

**ITT Technical Institute**

**PL1240**

**Research and Writing for the Paralegal I  
Onsite Course**

**SYLLABUS**

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**Credit hours:** 4.5

**Contact/Instructional hours:** 56 (34 Theory Hours, 22 Lab Hours)

**Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s):**

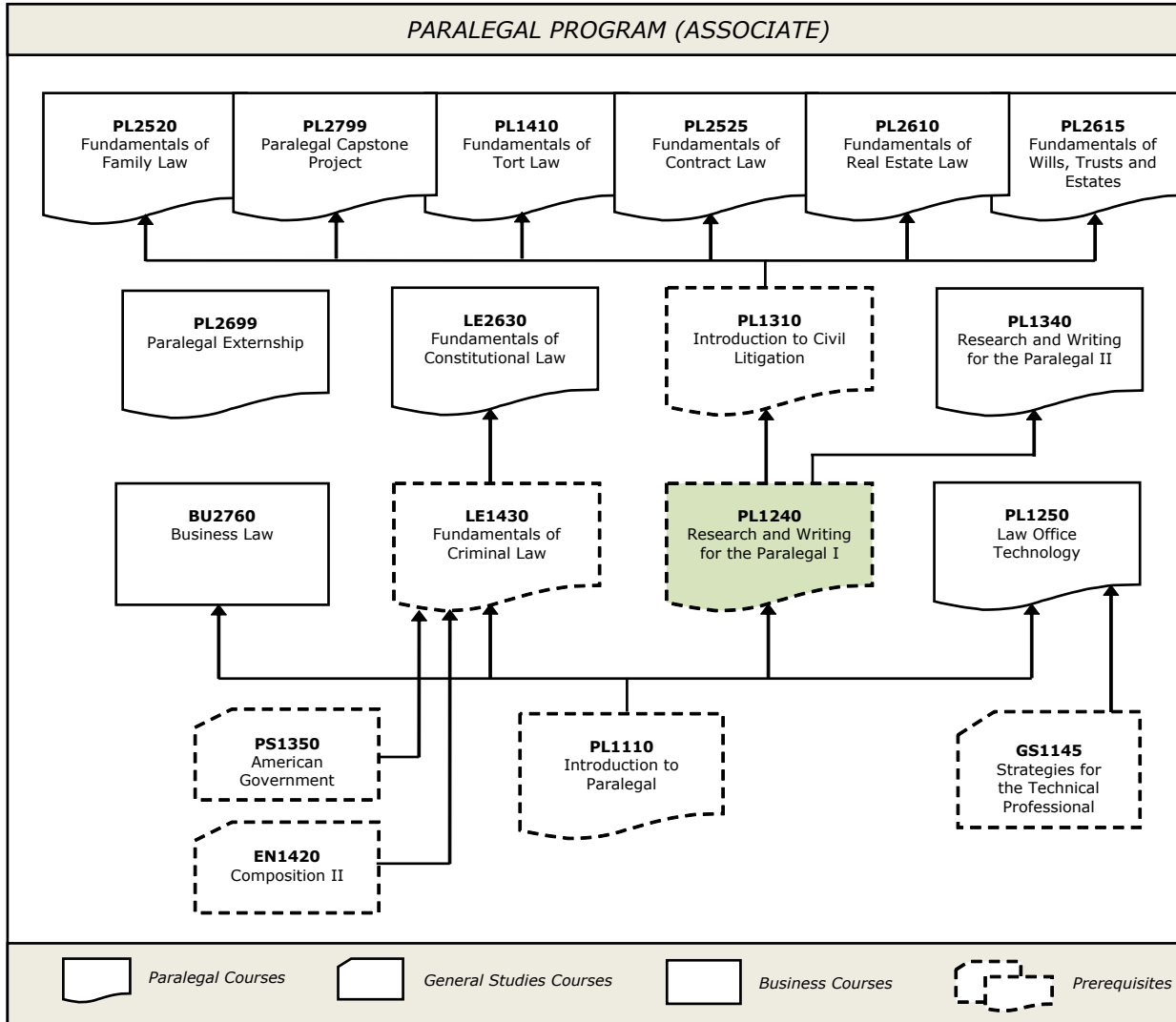
Prerequisites: PL1110 Introduction to Paralegal or equivalent

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the process of legal research, and explores basic skills and techniques necessary to create effective written legal documents. Study includes focus on ethical considerations in conducting legal research.

