Proposal Date: 2/25/2013

**University College**

**Department of Professional Studies**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Julie Shadoan, South Campus, C179, [julie.shadoan@wku.edu](mailto:julie.shadoan@wku.edu), 780-2539

**1. Identification of proposed course:**

* 1. Course prefix (subject area) and number: PLS 200C
  2. Course title: Legal Ethics
  3. Abbreviated course title: Legal Ethics
  4. Credit hours and contact hours: 3
  5. Type of course: Lecture
  6. Pre-requisites/co-requisites: PLS 190C (Pre- or Co-Requisite)
  7. Course catalog listing: Study, analysis and application of

codes of professional responsibility

and standards of conduct governing

the practice of law in state and

federal courts.

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. Reason for developing the proposed course:

The reasons for proposing this course are enumerated as follows:

▪The course fulfills WKU’s mission to prepare students to be thoughtful and responsible business owners, employees and fiduciaries when representing a client’s interests in a diverse and ever-changing legal environment.

▪This course also fulfills WKU’s mission to prepare students to think critically and develop problem solving skills when faced with ethical dilemmas in the context of the practice of law.

▪The addition of this course to the existing paralegal studies curriculum was recommended as part of the most recent program accreditation process with the American Bar Association as well as by alumni request documented in bi-annual program surveys.

▪The addition of this course to the existing paralegal studies curriculum is necessary to maintain a competitive edge in the state and regional academic markets.

* 1. Projected enrollment in the proposed course: 20 students per offering, including PLS majors and those in the 2+2 program (per PLS/PS Articulation Agreement) based on current program enrollment.
  2. Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:

This course covers subject matter relegated to only a small portion of existing courses, including PLS 190C, Intro to Paralegal Profession; PLS 293C, Civil Procedure; and PLS 299C, Internship. These courses will be revised to address this subject only as necessary for context.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:

Many courses that address ethics in various professional contexts exist across campus. A representative but not exhaustive list includes: BCOM 301, Mass Communication Law and Ethics; BUS 102, Intro. to Ethical Issues in Business; CD 402, ASL Professional Ethics and Issues; CE 326, Engineering Law; CM 426, Construction Law; DH 324, Practice Management and Ethics; DMT 321, Professional Ethics Issues; GEOG 444, Environmental Ethics in Geography; JOUR 301, Press Law and Ethics; LEAD 330, Leadership Ethics and Decision-Making; MGT 305, Ethics and Critical Thinking; NURS 408, Professional Issues; PHIL 320, Ethics; PHIL 322, Biomedical Ethics; and PHIL 323/REL 323, Social Ethics. However, none of these courses provide an in-depth study and application of ethical standards for legal practitioners. This is a discipline-specific course.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:

Many American Bar Association-approved institutions offering certificates and degrees in paralegal studies offer similar courses. A representative but not exhaustive list includes: PLS 262, Basic Legal Ethics (Sullivan University, Kentucky); PLS 399, Professional Ethics for Paralegals (University of Louisville, Kentucky); LAW 103, Ethics and Professionalism (Volunteer State, Tennessee); LEGL 2400, Legal Ethics (University of Memphis, Tennessee); and PARA 100, Paralegal Profession and Ethics (Vincennes University, Indiana).

**3. Discussion of proposed course:**

* 1. Course objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

▪identify and understand the ethical rules governing the practice of law in state and federal courts;

▪identify and understand the ramifications for violation of ethical rules by attorneys and paralegals;

▪apply ethical rules and standards to various practice areas; and,

▪develop and implement practices and protocol to ensure compliance with ethical rules.

* 1. Content outline: Topics to be covered in this course are:

▪Introduction to Codes and Standards for Attorneys and Paralegals

▪Attorney-Client Relationship

▪Attorney-Paralegal Relationship

▪Confidentiality

▫Privilege

▫Work Product

▪Conflicts of Interest

▪Zealous Representation

▪Practice Marketing

▪Delivery of Legal Services

▪Judges and Government Employees

▪Special Topics

* 1. Student expectations and requirements: Student performance will be evaluated by various measures, including but not limited to: quizzes and exams, application exercises (in-class and out of class), case review and analysis, group projects, and papers.
  2. Tentative texts and course materials:

Kent Kauffman, *Legal Ethics* (2ed. Cengage 2009); Nathan Crystal, *Professional Responsibility: Problems of Practice and the Profession* (5ed. Aspen 2011); as well as various online databases including but not limited to [www.kybar.org](http://www.kybar.org); [www.courts.ky.gov](http://www.courts.ky.gov); www.lrc.ky.gov; Westlaw®; Loislaw®; and LexisNexis®.

**4. Resources:**

* 1. Library resources:

The WKU Law Library, Westlaw (online legal database) subscription access provided by the paralegal program, and free online repositories of law and rules are sufficient library resources for this course. The WKU Law Library resources for this course and the paralegal program generally have been approved by the American Bar Association as part of the program accreditation process.

* 1. Computer resources:

South Campus has three classroom computer labs and one open lab which will provide sufficient tech support for this course.

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. Proposed method of staffing: New full-time pedagogical faculty hired in July, 2012, will staff this course.
  2. Special equipment needed: N/A.
  3. Expendable materials needed: N/A.
  4. Laboratory materials needed: N/A.

**6. Proposed term for implementation:** Fall 2013

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Professional Studies Department: February 27, 2013

UC Undergraduate Curriculum Committee March 7, 2013

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**