

Business Law 711

Legal Environment of Business

BASIC INFORMATION

Course Section

Section 1

Course Title

Legal Environment of Business

Meeting Time

Online Format

Meeting Place

Internet Meeting Room

Level

Graduate

Credit Hours

3 credit hours

Textbooks and Other Required Materials

The following is a list of text and supplemental materials required or recommended for this course.

Required

Textbook. *Business and Society: Stakeholders, Ethics, Public Policy*, 14th edition, Anne T. Lawrence / James Weber. ISBN → 978-0-07-802947-9. This text is a hard cover book with nineteen (19) chapters. The bookstore should have the textbook available. A student also has other on-line options for textbook orders.

Laptop. A student must have access and use of a laptop or a desktop computer to complete the assignments. A cell phone is insufficient for most course work.

Equipment. Each student should also acquire a **headset with a microphone attachment** (approximately cost is \$35) in order to participate with weekly meetings and specifically for the oral presentation to be given toward the end of the class. At a **bare minimum**, a student must use earbuds (approximate cost \$10) with his built-in microphone. The reason for the hardware requirement is to eliminate the echo that occurs when a student uses his laptop's built-in microphone and built-in speaker. The echo is so bad that it disrupts class participation and oral presentations.

Recommended

No other materials or equipment should be necessary.

COURSE INFORMATION

Official Course Description

Today's managers are expected to make decisions that comply with legal and ethical principles. This course increases awareness of legal and regulatory controls that impact business dealings of government agencies, consumers, employees, competitors, investors, and the general public. Students will be helped to identify and address major legal and ethical issues to avoid potential liability and to maintain ethical integrity in a competitive global marketplace.

Prerequisites

Graduate standing & approval of Graduate Director, College of Business & Global Affairs.

Co-requisites

None

Course Resources

Blackboard

This course utilizes Blackboard on a daily basis. A student must ensure he/she is enrolled in and has access to this Blackboard course in order to receive basic course information as well as course announcements and grade information.

Word

This course awards points during the semester for quality documents using Word as the word processing program. A student should have access to and submit all assignments using Word.

PowerPoint

This course awards points during the semester for a quality professional presentation which will include the use of PowerPoint software. A student should be (or become) familiar with the features in PowerPoint in order to deliver appropriate presentations during class.

Westlaw Database

This course awards points during the semester for research based activities which will include the use of the Westlaw Database which has law specific information. By virtue of being enrolled at UTM, a student has access to this database through the UTM Library website; therefore, no additional purchase is necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes / Objectives

College Mission Statement

The college's main priority is the delivery of excellent undergraduate education in business disciplines as well as international studies and political science. Student-faculty interaction is central to this education process. Moreover, the college emphasizes experiential-learning opportunities, a global outlook, quality

graduate instruction, scholarly research, university and professional service, and west Tennessee economic development. (Approved at November 22, 2013 CBGA Faculty Meeting)

Learning Objectives related to the B.S.B.A. Mission

Graduates of the on-line M.B.A. program will demonstrate:

- a. **effective written and oral communication,**
- b. effective leadership and teamwork,
- c. **an understanding of the integrated nature of business functions,**
- d. the ability to think critically and use analytical approaches in making effective decisions within a dynamic business environment, and
- e. **an understanding of ethical dimensions in business decisions.**

(The bold type indicates the learning objectives on which this class focuses.)

Course Specific Objectives: (As approved by discipline/college faculty)

This class focuses on two (2) areas:

- **Business Ethics** → The student should be able:
 - to identify and analyze the ethical issues in business situations,
 - to identify and describe the affected stakeholders and their viewpoints in an ethical dilemma and the parties who should be involved in the decision making process,
 - to identify and evaluate alternatives and their resulting consequences in resolving the ethical dilemma, and
 - to identify and implement the appropriate course of action in resolving the dilemma with attention to the pros and cons of the chosen action.
- **Business Law** → The student should be able:
 - to identify and describe legal issues in business situations involving consumers, employees, shareholders, and other businesses.
 - to understand practical steps in structuring business transactions to avoid legal problems.
 - to know when an attorney at law is needed on structuring and/or enforcing a business transaction.

