" or "me, too" or "I don't think so" with nothing more do little to extend a conversation. While it is acceptable to let a classmate (or me) know that you agree or disagree with his/her (or my) point of view, the important thing is to state ***why*** you agree or disagree. What has

led you to that perception or belief? When appropriate, ask classmates (or me) questions (i.e. “So when you said X, what exactly did you mean?).

- **Be open to new perspectives.** When a classmate asks you for clarifying information, or when someone disagrees with you, don’t get angry, but take a step back to examine your position. Being challenged and confronted will be part of your growth as a professional. And beware: I like to play the Devil’s Advocate sometimes!

Attachment B

Writing Rubric

The following what I expect of your written assignments:

Your work should be clear and focused. It should hold my attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich your central theme. Draw from personal experiences when appropriate.

The organization should enhance and showcase your central theme. The order, structure or presentation of information should be compelling and move me through the text.

The essay should speak to me in a way that is individual and engaging. It should be crafted in a way that reflects the purpose for writing it.

The words should convey the intended message in a precise, interesting (remember that I have to read all of these) and natural way.

The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences should be well built, with strong and varied structure.

I enjoy reading amusing assignments when it is appropriate. I like to get a good giggle from your work now and then. Just keep it clean.

The assay should demonstrate a good grasps of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and effective use of them. ***I emphasize this – as I mentioned above, I am very particular about a fundamental ability to write a grammatically correct, coherent, error-free sentence!***

And a few practical tips here as well:

- Your essays will be graded on their content, but the rubric above will be applied. It doesn't help you to say the greatest thing if it's buried in some obscure place in your work.

- Use a readable font, and please use a font size that is easy to read. My eyes are not young any longer, and if I have print something out and read it using a magnifying glass (it has happened), I will not be a very happy professor. My preference is Arial, 12 point, full-justified, but that's not required. As long as I can read it easily on the computer, you will be fine (but a word to the wise ...)

- Almost all written assignments should be roughly 2 pages long, so use that as a general measurement –some should be longer or shorter, but that will be on an assignment-by-assignment basis.