



**Columbia Southern University – Dept. of Continuing Education
21982 University Lane • Orange Beach, AL 36561**

<http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/>

Contact: Laurie Coleman | 800.977.8449 x1840 | laurie.coleman@columbiasouthern.edu

Education & Training Plan

**Family Law Professional Certificate Program with Externship
Columbia Southern University (CSU)**

Student Full Name: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Program includes National Certification & an Externship Opportunity
Mentor Supported

Family Law Professional Certificate Program with Externship

Course Code: CSU-L-FAM
Program Duration: 6 Months
Course Contact Hours: 375
Student Tuition: \$3,799

The Family Law Professional

The practice of family law examines state regulation of sexual and marital relationships, including the delicate balance of family privacy against state intervention in the marital relationship. Litigating around the institution of marriage and family that is most personal to individuals, family law brings to light a number of issues that affect peoples’ lives at a very deep level. Further, family law also covers principles governing child custody and visitation, child support, and the regulation of non-traditional relationships as they pose a variety of questions about what a “family” is under the law.

The Family Law Professional Program

Covering these intriguing and recently developing issues, this program provides an overview of family law. Students will explore fundamental topics including marriage, divorce, annulment, property division, parenthood, adoption, custody, support, and family violence as well as emerging areas such as legal recognition of non-marital families and assisted reproductive technology. Students will study all of these points with special attention to the legal principles, ethical issues, research, interviewing, discovery, drafting, and other essential practice skills that make up the work product surrounding this field. Examining the initial organization, operation and potential dissolution of a family unit, the Family Law program addresses premarital controversies, capacity to marry and the formalities of marriage in light of the rights and duties of marital partners, various grounds for divorce, annulment and separation, spousal support and basic issues of property distribution.

Education and National Certifications

- Students should have or be pursuing a high school diploma or GED.
- There are no state approval and/or state requirements associated with this program.
- There is a National Certification exam available to students who successfully complete this program:
 - **Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Certification Exam.**

Program Objectives

At the conclusion of this program, students will be able to:

- Describe tasks paralegals perform as members of a family law team
- Perform research on issues related to family law cases
- Interpret the major legal issues related to premarital agreements and marriage
- Interpret the major legal issues related to annulment, separation and divorce
- Interpret the major legal issues related to non-marital families
- Interpret the major legal issues related to parenthood and adoption
- Interpret the major legal issues related to family violence
- Interpret the major legal issues related to discovery and financial statements
- Interpret the major legal issues related to child custody and child support
- Interpret the major legal issues related to spousal support
- Interpret the major legal issues related to property division
- Draft family law documents
- Propose strategies for dealing with ethical issues that arise in family law cases
- Use Microsoft Office

National Certification

Upon successful completion of this Columbia Southern University program, students would be eligible to sit for the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) exam. Although there are no state approval, state registration or other state requirements for this program, students who complete this program at Columbia Southern University will be prepared and are eligible to sit for this national certification exam. Students who complete this program are encouraged to complete the externship option with their program. Students who complete this program can and do sit for the MOS national certification exams and are qualified, eligible and prepared to do so. Columbia Southern University works with each student to complete the exam application and register the student to take their national certification exam.

Externship / Hands on Training / Practicum

Although not a requirement, once students complete the program, they have the ability to participate in an externship and/or hands on practicum so as to practice the skills necessary to perform the job requirements of a professional in this field. Students will be assisted with completing a resume and/or other requirements necessary to work in this field. All students who complete this program are eligible to participate in an externship and will be placed with a participating organization near their location. Columbia Southern University works with national organizations and has the ability to place students in externship opportunities nationwide.

Columbia Southern University contact: If students have any questions regarding this program including national certification and externships, **they should call Laurie Coleman at 800.977.8449 x1840 or via email at laurie.coleman@columbiasouthern.edu.**

Note: No refunds can be issued after the start date published in your Financial Award document.



About Columbia Southern University!

Welcome to Columbia Southern University!