# Where Does This Course Belong?

The following diagram demonstrates how this course fits in the standard program:



**NOTE:** Refer to the catalog for the state-specific course and program information, if applicable.

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This course is required for the Paralegal program. This program covers the following core areas:

- Legal research
- Document preparation
- Legal analysis
- Resource management (including online resources)
- Process management

## Course Summary

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### Major Instructional Areas

1. Responsibilities of a paralegal in the American legal system
2. Ethical considerations related to legal research
3. The main products of legal research
4. The significance of mandatory authority and persuasive authority
5. The major components of a reported court decision

### Course Objectives

1. Summarize research practices used by a paralegal.
2. Analyze ethical issues related to research.
3. Describe the main products of legal research.
4. Prepare case briefs and legal memoranda of law.
5. Analyze the facts in a case.
6. Classify legal research sources.
7. Differentiate mandatory authority from persuasive authority.
8. Research enacted law.
9. Research case law.
10. Use secondary sources as part of legal research.
11. Use the ITT Tech Virtual Library to locate paralegal research and documents as appropriate.

## Learning Materials and References

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### Required Resources

Complete Textbook Package	New to this Course	Carried over from Previous Course(s)	Required for Subsequent Course(s)
Hames, J. B., & Ekern, Y. (2012). <i>Legal research, analysis, and writing</i> (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.	■		■

### Technology Requirements

- A computer or access to a computer with Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Internet access

### Recommended Resources

Books and Professional Journals (accessed at ITT Tech Virtual Library> School of Criminal Justice> Databases> LexisNexis Academic)

- *Justice Quarterly*
- *Law & Society Review*
- *National Law Journal*
- *The ABA Journal*

### Professional Associations

- American Association for Paralegal Education: [www.aafpe.org](http://www.aafpe.org) (accessed 1/25/2013)
  - This site includes information about mission and history of the AAFPE organization as well as information dedicated to Paralegal Education, Conferences, Social Networking opportunities and AAFPE Partners. Access to all resources on this site require a membership tot the AAFPE organization.
- NALS, the Association for Legal Professionals: [www.nals.org](http://www.nals.org) (accessed 1/25/2013)
  - NALS is dedicated to the philosophy that Paralegals, Legal Assistants, and Legal Secretaries can learn from one another. NALS provides [continuing legal education](#), certifications and networking to all members of the legal community, conference opportunities, Articles, employment opportunities, and information about grants.
- National Association of Legal Assistants: [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org) (accessed 1/25/2013)

- **NALA** is the nation's leading professional association for **paralegals**. As a non-profit organization, NALA provides continuing education and professional development programs for paralegals - from novice to experienced professionals.
  - National Federation of Paralegal Associations: [www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org) (accessed 1/25/2013)  
Created as a non-profit federation, NFPA is an issues-driven, policy-oriented professional association directed by its membership. NFPA routinely monitors legislation, case law, proposed changes to the rules of responsibility and ethics opinions that affect the paralegal profession. NFPA's [Model Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility and Guidelines for Enforcement](#) delineates the ethical guidelines and standards for conduct to which all paralegals should aspire.  
[ITT Tech Virtual Library](#) (accessed via Student Portal | <https://studentportal.itt-tech.edu>)
    - ITT Tech Virtual Library> School of Criminal Justice> Databases> LexisNexis Academic
      - LexisNexis Academic

**NOTE:** All links are subject to change without prior notice.

## Information Search

Use the following keywords to search for additional online resources that may be used for supporting your work on the course assignments:

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- Case law
- Statutory law
- Precedent
- Rules of court
- Law library
- Case reporter series
- Computer assisted legal research (CALR)
- LexisNexis Academic
- Administrative law
- Legal issues
- Administrative rules
- IRAC process
- Validation
- Shepard's citations

## Suggested Learning Approach

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In this course, you will be studying individually and within a group of your peers. As you work on the course deliverables, you are encouraged to share ideas with your peers and instructor, work collaboratively on projects and team assignments, raise critical questions, and provide constructive feedback.

Use the following advice to receive maximum learning benefits from your participation in this course:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do take a proactive learning approach</li> <li>▪ Do share your thoughts on critical issues and potential problem solutions</li> <li>▪ Do plan your course work in advance</li> <li>▪ Do explore a variety of learning resources in addition to the textbook</li> <li>▪ Do offer relevant examples from your experience</li> <li>▪ Do make an effort to understand different points of view</li> <li>▪ Do connect concepts explored in this course to real-life professional situations and your own experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't assume there is only one correct answer to a question</li> <li>▪ Don't be afraid to share your perspective on the issues analyzed in the course</li> <li>▪ Don't be negative about the points of view that are different from yours</li> <li>▪ Don't underestimate the impact of collaboration on your learning</li> <li>▪ Don't limit your course experience to reading the textbook</li> <li>▪ Don't postpone your work on the course deliverables – work on small assignment components every day</li> </ul>



