

BLAW 2361 Syllabus

BLAW 2361 Legal Environment of Business

Instructor

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Course Description

A survey of basic features of the American legal system and legal aspects of business transactions. Topics include the nature and sources of law, court systems and procedures, agency, torts, contracts, ethics, and government regulation of business.

Scope and Nature of the Course

Laws surround us in Western society. Daily, we enter into contracts at the grocery store or a fast food restaurant. When your car is low on fuel, you pull into the service station to fill up with gasoline. There you choose to pay at the pump. Without talking to any other party, you insert your credit card. Yes, you have entered into an implicit contract. As you pull back onto the main road, a car hits you. Tort issues arise. Were you and/or the other car negligent? Will there be a lawsuit arising from this accident?

This course covers major legal issues relating to business law. You will study areas such as jurisdiction, torts, contracts, and agency and will get a general awareness of these legal concepts. The purpose of this course is to give you a basic understanding of what is required legally of you and others. Obtaining this core knowledge will allow you to proactively prevent legal issues. If problems arise, however, you should get legal help and representation, since this course will not make you a lawyer.

Much of this material is organized by topics and theoretical explanations. You will study a new language—legal terminology—but you will also be required to learn to use the language. Case law and hypothetical fact situations will allow you to practice working with these procedural and substantive areas. When working with facts, you will learn to recognize legal problems. What issues arise to give rise to a potential lawsuit? By using the applicable rules of law, you will work as the “judge” to make a ruling in the case. Of course, by recognizing the plaintiff’s and defendant’s positions, you will obtain a more complete understanding of how law works. Interestingly, it is much like explaining an elephant’s physical attributes. Depending on which side you are looking from, descriptions will vary from person to person. From the front, the pachyderm has a trunk, large eyes, perhaps tusks, mouth, tongue, and ears. Yet from the rear, the description of the same mammal would be quite different. In law, from the same set of facts, the plaintiff and defendant have different explanations, memories, and perceptions of what actually occurred. That’s why lawsuits arise.

Course Goals

The generalized learning objectives in this course are as follows:

- explain the concept of jurisdiction and its importance;
- describe the design of the court system and its general method of operation;
- explain the litigation system and alternative methods of dispute resolution;

- describe the general function of the United States Constitution and relevant amendments;
- recognize the purpose of the tort system, types of torts, and elements of each;
- explain the elements of common law contracts and their application;
- understand the basic knowledge of the scope and application of Article 2 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC);
- explain the recognition of the law of agency, types, and effect; and
- recognize the law as a system—shaping social behavior and impacting ethical conventions.

Course Materials

The text required for this course is:

Jentz, Miller, and Cross. *Business Law: Text and Summarized Cases: Legal, Ethical, Global, and E-Commerce Environment*, 11th alternate edition. South-Western, Cengage Learning. 2010. (ISBN-13:978-0-324-59616-8 or ISBN-10:0-324-59616-2)

The text also includes an [online interactive study center](#) with the following features:

- Internet exercises,
- interactive quizzes,
- key terms, and
- case problem sample answers.

This site serves as an excellent supplemental study aid for students enrolled in this course, and at the end of each lesson, you are directed to the online self-assessments available on this site.

Course Procedure

The BLAW 2361 course content is divided into ten lessons. In these lessons, you will learn how to evaluate issues and structure a legal argument. Each lesson begins with a list of learning objectives. Read these objectives before you read the assigned chapters in the textbook. Because legal terminology can be difficult to wade through, you will understand the material better if you carefully read one lesson and do the parallel assignment before starting another. Most individual cases, e.g., *Buckeye Check Cashing, Inc. v. Cardegna* (pages 41-42), will not be specifically covered on the final exam. However, reading these decisions may better help you to understand the theoretical concepts. If you are required to understand the details of a case, I will make special note in the lesson. The lesson content contains explanations of the material covered and is quite helpful in gathering an overview of the legal theories. At the end of each chapter in the text is a section entitled “Terms and Concepts,” which highlights new vocabulary terms introduced. The “Questions and Case Problems” are thinking questions often taken from real lawsuits. This type of problem prepares you for the fact situation essay portion on the final exam. You should periodically return to review the previous chapters to reinforce the material, since the final exam is cumulative.

Scheduling Your Time

This is a self-paced course, so it is important to use your time effectively. Completing one lesson's quiz and essays every 10 to 14 days is recommended. **You must wait to receive each lesson's essays back before submitting any of the next lesson's assignments (either quiz or essays).** Constructive comments from me will improve your performance and retention. While your quizzes will be scored automatically, I have 10 business days to grade and return essays to you.

To help you plan out your progress throughout the course, complete the [Course Study Schedule \(.pdf\)](#) before you begin your first lesson.

Assignments

Each lesson in this course ends with a pair of assignments (a quiz and essays) that you will submit for grading. Assignments will vary in nature. Some will be short answer and fact situation problems, while others will be predominantly objective questions. For essays, type answers in your own words. The better you understand the material in the assignment, the better your grade will be on the exams. As stated in the preceding section, **you must wait to receive each lesson's graded essays back before submitting any part of the next lesson's assignments (either quizzes or essays).**

You will submit each portion of the ten assignments (both quizzes and essays) online. Instructions for how to complete assignments are included in the course content. Please note that some assignments are comprised of two parts: a quiz and an essay.

Exams

There will be one midcourse exam taken after Lesson 4, and one final exam taken after Lesson 10. **You must submit all prerequisite assignments before requesting to take an exam.** For more information on how to request to take an exam and how to locate a suitable proctor, refer to the About Your Exam section of the [Correspondence Course Information \(.pdf\)](#) page.

Two-thirds of each exam will be objective questions, similar to those completed in the ten assignments. One-third of each exam will be fact situation problems stressing your use of the law learned in this correspondence course. These exams will be taken in proctored environments and without notes. The final exam will be comprehensive, stressing the new material covered after the midcourse. Yet the introductory concepts of courts and torts are so vital to business law that they must be incorporated into your cumulative base knowledge of law.

Grades

Your grade for the semester will be determined as follows:

Lesson Quizzes (10 @ 7.5 points each) = 75 points

Lesson Essays (10 @ 5 points each) = 50 points

Midcourse Exam = 100 points

Comprehensive Final Exam = 200 points

Total = 425 points

A = 381-425 points

B = 338-380 points

C = 296-337 points

D = 253-295 points

F = 252 points

No pluses or minuses will be added to your final reported grade. Again, **you must earn a score of 60 percent or better on the final exam in order to pass the course.**

Faculty-Student Contact

According to "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," faculty-student contact is very important. Even though this is a correspondence course, I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. You are welcome to e-mail me by using the Mail tool in the left-hand navigation menu. (It is important to keep all mail related to

this course contained within this TRACS site.) My policy is that during non-holiday breaks or announced away times, any email I receive between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply on the next business day.

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the Texas State Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page.

TRACS Technical Support

Texas State's Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides phone and LiveChat technical support for TRACS 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To take advantage of these services, visit [ITAC online](#) or call 512.245.ITAC (4822). Note also that a number of online TRACS tutorials are available from [TRACS Facts](#).

Before beginning this online course, it is recommended that you review the minimum hardware and software requirements and other important information available on the ITS [Course Information page](#).

Correspondence Course Information

As a correspondence studies student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with correspondence-related policies and services. To this end, I encourage you to review the [Correspondence Course Information \(.pdf\)](#) page as well as the [Correspondence Studies Student Handbook](#).

Students with Special Needs

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the [Office of Disability Services](#), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY). Students should then notify the [Office of Distance and Extended Learning](#) of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The [Texas State Academic Honor Code](#) applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community.