

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
CONTINUING EDUCATION  
COURSE OUTLINE

**SECTION I**

**SUBJECT AREA AND COURSE NUMBER**

OFSY 542

**COURSE TITLE**

LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

**TYPE COURSE**

NON-FEE

VOCATIONAL

**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers an introduction to legal terminology as it relates to the work of a legal secretary or clerical assistant. Students will acquire a working knowledge of the language and documents most commonly used in the legal profession. The course will include: definitions, spellings and pronunciations of legal terms, basic court procedures, court rules/guidelines, and sample copies of routine legal documents and their uses. (FT)

**LECTURE HOURS**

54

**LABORATORY HOURS**

0

NOTE: In order to earn one (1) unit of high school credit, students will be required to complete an additional 26 hours of work in an open lab for a total of 80 hours.

**ADVISORY**

NONE

**RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVEL**

Eighth grade reading level, ability to communicate effectively in the English language.

**INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Social Responsibility  
SDCE students demonstrate interpersonal skills by learning and working cooperatively in a diverse environment.
2. Effective Communication  
SDCE students demonstrate effective communication skills.

INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)

3. Critical Thinking  
SDCE students critically process information, make decisions, and solve problems independently or cooperatively.
4. Personal and Professional Development  
SDCE students pursue short term and life-long learning goals, mastering necessary skills and using resource management and self-advocacy skills to cope with changing situations in their lives.

COURSE GOALS

Achieve a working knowledge of legal terminology, definitions and usage, the basic procedures and types of documents used in the legal profession. Areas of law include, but are not limited to, civil law, criminal law, wills and trusts, bankruptcy, corporations, contracts, domestic relations and real estate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. Define and correctly use, pronounce, and spell terms used in routine legal documents and the legal environment.
2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of legal procedures and court requirements.
3. Identify the purpose of selected forms and documents used in the legal profession.
4. Use the dictionary, legal secretaries' handbook, office manual and other reference materials pertaining to the law.

**SECTION II**

COURSE CONTENT AND SCOPE

1. Legal Terms
  - 1.1. Definition
  - 1.2. Usage
  - 1.3. Pronunciation
  - 1.4. Spelling
2. Application of Legal Terms
  - 2.1. Civil procedures
  - 2.2. Criminal law
  - 2.3. Real estate
  - 2.4. Probate
  - 2.5. Family law
  - 2.6. Contract law
  - 2.7. Corporate law
  - 2.8. Discovery procedures

### COURSE CONTENT AND SCOPE (CONTINUED)

- 2.9. Latin terms
- 3. Court
  - 3.1. Requirements
  - 3.2. Procedures
  - 3.3. Court structure
  - 3.4. Local rules
- 4. Legal Documents
  - 4.1. Identification
  - 4.2. Routine documents
- 5. Resource Materials/Office Manuals

### APPROPRIATE READINGS

Appropriate readings may include, but are not limited to, the usage of a legal dictionary and legal reference manuals, texts regarding basic legal procedures and introduction to the law, and/or legal secretarial manuals.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments may include, but are not limited to, defining of legal terms, completion of course handouts, and practical applications encompassing legal vocabulary.

### OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS

Outside assignments may include, but are not limited to, review and memorization of terminology definitions, completion of definitions and course handouts, and review materials provided.

### APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING

Assignments which demonstrate critical thinking may include, but are not limited to, written and oral analysis of reading materials, selection of appropriate documents, discussion on legal issues in the media, legal ethics and research.

### EVALUATION

Evaluation will be based on performance in a variety of activities and assignments, such as in-class projects and writing assignment, out-of-class projects and writing assignments, quizzes, objective and essay examinations and class participation.

### METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

Methods of instruction will include, but are not limited to, lecture, demonstrations, audio-visual materials, practical assignments, field trips, and other unique instructional strategies.

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TEXTS AND SUPPLIES

Texts must be current and relevant to the course such as:

*California Legal Secretary*, latest edition, James Publishing  
*Law Office Procedure Manual*, latest edition, The Rutter Group  
*California Style Manual*, latest edition, State of California Publications Division  
*A Uniform System of Citation*, latest edition, Harvard Law Review Association

PREPARED BY Gloria Renas DATE May 30, 1989

REVISED BY Marcy Schroeder DATE September 15, 1989

REVISED BY Kim Minden DATE June 19, 1996

REVISED BY Sharian Lott DATE February 22, 2007

REVISED BY Instructional Servies, SLOs added DATE March 7, 2017

Instructors must meet all requirements stated in Policy 3100 (Student Rights, Responsibilities and Administrative Due Process), and the Attendance Policy set forth in the Continuing Education Catalog.

REFERENCES:

San Diego Community College District Policy 3100  
California Community Colleges, Title 5, Section 55002  
Continuing Education Catalog