Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
College of Business  
Standardized Course Syllabus – Fall 2012

Course Number: BLAW 3310.001  
Course Name: Legal Environment of Business  
Time/Location: Mon 7:00-9:30 p.m. OCNR 131  
Instructor: Dr. John D. Bell  
Office: Wells Fargo Tower, 615 N. Upper Broadway, Suite 1100, Corpus Christi, TX 78401  
Phone: (361) 888-9201  
Email: jdbell@wbwpc.com  
Office Hours: One-half hour per week in classroom after end of class.  
Optional Materials: Study Guide to accompany text  

Course Description:  
An introduction to the legal systems of government, business and society. Includes coverage of ethics, the judicial process, basics of contracts law, constitutional issues, business torts and crimes, creditor/debtor relationships, business organizations, international law, environmental law, and various aspects of regulation of business.

Course Objectives:  
By the end of this course, the students will be able to:  
• understand the fundamental concepts and operations of the U.S. legal system and the four sources of law (constitutions, legislation, administrative agencies, and courts).  
• understand the basic principles and doctrines pertaining to key substantive topics in business law, including torts, criminal law, contracts, debtor/creditor relationships, negotiable instruments, business organizations, property, and the regulation of business.  
• apply legal principles and doctrines to factual situations.  
• recognize the role of law in relation to ethics, politics, and the social order.  

Relationship to Other Coursework:  
This course provides an overview of American business law. Students will gain an understanding of the various legal and regulatory influences that affect businesses. The concepts will be useful as a basis for considering and applying information learned in later coursework.  

Instructional Methodology:  
Instruction will include lecture, class discussions, handouts, and videos. Emphasis will be placed on practical application of theories presented. Development of critical thinking skills is also important and will be encouraged through class discussions. Current events and personal experiences of students that illustrate material covered in class will be used to demonstrate practicality and usefulness of course material.
Performance Evaluation and Grading:

Exams: Three major exams will be given, each consisting of 90% objective questions and 10% essay questions. Students must bring a Scantron (882ES) and #2 pencils. The exams will be based upon text, handouts, lectures and class discussions.

Make-Up Exams: No make-up exams will be offered except when arranged with the instructor a week in advance of the exam date. If an exam is missed, the student may take a comprehensive final exam in order to make up the missed grade. Additionally, the comprehensive final is an option for any student desiring to substitute it for the lowest test grade on the three regular exams or for the Quiz score below.

Quizzes: Twelve (12) short quizzes (5 questions each) will be given at the end of each class in order to provide feedback on the understanding of material. The quizzes will relate to material covered during that class period. The lowest two quiz scores will be deleted, and the average of the remaining ten (10) scores will count as an additional exam grade.

Grading: The regular exams will count for 75% of the final grade, and the average of the quizzes/class assignments will count for 25% of the grade. As noted above, the comprehensive final exam can be used to replace the lowest of the regular exam grades or the quiz average. A letter grade will be determined based on the percentage earned of total points possible, as follows: A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: < 60%. In some instances, a curve may be applied in determining letter grades.

Participation and Attendance: Attendance and class participation will be a determining factor for final grades, particularly in borderline cases. Attendance will be taken each class and noted. Participation in class discussion and responsiveness to questions from the instructor will be noted as well.

Oral and Written Communication Content:

Law involves many difficult concepts, and class discussions will be a means of exploring problematic areas. Students are expected to come to class prepared to ask and answer questions. The Socratic method will be used to elicit student responses and encourage critical thinking about cases, text readings, and other information. In addition, students are encouraged to share personal experiences and other issues that relate to class material. Exams will contain essay questions to encourage writing and analytical skills. In-class assignments or a legal issues paper may be used to encourage development of research and writing skills.

Technology Applications:

Students are encouraged to use electronic study aids provided by the text publisher, such as on-line quizzes and additional readings. Communication with instructor by e-mail is encouraged. The student may be required to utilize technology for research assignments or to access supplemental materials. Substantively, the course covers technology topics, such as e-commerce, internet, and e-contract legal issues. On-line quiz practice is advisable at: http://www.cengage.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20bi&product_isbn_issn=9780324786156

Ethical Perspective:

Ethics will be discussed continuously throughout the course, as ethics and law are closely intertwined. Cases, class discussion topics, and many of the required paper assignments will involve ethics. Exams will also include questions with ethical dimensions.

Global Perspective:

In addition to a chapter on International Law, the increasing globalization of business will be discussed in conjunction with various cases and discussion questions. As the focus is U.S. law, however, the global perspectives are peripheral to most of the substantive topics covered.
Demographic Diversity Perspective:
Certain chapters cover discrimination and equal protection, and the text uses demographic diversity in examples. However, demographic diversity is not a particular focus of this course.

