This intensive class is designed to give students, particularly from Colorado and neighboring states, an appreciation of the importance of allocation of water resources in the American West. Participants will learn of the common law and civil law approaches to the distribution of water in arid regions, the transportation of water from one basin to another, and a hierarchy of competing uses for the water. Water was first viewed as an instrumentality of transportation (and the main impetus behind junking the Articles of Confederation in favor of the Constitution), later as power for industry, irrigation for agriculture, and the water resource behind the growth of cities of the American west. Las Vegas and Phoenix, for example, would have been mere refueling stations on the transcontinental railroads were it not for massive water projects to make the desert bloom. Special emphasis will be given to Colorado’s unique system of water courts and water judges.

INSTRUCTOR: Bill Thoms, J.D.

EXPECTATIONS: This is an accelerated course. You will be expected to spend an average of at least 8 hours per week reading and completing assignments. Please note that, barring extenuating circumstances, extensions will not be granted for this online course. This course is the equivalent of at least 45 clock hours of study. 70% is the minimum passing score on all tests and assignments for this course.

OBJECTIVE: Participants will learn how the law has influenced the growth of the west and the various forms of ownership that people can exercise over the inland waters of the United States. Particular emphasis will be given to adjudication of competing claims to a finite resource, water. Students will leave the course with an appreciation of the importance of water to western civilization, and the rights and duties of upstream and downstream riparians. Although this course is concerned with US water law, the student will also recognize the importance of the free flow of water between the US and its continental neighbors, Canada and Mexico.

REQUIRED TEXT: Water Law in a Nutshell, most recent edition, West Publishing Company. This book is available from The Center for Legal Studies by calling 1-800-522-7737 or Order Now Online

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED LEGAL RESOURCES:

Reading Assignments for Lesson Topics:
Lesson One: Introduction to Water Law
Read Chapter 1 in Water Law in a Nutshell (Nutshell)

Lesson Two: Riparian Water Rights
Read Chapter 2 in Nutshell

Lesson Three: The Doctrine of Prior Application
Read Chapter 3 in Nutshell
**Advanced Paralegal Certificate Course: Water Law Continued**

**Syllabus**

**Lesson Four:** States with Hybrid Water Legislation  
Read Chapters 4 & 5 in Nutshell

**Lesson Five:** Groundwater and Diffused Surface Waters  
Read Chapters 6 & 7 in Nutshell

**Lesson Six:** Governmental Regulation of Water Rights  
Read Chapters 8, 9, 10, & 11 in Nutshell

**TESTS:** For each lesson you will submit a 50-point test covering the topics in that lesson’s reading consisting of a variety of short answer questions and possibly some true/false or multiple choice questions. These assignments are due by 9:00 a.m. each Friday.

**EXAMS:** You will complete two exams. Each is worth 100 points. The Midterm exam is to be submitted with your Lesson Three Assignments; the Final exam is to be submitted with your Lesson Six Assignments.

**BULLETIN BOARD ASSIGNMENTS:** You will also post your responses to six class participation assignments. These assignments are referred to as Bulletin Board Submissions and will be submitted by either selecting Bulletin Board Submission from within the lesson material, or by selecting ‘Forums’ under Activities on the Left Hand Block.

All lesson objectives, assignments, and tests can be found in the Lesson Materials.

**GRADING:** Your grade will be based on your completion of six tests, two exams, and class participation/Bulletin Board Submissions. The exams and tests can be accessed from within the lesson material, or by selecting ‘Assignments’ under Activities on the Left Hand Block. You will have the opportunity to engage in “class participation” by using the Bulletin Board tool to respond to the bulletin board assignments throughout the course. Also, participating in the bulletin board assignments will enhance your understanding of the reading material.

**Your final grade will be figured as follows:**
- The six tests are worth 50 points each and comprise 60% of your grade.
- The two exams are worth 100 points and comprise 30% of your grade.
- Your participation in class participation assignments comprises 10% of your grade.