**Course Outline**

<p><b>Unit 1: BASICS OF THE RESEARCH SYSTEM</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the research responsibilities of a paralegal.</li> <li>Articulate the steps in researching case and statutory law in LexisNexis.</li> <li>Utilize LexisNexis to locate case law and statutes.</li> <li>Summarize the proper ethical procedures for conducting legal research.</li> <li>Differentiate between mandatory and persuasive authority.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 8 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 1</li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		3 hrs.
	Complete Unit 1 Assignment 1: Research and the Paralegal.		3 hrs.
		Prepare for Unit 2 Lab 1.	2 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 1 Assignment 1: Research and the Paralegal	2%
	Labs	Unit 1 Lab 1: Confidentiality and Ethics	2%

<p><b>Unit 2: FINDING AND ANALYZING CASE LAW</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the components of case law.</li> <li>Cite case law in the appropriate format.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 11.5 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapters 3 and 10</li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		5.5 hrs.
	Complete Unit 2 Assignment 1: Components of a Case.		4.5 hrs.
		Study for Unit 3 Quiz 1.	1.5 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 2 Assignment 1: Components of a Case	2%
	Labs	Unit 2 Lab 1: Locating Cases and Court Rules	2%

<p><b>Unit 3: BRIEFING CASES</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the purpose and content of a case brief.</li> <li>Identify and articulate the legal issues of a case.</li> <li>Prepare a case brief.</li> <li>Identify the relevant facts of a client's legal situation.</li> <li>Identify the legal issues in a client's situation.</li> <li>Apply the law to the facts of a client's legal situation.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 9.5 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 4 and Appendix G</li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>	
	Complete the reading assignment.	2 hrs.	
	Complete Unit 3 Assignment 1: Preparing a Case Brief.	4.5 hrs.	
	Work on Project Part 1.	3 hrs.	
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)</b>
	Quizzes	Unit 3 Quiz 1	5%
	Assignments	Unit 3 Assignment 1: Preparing a Case Brief	2%
	Labs	Unit 3 Lab 1: Writing a Case Brief	2%

<p><b>Unit 4: THE MEMORANDUM OF LAW</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the purpose and content of an internal memorandum of law.</li> <li>Prepare an internal memorandum of law.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 11.5 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 13</li> <li><i>Klasa v. Rogers</i></li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>	
	Complete the reading assignment.	4 hrs.	
	Complete Unit 4 Assignment 1: Preparing a Memorandum of Law.	4.5 hrs.	
	Work on Project Part 1.	3 hrs.	
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)</b>
	Assignments	Unit 4 Assignment 1: Preparing a Memorandum of Law	2%
	Labs	Unit 4 Lab 1: Writing a Memorandum of Law	2%

<p><b>Unit 5: ANALYZING CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate and analyze constitutions.</li> <li>• Locate statutes, regulations, court rules, and court dockets using state and court online resources.</li> <li>• Analyze statutory and administrative law.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 10 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapters 5 and 6</li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		4 hrs.
	Complete Unit 5 Assignment 1: Locating and Analyzing Statutes.		4.5 hrs.
		Study for Unit 6 Quiz 2.	1.5 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 5 Assignment 1: Locating and Analyzing Statutes	2%
	Labs	Unit 5 Lab 1: Statutes and Rules	2%
	Project	Project Part 1 (ePortfolio)	5%

<p><b>Unit 6: SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize secondary sources of law.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Total outside work:</b> 11 hours</p>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 7</li> <li>• <i>Palsgraf v. Long Island R.R.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		3.5 hrs.
	Complete Unit 6 Assignment 1: Using Secondary Sources of Law to Find Primary Sources of Law.		4.5 hrs.
	Work on Project Part 2.		3 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Quizzes	Unit 6 Quiz 2	5%
	Assignments	Unit 6 Assignment 1: Using Secondary Sources of Law to Find Primary Sources of Law	2%
	Labs	Unit 6 Lab 1: Performing Legal Research in Secondary Sources	2%

<b>Unit 7: IDENTIFYING FACTS</b>			<b>Total outside work:</b> 11 hours
Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply knowledge to distinguish and analogize cases to client legal issues.</li> </ul>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 2</li> <li><i>Booker v. Revco D.S.</i></li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		2 hrs.
	Complete Unit 7 Assignment: Identify Legally Relevant, Explanatory, and Legally Unimportant Facts.		4.5 hrs.
	Study for Unit 8 Quiz 3.		1.5 hrs.
		Work on Project Part 2.	3 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 7 Assignment 1: Identify Legally Relevant, Explanatory, and Legally Unimportant Facts	2%
	Labs	Unit 7 Lab 1: <i>Booker v. Revco D.S.</i>	2%

