



Family Law Program Overview

The Family Law Advanced Paralegal Course uses historical overviews, examples taken from actual cases, as well as recent Supreme Court Cases to describe the principles and practice of family law. This course prepares students to assist attorneys as they draft premarital agreements, help clients start or end their marriages, set up mutually agreeable child custody arrangements, clarify paternity, adopt a child, and more. This course includes comprehensive coverage of traditional family law topics, explores the developing law concerning nontraditional families and gay and lesbian parents' rights, describes technological innovations such as virtual visitation, and presents other high-profile topics currently under debate.

Program Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to explain/discuss:

- The paralegal's role in a family law firm
- How to help draft a premarital agreement
- How to help draft a cohabitation agreement
- What legal issues come up prior to marriage
- The different types of marriages
- The issue of same-sex marriage
- The grounds for an annulment
- Conflict of law issues related to annulments
- Consequences of an annulment decree
- Co-fault grounds for divorce
- Fault grounds for divorce
- How a judicial separation works

- Jurisdictional issues involved in divorces
- Pre-trial and trial matters in a divorce case
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Enforcement of divorce judgments
- How to help draft a separation agreement
- How alimony is determined
- How property division is determined
- How separation agreements are modified
- How child custody and visitation rights are determined
- What to expect from a parent v. parent custody case
- What to expect from other types of custody cases
- The laws prohibiting child snatching
- How child support is determined
- How child support is enforced
- The tax consequences of separation and divorce
- The legal rights of women, including employment rights and reproductive rights
- Illegitimacy rights
- How to help with a paternity proceeding
- The legal status of children, especially those who have been abused or neglected
- The different kinds of adoption
- How to help with an adoption procedure
- The new science of motherhood, including frozen embryos

- The surrogate controversy
- Intrafamily torts
- Vicarious liability

Program Outline

Lesson 1: Marriage and Premarital Agreements

- Marriage
- Premarital Agreements

Lesson 2: Domestic Violence and the Law of Divorce, Annulment and Legal Separation

- Domestic Violence
- The Law of Divorce, Annulment, and Legal Separation

Lesson 3: Child Custody and Child Support

- Child Custody
- Child Support

Lesson 4: Spousal Support and Division of Marital Property

- Spousal Support
- Division of Marital Property

Lesson 5: Jurisdiction and the Divorce Process

- Jurisdiction
- The Divorce Process

Lesson 6: Paternity, Child Abuse and Neglect, and Adoption

- Determining Paternity
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Adoption