OUR MISSION: Columbia Southern University provides diverse learning experiences and affordable, flexible distance education programs at the certificate, undergraduate, and graduate levels to a global student body, delivered by qualified, student-centered faculty committed to teaching and student learning. The University is dedicated to providing exceptional academic and student support services.

OUR VISION: The Vision of Columbia Southern University is to change and improve lives through higher education by enabling students to maximize their professional and personal potential.

The Continuing Education Department at Columbia Southern University is committed to a program of public service, outreach and continuing education by sharing resources with the workforce to enhance the intellectual capital of all those in need or desire lifelong learning and development. <http://www.columbiasouthern.edu/online-degree/continuing-education>



Columbia Southern University and Pearson Education

Columbia Southern University's eLearning programs were developed in partnership with Pearson Education to produce the highest quality, best-in-class content and delivery necessary to enhance the overall student learning experience, boost understanding and ensure retention. Pearson Education is the premier content and learning company in North America offering solutions to the higher education and career training divisions of colleges and universities across the country aimed at driving quality education programs to ensure student success. Please visit us at www.pearson.com.

About Pearson Education

Welcome to Pearson. We have a simple mission: to help people make more of their lives through learning. We are the world's leading learning company, with 40,000 employees in more than 80 countries helping people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives. We provide a range of education products and services to institutions, governments and direct to individual learners, that help people everywhere aim higher and fulfil their true potential. Our commitment to them requires a holistic approach to education. It begins by using research to understand what sort of learning works best, it continues by bringing together people and organizations to develop ideas, and it comes back round by measuring the outcomes of our products.

Family Law Professional Program Detailed Student Objectives:

INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY LAW

- Identify the types of cases paralegals work on as members of a family law team
- Outline the client intake process
- Describe differences between subject matter, personal, and *in rem* jurisdiction
- Identify legal resources used by paralegals to research family law issues
- Describe the doctrine of *respondeat superior*
- Describe ethical issues related to conflicts of interest and attorney-client communications
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

PREMARITAL AGREEMENTS

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Locate forms needed to process family law cases in your jurisdiction
- Describe the nature, purpose, and scope of premarital agreements
- Describe how current trends and changes in society are affecting the enforceability of premarital agreements
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to premarital agreements in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a premarital agreement

MARRIAGE

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify common legal requirements for valid ceremonial and common law marriages
- Give examples of governmental regulation of the fundamental right to marry
- Identify basic types of rights and benefits that flow from marriage
- Describe how changes in state laws related to same-sex marriage are affecting family law practice
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to marriage in your jurisdiction to a case study

ANNULMENT

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify differences between annulment and divorce
- Describe the two types of grounds for annulment that are common in many states
- Identify defenses to and consequences of annulment
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to annulment in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a document to bring an annulment action

NONMARITAL FAMILIES

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Articulate the legal differences between cohabitation, domestic partnership, civil union, and marriage
- Describe the common elements of a cohabitation agreement
- Identify forms of relief available to cohabiting partners when their relationship dissolves
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to nonmarital families in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a cohabitation agreement
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

PARENTHOOD

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Describe methods of establishing legal parentage
- Outline how parenthood may be disestablished
- Describe paternity fraud
- Describe issues surrounding assisted reproductive technology as related to family law practice
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to parenthood in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

ADOPTION

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify the types of adoption
- Describe the process of adoption
- Summarize the rights of parents in the adoption context
- Describe the nature and purpose of putative father registries
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to adoption in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a petition for adoption
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify types of abuse and neglect
- Describe remedies available to adult victims of family violence
- Give examples of mandatory and permissive reporters in child abuse cases
- Explain how abuse and neglect affect custody decisions
- Describe jurisdictional issues that commonly arise in family violence cases
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to family violence in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a petition for protection from abuse

DIVORCE PROCESS

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify the major fault and no-fault grounds for divorce
- Describe jurisdictional issues that commonly arise in divorce cases
- Summarize the four primary methods for altering the marital status
- Outline the basic stages of the divorce process
- Identify common types of alternative dispute resolution
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to divorce in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a complaint for divorce and responsive documents