<b>Unit 8: IDENTIFYING LEGAL ISSUES</b>			<b>Total outside work:</b> 9 hours
Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply knowledge to distinguish and analogize cases to client legal issues.</li> <li>Identify and articulate the legal issues of a case.</li> </ul>			
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapters 3 and 12</li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>		<b>Estimated Time</b>
	Complete the reading assignment.		4 hrs.
	Complete Unit 8 Assignment 1: Identify Legal Issues.		5 hrs.
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Quizzes	Unit 8 Quiz 3	5%
	Assignments	Unit 8 Assignment 1: Identify Legal Issues	2%
	Labs	Unit 8 Lab 1: Bar None Memorandum of Law	2%

<p><b>Unit 9: THE IRAC PROCESS</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the IRAC process.</li> <li>• Utilize the IRAC process in preparing a case brief</li> </ul>			<p><b>Total outside work:</b> 10 hours</p>
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 4, pp. 85–98</li> <li>• <i>Markowitz v. Helen Homes of Kendall Corporation</i></li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>	
	Complete the reading assignment.	2.5 hrs.	
	Complete Unit 9 Assignment 1: Drafting Legal Issues and Rules in an IRAC.	4.5 hrs.	
	Work on Project Part 3.	3 hrs.	
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 9 Assignment 1: Drafting Legal Issues and Rules in an IRAC	2%
	Labs	Unit 9 Lab 1: <i>Markowitz v. Helen Homes of Kendall Corporation</i>	2%
	Project	Project Part 2: Due (ePortfolio)	5%

<p><b>Unit 10: APPLYING THE IRAC PROCESS</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the IRAC process.</li> <li>• Utilize the IRAC process in preparing a case brief.</li> </ul>			<p><b>Total outside work:</b> 21 hours</p>
<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 6, pp. 153–162</li> <li>• <i>Crawford v. State</i></li> </ul>		
<b>OUTSIDE WORK</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>	
	Complete the reading assignment.	3.5 hrs.	
	Complete Unit 10 Assignment 1: Drafting Conclusions in an IRAC	4.5 hrs.	
	Work on Project Part 3.	3 hrs.	
	Study for Final Exam.	5 hrs.	
	Study for Laboratory Final.	2 hrs.	
	Complete Project Part 3 and upload to ePortfolio.	3 hrs.	
<b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b>	<b>Grade Allocation</b> (% of all graded work)
	Assignments	Unit 10 Assignment 1: Drafting Conclusions in an IRAC	2%
	Labs	Unit 10 Lab 1: <i>Crawford v. State</i>	2%

<p><b>Unit 11: Validating Cases; Course Review and Final Examinations</b></p> <p>Upon completion of this unit, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize Shepard's case validation tools.</li> <li>Utilize LEXIS to ensure a case is still good law.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Total outside work:</b> NA</p>	
<p><b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hames &amp; Ekern, Chapter 9</li> </ul>		
<p><b>GRADED ACTIVITIES/ DELIVERABLES</b></p>	<p><b>Grading Category</b></p>	<p><b>Activity/Deliverable Title</b></p>	<p><b>Grade Allocation (% of all graded work)</b></p>
	Final Exam	Final Exam	15%
	Laboratory Final	Laboratory Final	15%
	Project	Project Part 3: Due (ePortfolio)	5%

Note: Your instructor may add a few learning activities that will change the grade allocation for each assignment in a category. The overall category percentages will not change.

## Evaluation and Grading

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### Evaluation Criteria

The graded assignments will be evaluated using the following weighted categories:

Category	Weight
Assignments	20%
Labs	20%
Project	15%
Laboratory Final	15%
Quizzes	15%
Final Exam	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grade Conversion

The final grades will be calculated from the percentages earned in the course, as follows:

Grade	Percentage
A (4.0)	90–100%
B+ (3.5)	85–89%
B (3.0)	80–84%
C+ (2.5)	75–79%
C (2.0)	70–74%
D+ (1.5)	65–69%
D (1.0)	60–64%
F (0.0)	<60%

## **Academic Integrity**

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All students must comply with the policies that regulate all forms of academic dishonesty or academic misconduct, including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, and sabotage. For more information on the academic honesty policies, refer to the Student Handbook and the Course Catalog.

*(End of Syllabus)*