Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
College of Business  
Course Syllabus – Fall 2014

Course Number: BLAW 3310.005
Course Name: Legal Environment of Business
Instructor: Mara Schechter Butler  
Office: OCNR 378  
Phone: (361) 825-2493  
E-mail: mschechterbutler@tamucc.edu

Class Times: 3310.004 Thurs. 7-9:30 OCNR 116

Office Hours:

<table>
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<th>OFFICE HOURS:</th>
<th>You may contact me via E-mail and/or voicemail.</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00-7:00 Thurs. or by appointment</td>
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Optional Materials: Study Guide to accompany text
Prerequisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the legal systems of government, business and society, including coverage of ethics, 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.

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. Please note that any content of this course is for educational purposes only and not to be taken as legal advice.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY: Instruction includes lecture, discussion, handouts, assignments, 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. Recent cases, current events and student experiences will be used to demonstrate practicality and usefulness of course material. Power Point presentations which outline each class are available on Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: After completing this course, students should 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.
- Recognize the role of law in relation to ethics, politics, and the social order.
- Use critical thinking skills to apply legal theories and doctrines to factual situations.
PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND GRADING:

Grading: Grades will be based on your average of four exams and a comprehensive final exam. The lowest grade on these five exams will be dropped. Class participation and attendance will be taken into account and can raise a borderline grade to the next higher grade. As well, there may be class quizzes and the possibility of extra credit. Both are at the discretion of the professor. A letter grade will be determined based on the percentage earned as follows: A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 0-59%. In some instances, a curve may be applied in determining letter grades.

Exams: Four regular exams, and a comprehensive final exam worth 100 points each, based on text, handouts, assignments, lecture, and class discussions. Objective, essay, and short answer questions. Scantrons (882ES) and #2 pencil required.

Make-up Exams: No make-up exams, except in extraordinary circumstances (defined by instructor). For known absences, exams may be taken early or with another section of the class if arranged in advance. If an exam is missed, the comprehensive exam may be taken to make up the grade.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONTENT:
Law involves many difficult concepts, and class discussions will be a means of exploring problematic areas. Readings are mandatory. 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, readings, and other information. In addition, students are encouraged to share personal experiences and other issues that relate to class material. Exams will contain short answer/essay questions to encourage writing and analytical skills. In-class assignments often involve writing and analytical skills.

TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS:
Students are encouraged to use electronic study aids provided by the text publisher, such as on-line quizzes and additional readings. E-mail is encouraged for communication. Substantively, the course covers technology topics, such as e-commerce, internet, and e-contract legal issues. However, recording lectures is not permitted.

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 legal issues paper assignments 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. Environmental issues receive attention through multiple chapter highlights, and a chapter on Environmental Law is included.
ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance in class is expected, as it is important for many reasons. Class lectures and discussions are important for learning and integrating the material. Class attendance and participation will be taken into consideration and applied to students’ grade point averages at the end of the semester—see grading guidelines. The instructor has discretion in this, as in other grading procedures. 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 or with another section of the class. 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. In extraordinary circumstances (as defined by the instructor) a student can make up the exam, as long as they do so before the next class session. Normally, a student must take the comprehensive final to substitute for the missed exam. NOTE: Rarely are absences deemed “excused.”

DROPPING A 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. April 11, 2014 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

MAJOR FIELD TEST:
The Major Field Test (MFT) is required for all students pursuing the Bachelor of Business Administration degree and will be administered in the MGMT 4388, 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 for the MFT by completing the online MFT review available through the COB website at www.cob.tamucc.edu.

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, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a 0 on the assignment.

STUDENT ETHICS CODE:
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 online at www.cob.tamucc.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.

GRADE APPEALS:
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.
**DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS:**
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 call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**STATEMENT OF CIVILITY:**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.
**READING ASSIGNMENTS**
Assigned Chapters must be read prior to class
(These are tentative dates and will be modified in class as class progresses.)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-28</td>
<td>Introduction, Chap. 1&lt;br&gt; Chap. 2&lt;br&gt; Chap. 3</td>
<td>Constitutional Foundations&lt;br&gt; Ethics &amp; Business Decision Making&lt;br&gt; Courts &amp; Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-4</td>
<td>Chap. 4-5&lt;br&gt; Chap. 6</td>
<td>Torts and Cyber Torts; Intellectual Property &amp; Internet Law&lt;br&gt; Criminal Law and Cyber Crimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>EXAM I</td>
<td>(over Chapters 1-6)</td>
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<td>9-18</td>
<td>Chap. 7&lt;br&gt; Chap. 8-9</td>
<td>Agreement &amp; Consideration in Contracts&lt;br&gt; Capacity, Legality and Enforceability&lt;br&gt; Contract Performance, Breach and Remedies</td>
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<td>9-25</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>10-2</td>
<td>Chap. 10, Chap. 11</td>
<td>Sale and Leases: Performance and Breach in Sales and Lease Contracts</td>
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<td>10-9</td>
<td>EXAM II</td>
<td>(over Chapters 7-11)</td>
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<td>10-16</td>
<td>Chap. 17</td>
<td>Agency</td>
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<td>10-23</td>
<td>Chap. 18</td>
<td>Employment Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-30</td>
<td>EXAM III</td>
<td>(over Chapters 17-18)</td>
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<td>11-6</td>
<td>Chap. 19&lt;br&gt; Chap. 20</td>
<td>The Entrepreneur’s Options&lt;br&gt; Corporations</td>
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<td>11-13</td>
<td>Chap. 13&lt;br&gt; Chap. 14</td>
<td>Negotiable Instruments&lt;br&gt; Checks &amp; Banking in the Digital Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>EXAM IV</td>
<td>(Chapters 13, 14, 19 &amp; 20)</td>
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<td>12-4</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>Cumulative</td>
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