Transfer Guidelines

All transfers of courses normally taught in the College of Business and Global Affairs must be approved in advance. Please make requests for transfer credit (if needed) to the MBA Coordinator.

Course Communications

Mass Communication

The instructor will make general course related announcements to students using Blackboard as an announcement and/or using a group email.

Private Communication

Because this course is in the online format, the professor will not keep regular office hours but instead will check email at least one time per day and respond to student emails as quickly as possible. If a student needs to set up a private phone conference, arrangements will be made to do so at a mutually convenient time.

Student Email

I will gladly reply to any well-worded and thoughtful student email I receive; however, I will not reply to a poorly worded or sloppy email question or request. The following email is an example of what I consider to be a poorly worded / sloppy email request:

i ned hlep w/ some stuf in class. wen can i come buy?

This message is loaded with problems. Words are misspelled; the student's problem is not described; I do not know who the student is or what class he is taking. Messages such as this will receive a reply as follows:

Request rejected. Resubmit.

The student should resubmit an appropriately worded email request such as:

Dr. _____,

I am a student in your online BLaw 711 course. I am having trouble with Q2A which is due in a few days. The link on Blackboard does not appear to be working. I have tried it on two different computers and cannot get it to work. Do you have a suggestion for me? I would be glad to communicate through email or to speak to you in person if necessary. The best number to reach me is xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Joe Schmoe

This request is much better because the student adequately identified himself, described his problem, tried to solve his problem, asked for assistance in a professional manner, and did not wait until the day the assignment is due.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS / EXPECTATIONS

Introduction

Ethics and law affect every area of business. As such, a student should develop an appreciation for the policies behind the ethical codes and business law topics. In this class, each item of quality work a student produces will yield him points. a student should not expect a high grade in this class without significant effort. Each student should insure he can access to Blackboard and check Blackboard on a regular basis for announcements and course materials.

Course Assessments

Graded Items

The following items will be used to measure a final grade in this course:

Introduction

Quarter 1 – Chapters 1 through 7

Quarter 2 – Chapters 8 through 14

Quarter 3 – Chapters 15 through 19

Quarter 4 – Oral Presentation and Final Exam

Grading Scale

The following grading scale will be used to calculate a student's the final grade for the semester:

A	=	90% to 100%
B	=	80% to 89%
C	=	70% to 79%
D	=	60% to 69%
F	=	0% to 59%

Extra Points

Individual Basis

No extra points for any category are available on an individual basis.

Class Basis

In the event any extra points offered, all students will receive the same opportunity and time frame to benefit from said points.

Course Evaluations

Mid-term grade calculation

Because this course is so short in duration, mid-term grades are not calculated.

Final grade calculation

The student with the highest number of total points at the end of the semester (i.e., “the point leader”) will receive a score of 100% with the other students’ scores calculated as a percentage thereof. For example, if the point leader accumulates 315 points for the semester and another student accumulates 265 points, that student’s percentage is 84.1% or a “B” based on the grading scale listed above.

Grade calculation discrepancy

A student who disagrees with the grade that I calculate must present evidence of the error by using the contents of this syllabus and by providing his own supporting calculations for what he believes his grade should be.

Appealing a final grade

All exam papers (including the final exam), class assignments, etc. will be destroyed four (4) weeks after the start date of the next semester unless the student officially appeals his grade within the first three (3) weeks of the next semester in accordance with the UTM Catalog.

Major Assignments and Exam

Introduction, Chapter Videos, and Chapter Assignments

Students must be active listeners and participants with the material. Lectures and related PowerPoint files will be available on Blackboard.

Schedule

This syllabus contains a daily schedule with the dates for the topics to be discussed; however, some shifting of coverage may occur. Students will be asked to discuss issues in the reading and cases listed on the schedule for coverage for those days. Preparation and participation are required to earn the points available.

Participation level

A student should attempt to participate more than the minimum (i.e., a slacker) and less than the maximum (i.e., a gunner).

Points

For the course introduction and for each chapter, a student can earn points for completing various exercises. Those exercises could be in the form of watching videos, taking on-line quizzes, posting information on the discussion board forums, or other types of participation-type exercises.

Chapter items. Each chapter has two (2) discussion board items on which to comment. A student should engage in a discussion / debate for one (1) of the discussion board items. Each forum will contain instructions on what material should be used as the basis for the discussion in that forum. The forum may focus on a chapter problem, a video clip, a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, a written scenario, or other exercise.

