Syllabus
Center for Leadership Education, 660.308.01
Business Law I
Spring, 2015
(3 credits, S)

Description

This course is designed to provide students an introduction to legal reasoning and analysis. Content distinguishes forms of business, civil versus criminal law, and agency principles; intellectual property concepts, contract Law, the UCC (Uniform Commercial Code) and consumer protection are explored and discussed in the context of assigned legal cases which are intended to develop a student's ability to analyze and apply law.

Prerequisites

Introduction to Business (EN.660.105 or the equivalent)

Instructor

David A. Fisher, dafisher@jhu.edu
Office: Maryland 16 Maryland Hall, 443-846-6128
Office hours: Mondays 5:00-5:30 p.m., Tuesdays 5:00-5:30 p.m., and by appointment

Teaching/Course Assistant

Yoni Krupski, yonikrupski@gmail.com
Office: 104 Whitehead Hall, (412) 478-5212
Office hours: To Be Determined, and by appointment

Meetings

Mondays, 6:15-9:00 p.m., 2 Shaffer Hall

Textbook


Online Resources

Please log in to Blackboard for materials related to this course.
Course Objectives

(1) Students will learn about the legal system and court system in the United States.
(2) Students will learn about the sources of law in the United States.
(3) Students will learn the basics about various legal subject areas affecting businesses, including white collar crime, business entities, agency principles, alternative dispute resolution, tort law and contract law.

Course Topics

- Sources of law
- The United States legal system
- How a dispute moves through the legal system
- Alternative dispute resolution
- White collar crime
- Business entities
- Agency principles
- Intentional torts
- Negligence
- Contract law

Course Expectations & Grading

Students will be evaluated on their performance in each of the following areas (subject to modification based on circumstances):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (non-cumulative)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned exercises</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADING:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-66.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>UNIT/TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/26</td>
<td>Introduction/course overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/02</td>
<td>Sources of Law/Types of Law</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/09</td>
<td>U.S. Legal System/finding the Law</td>
<td>Chapters 1 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/16</td>
<td>First Amendment Issues</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/23</td>
<td>ADR/Business Entities/Agency</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/02</td>
<td>White Collar Crime/Review for Mid-term</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (pp. 159-61 &amp; 168-71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/09</td>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/16</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/23</td>
<td>Tort Law: Intentional Torts/Negligence</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (pp. 99-114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/30</td>
<td>Tort Law: Intentional Torts/Negligence</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (pp. 115-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/06</td>
<td>Contract Law: Agreement/Consideration</td>
<td>Ch. 7 (pp. 193-210, 216-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/13</td>
<td>Contract Law: Legality/Capacity/Genuine Assent</td>
<td>Chapter 8 (pp. 227-43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/20</td>
<td>Contract Law: Performance/Breach/Remedies</td>
<td>Chapter 9 (pp. 262-76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/27</td>
<td>Contract Law: UCC/Business Start-up Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/11</td>
<td>Final Exam (6:00 to 9:00 p.m.) in our regular classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the amount of material covered each week, cancellation of class due to weather, or other unexpected occurrences.

### Assignments & Readings

Specific assignments will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. Readings are listed above. Any additional reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard.
Ethics

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

In addition, the specific ethics guidelines for this course are:

1. Students are not to share information regarding completed assignments, exercises, quizzes, exams, etc. with students who have not yet completed those items.
2. Students are not to present false reasons for non-attendance of any scheduled class.
3. Students are not to act disrespectful in verbal or non-verbal responses to other students regarding anything said or done by those students during class periods.

You may collaborate with other students in this course, but only when:

1. The written directions for an assignment expressly state that such collaboration is permitted and you may only collaborate with those students specified in writing, or
2. The instructor or course assistant verbally indicate that collaboration is permitted in a specific in-class exercise or assignment.

On every exam, you will sign the following pledge: “I agree to complete this exam without unauthorized assistance from any person, materials or device. [Signed and dated]”

Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

You can find more information about university misconduct policies on the web at these sites:

- For undergraduates: [http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/](http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/)
- For graduate students: [http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/](http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/)

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu. No requests for special accommodations will be considered without such prior documentation and support.

Note on Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions except in cases of emergency (e.g., documented illness, death in family), religious holidays (the observance of which require restriction of daily activity), or participation in official Johns Hopkins University functions (e.g., field trips or athletic contests). In the case of absence for special personal reasons other than those mentioned above, it is the responsibility of the student to confer with the instructor as to whether the absence is to be excused. Activities sponsored or scheduled by student clubs or organizations (including fraternities and sororities) are NOT bases for excused absences, nor are athletic practices or meetings or early departure from campus for holidays or breaks. When determining whether or not to excuse an absence, the instructor may require documentary evidence. Students are expected to arrive on time for the beginning of the class period. Unexcused absences and late arrivals will have a negative impact on your grade.
Note on Class Format

This course utilizes lectures, in-class exercises and class analysis and discussion of various issues and hypothetical fact patterns. Students are required to read the assigned materials ahead of the class period in which the materials will be discussed. Students are expected to participate in in-class discussions and in-class exercises.