DISCOVERY AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify differences between formal, informal, and electronic discovery
- Describe the primary strengths and weaknesses of the five formal methods of discovery
- Summarize common objections to discovery requests
- Describe the purpose and scope of financial statements
- Outline the court's role in the discovery process
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to discovery and financial statements in your jurisdiction to a case study

- Draft a financial affidavit
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

CHILD CUSTODY

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Describe the common legal standards for custody decisions
- Identify types of child custody
- Identify factors courts consider when making custody decisions
- Describe the role of the guardian *ad litem* and other advocates for children in the context of custody decisions
- Summarize how courts are increasing recognition of the rights of third parties in child custody cases
- Describe jurisdictional issues that commonly arise in child custody cases
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to child custody in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a parenting plan

CHILD SUPPORT

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Explain the role of Title IV-D agencies in child support cases
- Identify differences between child support and spousal support
- Describe factors courts consider when establishing and modifying child support orders
- Describe jurisdictional issues that commonly arise in child support cases
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to child support in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a motion for temporary child support
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

SPOUSAL SUPPORT

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Describe types of spousal support
- Identify the common elements of a spousal support provision in a separation agreement
- Describe differences between spousal support and property division
- Describe factors courts consider when awarding spousal support
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to spousal support in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft an alimony provision for a separation agreement

PROPERTY DIVISION

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify differences between separate and marital property
- Describe differences between community property and equitable distribution approaches to property division
- Identify factors courts consider when making property division decisions
- Describe jurisdictional issues that commonly arise in property division cases
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to property division in your jurisdiction to a case study
- Draft a proposed property settlement
- Propose appropriate actions in response to hypothetical ethical dilemmas

SEPARATION AGREEMENTS

- Conduct research related to family law case studies
- Identify the common components of a separation agreement

- Describe differences between a merged and surviving separation agreement
- Give examples of problems that arise related to separation agreements
- Apply rules, procedures, statutes, and case law related to separation agreements in your jurisdiction to a case study

Note: This program can be completed in 6 months. However, students will have online access to this program for a 24-month period.

MICROSOFT OFFICE Module

- Use an integrated software package, specifically the applications included in the Microsoft Office suite
- Demonstrate marketable skills for enhanced employment opportunities
- Describe proper computer techniques for designing and producing various types of documents
- Demonstrate the common commands & techniques used in Windows desktop
- List the meaning of basic PC acronyms like MHz, MB, KB, HD and RAM
- Use WordPad and MSWord to create various types of documents
- Create headings and titles with Word Art
- Create and format spreadsheets, including the use of mathematical formulas
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of computer database functions, including putting, processing, querying and outputting data
- Define computer terminology in definition matching quizzes
- Use the Windows Paint program to alter graphics
- Use a presentation application to create a presentation with both text and graphics
- Copy data from one MS Office application to another application in the suite
- Use e-mail and the Internet to send Word and Excel file attachments
- Demonstrate how to use the Windows Taskbar and Windows Tooltips
- Explain how copyright laws pertain to data and graphics posted on the Internet
- Take the college computer competency test after course completion
- Follow oral and written directions and complete assignments when working under time limitations

Note: Although the Microsoft Office Module is not required to successfully complete this program, students interested in pursuing free Microsoft MOS certification may want to consider completing this Microsoft Office Module at no additional cost.

System Requirements:

Windows Users:

- Windows 8, 7, XP or Vista
- 56K modem or higher
- Soundcard & Speakers
- Firefox, Chrome or Microsoft Internet Explorer

Mac OS User:

- Mac OS X or higher (in classic mode)
- 56K modem or higher
- Soundcard & Speakers
- Apple Safari

iPad Users:

- Due to Flash limitations, eLearning programs are NOT compatible with iPads

Screen Resolution:

- We recommend setting your screen resolution to 1024 x 768 pixels.

Browser Requirements:

- System will support the two latest releases of each browser. When using older versions of a browser, users risk running into problems with the course software.
- Windows Users: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Mac OS Users: Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox

Suggested Plug-ins:

- Flash Player
- Real Player
- Adobe Reader
- Java