Procedure for posting comments. Each chapter will have a separate forum and may contain additional instructions on the thread content. Please post your comments in the appropriate forum. Do not make one posting for all the items presented for the chapter. The discussion will flow better if all comments for a particular topic are grouped appropriately.

Credit. Regarding my expectations on credit-worthy discussion board posts, a student should use the concepts and terminology in the textbook as well as his own logic and experience to guide him in answering the questions. An appropriate length for the initial comment would be a well-worded four (4) to six (6) sentence paragraph to serve as the “jumping point” for the discussion. The length of a responsive type comment that engages in discussion or debate with another student depends on the type of debate taking place. In other words, either a short or long post may suffice. A student is free to post multiple comments if he so desires; however, he will earn points based on the quality not the quantity of postings. He is free to post an eighty-five (85) sentence comment; however, please be advised, that I may stop reading after sentence number five (5). All comments for each chapter’s discussion board forums are due as indicated on the Syllabus Schedule; however, consistently posting comments close to the deadline is not appropriate. A student should try to give his classmates and me enough time to respond to the posted statements if we so desire.

Live Sessions

I will conduct a live **Zoom session once or twice per quarter at various times as noted on the syllabus schedule.** The first portion of each session is devoted to audio and video testing. The rest of the session will consist of a discussion on the chapters and related questions you may have. The session

will be recorded. You may attend all the live sessions, but you are **required** to log into one (1) of the five (5) live sessions and to watch (at a time convenient for you) any of the sessions you do not personally attend. You must give a good faith effort to get your microphone and camera working prior to your scheduled PowerPoint oral presentation. The purposes of each Zoom session are (a) to insure your microphone and camera are working appropriately, (b) to answer any of your questions on the assignments or the material, and (c) to continue the conversations taking place on the discussion board.

Quarterly Assignments

Written Ethics Assignment

One (1) ethics assignment is given in order to discuss and dissect ethical conduct in the workplace. The assignment involves an ethical analysis of current events as they are addressed in *The Wall Street Journal* or another thoughtfully written article. The assignment is also designed to evaluate a student's writing and / or analytical skills and test a student's ability to follow correctly a detailed set of instructions. The assignment's due date is listed on the Syllabus Schedule. The due date will be strictly enforced. A student should insure his computer has the ability to access Word 2013 files. A free compatibility file (or pack) is available for download on the Microsoft website. A student should also submit his work using a secret number as assigned by the instructor and revealed to the student on Blackboard. In the "My Grades" section of Blackboard, each student will have access to his randomly assigned two digit secret number and should **not** disclose that number to any other students in the class. That number should be used as indicated in the assignment instructions so that all work is anonymous.

Written Business Law Assignment

One (1) assignment is given in order to discuss and dissect business law related topics in the workplace. The assignment involves a legal analysis of current events as they are addressed in *The Wall Street Journal* or another thoughtfully written article. The assignment is also designed to evaluate a student's writing and / or analytical skills and test a student's ability to follow correctly a detailed set of instructions. The assignment's due date is listed on the Syllabus Schedule. The due date will be strictly enforced. A student should insure his computer has the ability to access Word 2013 files. A free compatibility file (or pack) is available for download on the Microsoft website. A student should also submit his work using a secret number as indicated on Blackboard. In the "My Grades" section of Blackboard, each student will have access to his randomly assigned two digit secret number and should **not** disclose that number to any other students in the class. That number should be used as indicated in the assignment instructions so that all work is anonymous.

Oral Ethics & Business Law Case Presentation

One (1) oral presentation per student is expected in order to discuss and dissect both ethical conduct and business law in the workplace. A student may earn up to fifty (50) points on this assignment. No written work is to be submitted, but an appropriate PowerPoint slideshow is required.