Other Points

✓ Attendance and participation are essential. PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL AND FUNCTIONAL. Class will begin promptly at 6:15.

✓ Instructions as to assignments and exams, as well as any modifications to the class schedule or reading assignments, will be announced during class meetings and/or emailed to the class. It is each student’s responsibility to provide an up-to-date email address and/or otherwise obtain any such information if class is missed.

✓ Work submitted late will be downgraded. Only in the event of a genuine emergency, fully and satisfactorily documented by the student, will any exception be considered.

✓ Spelling, grammar, punctuation and careless errors will affect the grades of written materials.

✓ Please proofread all work to avoid losing points unnecessarily.

✓ All written assignments must contain acknowledgment of reliance on outside sources for each point relied upon. The source of each quotation, statement, idea, assertion, theory or the like that is not the original product of the student must be documented in a footnote or endnote.

✓ Each student is expected to do his or her own work except for specified in-class exercises. Instances of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to appropriate University officials. (Please see Special Note on Student Ethics above.)

✓ Each student should keep a copy (e.g., Word file) of all assignments handed in.

✓ There is no senior option.

✓ There will be no opportunity to do extra work once the semester is completed to make up for poor performance on assigned work during the semester.
Special (Important) Notes on Grading

1. The material presented and discussed prior to the mid-term exam is, in general, more basic and straightforward, more definitional in nature, than the material presented and discussed after that exam. That material is generally more analytical and abstract. Accordingly, the final exam may seem more challenging than the mid-term exam.

Therefore, you should not take it for granted that you will necessarily perform similarly on both exams. It is imperative that you prepare, attend class and participate thoroughly throughout the semester to maximize your chance to perform well on both exams.

2. Some grading of student work includes subjectivity on the part of the instructor. For instance, two students might include all the same facts in a written assignment and reach the same conclusion. However, their analyses and the way in which the facts, analyses and conclusions are organized and communicated may be vastly different. Therefore, one of the students may get a grade that is significantly different than that of the other student.

When I have the benefit of reading and evaluating the work of the entire class within a short period of time and comparing each assignment against not only my expectations, but the body of work produced by the class as a whole, I am most likely to assign each assignment the score it deserves.

Therefore, it is unlikely that a score earned on an assignment will be changed upon my reconsidering and re-reading of a student assignment. Great deference will be afforded to the initial grading decision. If you truly believe that an assignment has been scored incorrectly, it is my policy to re-evaluate the assignment and assign it the original score unless there is a compelling reason to either raise or lower the original score.

So, I am asking that you only request that an assignment be re-evaluated if you believe an error has been made in the initial scoring of it, not if you simply hope I will adjust your grade because you feel it deserves a higher score. As noted above, a re-grade can result in a lower score than the original score as well as a higher one. And, in the vast majority of cases, the re-grade results in no change.

3. The syllabus indicates 100 points that can be earned during the semester. I also build a couple of extra-credit points into the semester. For example, the exams will each contain one or more bonus questions. Also, exceptional performance on written assignments may result in bonus points being awarded. There will be no opportunity, during the semester or afterward, for individual students to otherwise earn extra credit points.

Please do not ask me to bump up your final grade because you just missed the next grade. As noted, I give several opportunities during the semester to earn an extra few points. The exams are curved to compensate for the fact that they might be unusually difficult. (I construct new exams for each semester so the difficulty level may vary.) Your final grade is final unless due to a mathematical error in its calculation. If you earn 89 points after completing all the work, you have not earned enough points for an A-. So, please do not ask for one.

ABET Outcomes

- Ability to communicate effectively (g).
- Recognition of the need for and an ability to engage in life-long learning (i).
- Knowledge of contemporary issues (j).
**Food for Thought**

"I respect faith, but doubt is what gets you an education."  Wilson Mizner

"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."  Will Durant

“There is nothing permanent except change.”  Heraclitus

"Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored."  Aldous Huxley

“If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.”  Derek Bok, former President of Harvard University

“Many highly intelligent people are poor thinkers. Many people of average intelligence are skilled thinkers. The power of a car is separate from the way the car is driven.”  Edward de Bono

“It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated.”  Alec Bourne

“Universities should be safe havens where ruthless examination of realities will not be distorted by the aim to please or inhibited by the risk of displeasure.”  Kingman Brewster, former President of Yale University

“The classroom should be an entrance into the world, not an escape from it.”  John Ciardi

“All generalizations are dangerous.”  Alexandre Dumas

"Knowledge is a process of piling up facts; wisdom lies in their simplification."  Martin H. Fischer

“How did the scarecrow know he didn't have a brain?”  Lance W. Bledsoe

"Outside of a dog, a book is probably man's best friend, and inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."  Groucho Marx.

“I'm not final because I'm right, I'm right because I'm final.”  Judge Mills Lane

“That oral contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.”  Samuel Goldwyn