

BUSINESS LAW
COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS
FALL 2012

COURSE: BUSI 2301, Section No. 51; BUSINESS LAW
WHERE: WEDNESDAY 6 – 9 PM; ROOM A-222
WHO: Matthew Williams
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OFFICE HOURS: Available by appointment only.

Course Description

A study of the principles of constitutional, statutory, administrative, and case law which form the legal framework for business activities. Topics include federal and state court systems, constitutional law, torts, criminal law, contracts, agency law, personal property, real property, intellectual property, employment law, business organizations, bankruptcy, wills/estates, and consumer law.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this course is to enable students to understand the legal method, certain legal principles, and the American legal system and how they relate to the business environment. Students learn legal reasoning and analysis and acquire knowledge of substantive areas of law. The course emphasizes thinking, speaking, and writing clearly. Students should leave the course with ability to recognize legal issues, discuss them intelligently, and tolerate (or, at least, understand the source of) ambiguity in their resolution.

Course Materials

- *Dynamic Business Law* by Nancy Kubasek
- Course Packet (provided via email by instructor. Includes syllabus, course outline, assignments, and other material.)

Academic Conduct

Honesty is mandatory. There are never any exceptions. You need to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct. Violations may include cheating, plagiarism, etc. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct generally result in a grade of “F” for the course, and a referral to the appropriate academic committee for further sanctions, including suspension from school. If you have any questions about what is right or wrong, ask me.

Method of Instruction

This course uses a “case-based” approach to learning the law, presenting legal principles in the context of problems. Legal problems typically involve disputes between two parties who

disagree, deeply and (often) sincerely, about who did what to whom, what legal rules apply, how to apply them, and who should prevail. Why is this important? Because learning the law requires analysis and interpretation. The law is not mathematical or scientific. One cannot plug in the facts, push a button, and arrive at a legal decision. Law acquires meaning only in context, only when legal principles are applied to facts.

For every legal problem students should ask: What principles does it illustrate? What precedent does it set? Are its facts common or unique? How does it relate to the themes of the course? Students should pay particular attention to “You Be the Judge” cases, many of which will be the focus of class discussions.

This course will also focus on vocabulary, terminology commonly used in the legal aspects of business; the course will utilize class participation, current events, and recent case law to illustrate business law principles.

Components of Course Grade

Students will receive a numerical grade on the 4.0 scale for each course component. Students can choose between two grading options. Option A is the default. Students who wish to write an additional paper and elect Option B must do so by the date listed on the syllabus:

GRADING OPTION A		GRADING OPTION B	
Course Participation	15.00%	Course Participation	15.00%
Tort Liability Essay	5.00% *	Tort Liability Essay	5.00%*
Mid-Term 1	10.00%	Mid-Term 1	7.50%
Mid-Term 2	17.50%	Mid-Term 2	15.00%
Court Observation Paper	7.50%	Court Observation Paper	7.50%
		Legal Environment Paper	15.00%
In-Class Quizzes	20.00%	In-Class Quizzes	15.00%
Final Exam	30.00%	Final Exam	25.00%
TOTAL	100.00%	TOTAL	100.00%

**Tort Liability Essay worth 5.00% extra credit*

I will grade the Tort Liability Paper and Legal Environment Paper using the attached Grading Matrix. To enable students to understand my grading standards, all students will write and receive a grade on the tort liability essay early in the course, before they elect a grading option. However, the Tort Liability Essay is worth a maximum extra credit of 5.00% of the overall course grade. Students who choose Option B must notify me of their election in writing or via email by the dead line noted on the course schedule below. Students who do not elect Grading Option B by this date will be graded according to Option A. Students may not elect Grading Option B after that date.

Course Participation

COURSE PARTICIPATION IS CRITICAL! However, each student should not feel afraid or uncomfortable to share their thoughts and ideas openly in the classroom setting. Each student should read and think seriously about all assigned materials before class, ask and answer questions in class, take an active, constructive role in creating a classroom environment that

encourages everyone's contribution, and connect the course material to his or her life experience. There are few "right" answers in this course. There are "right" approaches to arriving at answers: identifying the important issues, understanding the legal principles relevant to those issues, and applying legal reasoning to the facts and principles. Students have many avenues to engage with, and express their questions about and understanding of, the material: class discussion, office visits, email, online chats, or any other method of communication according to each student's style of learning and individual preference.

The course participation grade will be based on class attendance, class discussion, current event articles submitted and discussed, etc.

Current Events

A substantial portion of the course participation grade will be based upon discussion of current events related to a relevant topic or area of law taught in this class. Each week, every student will be responsible for providing at least one newspaper article, magazine article, web link, social media post, etc., and each student will potentially be called on to discuss their article with the class.

I have included a list of potential newspapers, magazines, and websites that are appropriate sources for the current event discussions (this list is not exclusive, feel free to find additional resources for current events):

- New York Times
- Houston Chronicle
- USA Today
- The Economist
- The Weekly Standard
- National Review
- www.drudgereport.com
- www.abcnews.go.com
- www.newsmap.jp
- The Washington Post
- The Huffington Post
- The Wall Street Journal
- Time Magazine
- Newsweek
- www.nbcnews.com
- www.cnn.com
- www.foxnews.com

Examinations/Quizzes

Examination and Quiz questions are multiple choice, matching, and short-answers; exams and quizzes cover all materials assigned in the syllabus, contained in the course book, contained in the course packet materials, or matters discussed in class. There will be seven (7) in-class quizzes. There will be two (2) mid-terms and a final examination. Each mid-term examination is non-cumulative, save for questions on legal analysis and problem-solving. The final examination is a cumulative exam.

Student Feedback

A Feedback Form is available to students to tell me what they like or dislike and provide comments and suggestions. Students can submit feedback at any time during the semester, anonymously if they choose, by noting it on the form and leaving it in my mailbox, slipping it under my office door, or leaving it on the table before or immediately after class.

Syllabus / Course Schedule

#	DATE	TOPIC	COURSE WORK (All readings prior to class) *Course Packet
1	8/29	INTRO/WHAT IS LAW?	CH 1 – 3
2	9/5	CONSTITUTIONAL LAW	CH 4; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 1</i>
3	9/12	CON LAW/CRIMINAL LAW	CH 4; CH 5
4	9/19	TORT LAW	CH 6; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 2</i>
5	9/26	<i>MID-TERM 1</i> ; PROPERTY INTRO	CH 7
6	10/3	REAL, PERSONAL, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	CH 7; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 3</i>
7	10/10	CONTRACT LAW – INTRO	CH 8 – 13; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 4</i>
8	10/17	CONTRACT LAW – CONTINUED	CH 8 – 13; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 5</i> ; Grading Option Election Deadline
9	10/24	CONTRACT LAW – SALES & INTERNATIONAL LAW	CH 8 – 13; CH 14-15
10	10/31	<i>MID-TERM 2</i> ; BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS INTRO	CH 20 – 23
11	11/7	BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCY LAW	CH 20 – 23; CH 19; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 6</i>
12	11/14	CORPORATE LAW	CH 22
13	11/21	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
14	11/28	EMPLOYMENT LAW/CONSUMER LAW	CH 24-25; <i>IN-CLASS QUIZ 7</i>
15	12/5	FINAL REVIEW	LEGAL ENVIRONMENT PAPER DUE
16	12/12	<i>FINAL EXAM</i>	

NOTE: This syllabus schedule is subject to change. In the event that substantial changes to the course material are made, an updated syllabus will be provided by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with changes to the syllabus.