SYLLABUS – FALL 2013
LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF BUSINESS 320F
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Introduction

The primary focus of this course will be on laws that commonly impact companies. It is my hope that you will be substantially more able to help a company avoid lawsuits after completing the semester. Exams will be used to evaluate the legal content of the course.

The second focus of this course will be on business ethics. The semester journal will be the primary tool for assessing the ethics portion of the course. LEB 323 meets the requirements for the UT ethics and leadership flag.

There is no prerequisite for this course.

Course Objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Identify legal issues that arise in everyday business situations
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of business law principles and terms, and apply these principles and terms to business situations involving legal issues
- Apply legal reasoning and critical analysis to business issues involving legal questions
- Identify ethical issues and formulate defensible resolutions

GRADE COMPONENTS

A. Exams (Law) – 2/3 of total course grade
We will have three exams, and each will be worth 2/9 of your course grade. They will occur on:

EXAM 1 (22%) – Wednesday, September 25, in class
EXAM 2 (22%) – Wednesday, October 30, in class
EXAM 3 (22%) – Wednesday, December 4, in class

*Exams will assess your ability to recall and apply information. Many of the questions will require you to identify legal issues, many others will require you to apply legal ideas to a new situation, and a few of the questions will require you to apply multiple legal ideas to a single situation.

*Curves: If the class average is low, I curve exams; if the class average is high, I do not. I never “curve down”.

*Missed exams: An unexcused absence during an exam will result in a score of 0 for that exam. If an absence is excused, I will give a make up exam which may be up to 100% essay. To have an excused exam absence, you must notify me of the reason for your absence before the exam, and then provide written documentation of extreme circumstances.

B. Class participation (Ethics) – 1/9 of total course grade

Your "baseline" score in this category will be 75. It can be adjusted up or down in the following ways:

a. If you miss more than three classes, and do not have a good reason for doing so, I will deduct 10 points from your class participation score for every absence starting with the 4th.
b. For participating in class discussions, I will add points.

C. Semester journal (Ethics) – 2/9 of total course grade

Periodically, I will distribute a handout with an ethical dilemma for you to analyze. There will be a total of about 8 questions during the semester, and three of the journal entries will be collaborative efforts. Your responses will be due on **December 4.** Detailed instructions will accompany the first assignment.

D. Other possible factors

*Additions. In the case of a genuine borderline grade, I will consider two and only two factors. First, if you have made substantial progress in improving exam scores, I may add a small bonus. Second, if you have shown unusual effort by coming to office hours regularly, I again may add a small bonus. No other factors will be considered, and no extra credit assignments will be offered.

*Deductions. Although it is rarely a problem, I may also deduct points for disrupting class or for failing to follow exam instructions.

Course Grades

At the end of the course, after all curves have been made, I will follow these cut-offs for each grade level:

lowest A: 88.0 average
lowest B: 76.0 average
lowest C: 64.0 average
lowest D: 60.0 average

*Plus/minus grading. The top 1/3 of scores in a grade range will receive a "+", and the bottom 1/3 of scores in a grade range will receive a "-".

Recorders

Unless you have a particular need and have discussed it with me ahead of time, please do not record the lectures.

Laptops

I have no problem with students using laptops to take notes, and a big problem with students who use laptops to surf the Internet during class.

Before you begin using a laptop in class, you must come by an office hour or come up to me after class in person and promise that you will use your computer only for taking notes.

Textbook

Business Law by John Allison and Robert Prentice (14th Custom Edition)

Class Schedule

On each exam, approximately 20% of the questions will come directly from the textbook assignments, and from any supplemental handouts that I distribute in class. These materials will not all be covered in class. The other 80% will be on material that is covered in the lectures. I will assign specific pages at the end of most lectures. Below is the list of topics that we will cover. Some will take a single day, while others will take as many as four days to cover. Ethics discussions and assignments will accompany many of the topics.

1. Introduction and Sources of Law
2. Court Systems and Alternative Dispute Resolution
3. The Constitution
4. Landlord-Tenant Law
5. Torts
6. Product liability
7. Contracts
8. Wills and Estates
9. Agency and Business Organizations
10. Intellectual Property
11. Employment Law
12. Bankruptcy
13. Ethics I: Systems and Methods
14. Ethics II: Behavioral Ethics
15. Criminal Law

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The McCombs School of Business has no tolerance for acts of scholastic dishonesty. The responsibilities of both students and faculty with regard to scholastic dishonesty are described in detail in the BBA Program's Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty at http://www.mccombs.utexas.edu/BBA/Code-of-Ethics.aspx. By teaching this course, I have agreed to observe all faculty responsibilities described in that document. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all student responsibilities described in that document. If the application of the Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty to this class or its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, the integrity of the University, and the value of our academic brand, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. You should refer to the Student Judicial Services website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/ to access the official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty as well as further elaboration on what constitutes scholastic dishonesty.

Campus Safety and Security

Please note the following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ :

.. Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

.. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

.. Students requiring assistance in evacuation should inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

.. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

.. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

.. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050

.. Further information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency.