

Hagerstown Community College
MASTER SYLLABUS

COURSE: PLS 203 Domestic Relations, 3 credits

INSTRUCTOR: G. Clair Baker, Jr.

SEMESTER/YEAR: Spring 2016
Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

ROOM: BSH 101

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines Domestic Relations law and practice in Maryland. The rights of the parties as to custody, visitation, support, alimony, and marital property; and the preparation and conduct of divorce and related proceedings are explored. The paralegal's role in assisting counsel in fact finding and preparation of documents and pleadings is emphasized. This course also stresses ethics as well as attitudes, skills, and behaviors required in a professional setting. PLS 101 or concurrent registration. Semester offered: Spring, 3 credits.

TEXTBOOK: Family Law by William P. Statsky

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: This course is intended to assist the student in:

- develop and implement analytical skills
- solve problems and communicate solutions
- demonstrate professional and ethical behavior
- apply basic knowledge to new situations
- demonstrate fundamental functions of the domestic law paralegal
- increase written and verbal communication skills

TOTAL HOURS OF COURSEWORK:

To earn one academic credit at HCC, students are required to complete a minimum of 37.5 clock hours (45 fifty-minute "academic" hours) of coursework per semester. Those hours of coursework may be completed through a combination of hours within the classroom and hours outside the classroom. Certain courses may require more than the 37.5 minimum hours of coursework per credit.

For most classes, students should expect to do at least 2 hours of coursework outside of class for each hour of in-class coursework.

COURSE CONTENT OBJECTIVES: This course is intended to assist the student to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the following substantive areas: marriage, antenuptial agreements, annulment, divorce, child custody, visitation, child support, marital property, paternity, domestic violence, and evolving areas of domestic relations law
- demonstrate knowledge of the following procedural areas: drafting pleadings, drafting agreements, interviewing clients and gathering pertinent information, and litigation support in domestic cases
- develop an understanding of the paralegal's role in this area of law
- develop an understanding of ethical and professional behavior

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:

- A. There will be a number of short tests to be completed in class and one or more written assignments to be completed out of class. Instructions will be provided on each assignment. Tests/quizzes will be announced at least one week in advance and will describe subject matter to be covered on the test. There will be an in class final exam.

COURSE POLICIES:

- A. The instructor reserves the right to modify the course content, syllabus, assessment methods and course procedures as necessary, in the sole and absolute discretion of the instructor.
- B. Students are expected to attend all classes. In the case of absence due to an emergency or participation in official College functions, it is the student's responsibility to confer with the instructor in advance about the absence and to arrange for completion of missed course work. It is the instructor's expectation that work due at the missed class will be submitted to the instructor in advance. Students absent from an announced test or examination unless authorized, may be given an equivalent exam at a later date at the direction of the instructor. Independent studies must be approved by Ms. Thornhill. The College Attendance Policy can be found in the Student Catalog.
- C. It is solely the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from any class that he/she intends no longer to attend. Failure to do so will result in the recording of an "F" grade and the student being billed full tuition and fees. Students contemplating withdrawing from a course should read the section of the Student Catalog entitled "Withdrawal and Course Changes." Withdrawal is completed through the Admissions and Registration Office.
- D. Become familiar with the Code of Student Conduct found in the Student Handbook and the provisions therein regarding academic integrity. Students will be expected to pledge that their work is the product of their own learning and academic effort, and that they have not received any unauthorized aid on their work.
- E. Students are expected to arrive on time to class.
- F. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes/assignments from a classmate.
- G. You may not bring children to class.
- H. Listen to the radio, sign up for email/text alerts, or check the college website for announcements of school closings due to inclement weather. The instructor will not necessarily communicate regarding school-wide closings or cancellations. We will have class unless the college closes.
- I. Bring your book and all supplemental materials to each class.

- J. Be prepared. Complete reading assignments in advance for the class meeting for which discussion, lecture, and classroom activities are scheduled.
- K. Participate with earnest in class discussions and activities.
- L. Be respectful of others and practice professional, respectful conduct in and out of class.
- M. All assignments are due on the date for which they are assigned. No late-submitted assignment can earn a higher grade than B. No assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days late. Missed assignments will be given a zero. Assignments must be turned in at class; no assignments will be accepted via email, fax, etc., unless specifically discussed with and approved by the Instructor.
- N. If you feel the need to contact me via email, please do so at BOTH addresses below to ensure timely acknowledgment of your messages.
- O. MUCH OF THE MATERIAL WILL BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH MARYLAND CASE LAW AND STATUTES. THIS MATERIAL IS VERY IMPORTANT AND WILL BE UTILIZED FOR A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE TESTS AND CLASS ROOM DISCUSSIONS.
- P. Most everyone utilizes IPAD, smart phone, or other technology to communicate during the work or school day. I will not be texting or otherwise using my phone during class except in the event of an emergency. It is expected that students show the same courtesy to each other and the instructor. SO, TURN OFF AND/OR SILENCE YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CLASS. You may certainly communicate with others via phone, etc., during the break.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students may receive reasonable accommodations if they have a diagnosed disability and present appropriate documentation. Students seeking accommodations are required to contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office as early as possible. Students may contact a DSS staff member for an appointment at dss@hagerstowncc.edu or at 240-500-2530.