Political, Social, Legal, Regulatory, and Environmental Perspectives:
The course is primarily focused on these issues. The political arena is central to the creation and operation of the legal system, from Constitutional provisions to local government ordinances. Laws emanate from social concerns, and these are discussed to explain the history and reasoning of legal concepts. The various sources of law and business regulation are covered extensively in each segment of the course. Environmental issues receive attention through multiple chapter highlights, and a chapter on Environmental Law is included.

Attendance Policy:
Attendance in class is expected. Zeroes earned on exams, quizzes and assignments due to absences may significantly influence final grades. For expected or planned absences involving an exam, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor and arrange to take the exam early. In the event of an unexpected absence involving exams it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor as soon as possible after the absence.

Academic Honesty:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) All assignments and exams are expected to be done independently unless otherwise specifically noted in the instructions.

Major Field Test:
The Major Field Test is required for all students pursuing the Bachelor of Business Administration degree and will be administered in the MGMT 43898, Administrative Policy and Strategy course. To prepare for this test, business majors are advised to retain their class notes, textbooks and other relevant materials from this class and the other business core courses and to fine-tune their readiness this Test by completing the online Major Field Test review available through the College of Business website at www.cob.tamucc.edu.

Dropping Class:
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. March 30, 2012, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeals:
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to
first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Code of Ethics:
This course, and all other courses offered by the College of Business (COB), requires all of its students to abide by the COB Student Code of Ethics (available at www.cob.tamu.edu). Provisions and stipulations in the code are applicable to all students taking College of Business courses regardless of whether or not they are pursuing a degree awarded by the COB.

Disability Statement
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.

Summary of Topical Coverage:

**TOPIC HOURS**

Amer. Legal System................................................................................................................................... 7.0
Torts ............................................................................................................................................................ 2.0
Criminal Law ........................................................................................................................................... 2.0
Contracts ..................................................................................................................................................... 5.0
Sales/Consumer Law .................................................................................................................................. 4.5
Business Organizations .......................................................................................................................... 5.0
Agency ....................................................................................................................................................... 2.0
Employment Law ...................................................................................................................................... 1.5
Negotiable Instruments ............................................................................................................................ 2.0
Creditor/Debtor .......................................................................................................................................... 2.5
Competition .............................................................................................................................................. 1.5
Property ..................................................................................................................................................... 1.5
Environ. Reg ............................................................................................................................................. 1.0
International Law ...................................................................................................................................... 1.5
EXAMS ...................................................................................................................................................... 6.0
Total ...................................................................................................................................................... 45.0
CLASS SCHEDULE – Fall 2012

UNIT 1
Aug 27 - Chapter 1 – The Historical and Constitutional Foundations
Sep  3 - LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
Sep 10 - Chapter 2 – Ethics and Business Decision Making
        Chapter 3 – Court and Alternative Dispute Resolution
Sep 17 - Chapter 4 – Torts and Cyber Torts
        Chapter 5 – Intellectual Property and Internet Law
Sep 24 - Chapter 6 – Criminal Law
        Chapter 7 – Cyber Crime
Oct  1 - Exam on Chapters 1 - 7

UNIT 2
Oct  8 - Chapter 8 – Contracts: Nature, Classification, Agreement and Consideration
        Chapter 9 – Contracts: Capacity, Legality, Assent and Form
Oct 15 - Chapter 10 – Contracts: Third Party Rights, Discharge, Breach & Remedies
        Chapter 11 – Sales and Leases: Formation, Title and Risk of Loss
Oct 22 - Chapter 12 – Sales and Leases: Performance and Breach
        Chapter 13 – Warranties, Product Liability and Consumer Law
        Chapter 14 – Negotiable Instruments
Oct 29 - Chapter 15 – Checks and Banking in the Digital Age
        Chapter 16 – Creditors’ Rights and Bankruptcy
Nov  5* - Exam on Chapters 8-16

UNIT 3
*Nov 5 - Chapter 22 – Promoting Competition
Nov 12 - Chapter 17 – Agency
        Chapter 18 – Employment Law
Nov 19 - Chapter 19 – The Entrepreneur’s Options
        Chapter 20 – Corporations
        Chapter 21 – Financing, Investor Protection and Corporate Governance
Nov 26 Chapter 23 – Personal Property, Bailments and Insurance
        Chapter 24 – Real Property and Environmental Law
        Chapter 25– International Law in a Global Economy
Dec  3 - Exam on Chapters 17-25
Dec 10 - Optional Comprehensive Final Exam

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