Time Slots. In Quarter 4 of the Syllabus Schedule, several time slots are available for setting a time to present a case. Time slots are filled on a "first come / first served" basis through the Discussion Board forum established for that purpose. Please make every effort to select one of the available time slots. If none of the listed times is possible, please let me know so we can find a mutually convenient time on the date so indicated in the syllabus. Keep in mind that recording each presentation will require me to be in my UTM office not my home; therefore, I also have limited times of availability. The student must submit his PowerPoint slide file to me through the Blackboard Assignment feature at least three (3) hours before his presentation date. The reasons for this deadline are (a) to encourage a thoughtful presentation,

(b) to discourage last-minute procrastination, and (c) to insure a working file is provided for the presentation. The PowerPoint file that a student submits to me through Blackboard will be the one used for his presentation.

Topic Selection. Each student is to choose a topic and comply with the guidelines to be released later in the course. Each student must “announce” his selection by entering the topic name and description in the appropriate discussion board forum established for that purpose. The topics are on a “first come / first serve” basis, and no duplication of topics is allowed. All topic selections must occur by the **eighteenth (18th) day of the course.**

- One previous presentation that worked well as an ethical and legal dilemma was the use of traffic cameras to catch speeders or other traffic violations. The student explained the benefits of camera use versus both the ethical and constitutional conflicts that arose with their use. I recommend that each student try to find a current topic as a starting point for an ethical presentation. Since I have described this particular topic’s usefulness, you may NOT use it for your presentation.
- A student may **not** use the following high-profile cases because the cases are older. Fresher topics are better and are plentiful.
 - WorldCom
 - HealthSouth
 - Bernie Madoff
 - Martha Stewart and Imclone Systems
 - Waste Management
 - Enron
 - Bloomberg – Soda Pop Limit

Because each student is successfully enrolled in this graduate level course, each student should have the ability to write at the graduate level. However, a “Grammar Sheet” will be provided on Blackboard in order to help students improve their writing. In addition to the information on the “Grammar Sheet,” each course assignment must meet the following guidelines:

- Typed in grammatically correct English.
- Answers must be well organized and written in complete sentences.
- Answers must comply with any additional instructions given on the assignment.
- Answers must be arranged in sequence as outlined in the assignment and labeled appropriately.

Just as an assignment must be submitted to me through Blackboard’s Assignment tool, a graded assignment will be returned to students using that same tool. To view a graded assignment, use the same Assignment screen as used to view the assignment instructions and click on the “view/complete assignment” link. The graded assignment is the last link under “Feedback from Instructor.”

Final Examination

One final exam will be administered through Blackboard and will utilize a service entitled “Proctor U” to insure the testing environment is secure. More information regarding the testing process will be released during the first seven days of the course so that you can plan accordingly. The exam will likely be an essay style exam but may have a few objective questions. The exam will cover classroom discussions, assigned textbook chapters, questions, cases, concepts, class handouts, problem sets, and class lecture

material. It will not cover the Written Ethical Assignment, Written Business Law Assignment, or the Oral Presentations. The final exam **must** be taken in the time period allotted.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

The University of Tennessee at Martin has chosen as its primary objective quality undergraduate education. Commitment to this objective must include an obligation by all members of the University community to promote and protect the highest standards of integrity in study, research, instruction and evaluation. Dishonesty or unethical behavior does not belong at an institution dedicated to the promotion of knowledge and learning. Integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation by faculty and honest academic conduct by students. Specific integrity attributes can be found:

http://www.utm.edu/departments/conduct/new_academic_integrity.php

Standard of Conduct

When persons enroll in The University of Tennessee at Martin, they retain the rights and duties of a citizen. Additionally, they must assume the duties and observe the regulations imposed by the University community. Specific conduct attributes can be found:

<http://www.utm.edu/departments/conduct/conduct.php>

Statement of Ethics

Each student should also read CBGA's Statement of Ethics:

[http://www.utm.edu/departments/cbga/_pdfs/Statement%20of%20Values%20\(October%202014\).pdf](http://www.utm.edu/departments/cbga/_pdfs/Statement%20of%20Values%20(October%202014).pdf)

Disability Services

The University of Tennessee provides reasonable accommodations (academic adjustments and auxiliary aids) to ensure equal access to educational content and university programs for students with disabilities. Students who are eligible for and who request accommodations through the Disability Services office must provide instructors with a letter of accommodation. The Disability Services office is located in the Student Success Center, 203 Clement Hall, 731.881.7605.

<http://www.utm.edu/departments/success/disability.php>

This instructor strongly requests the letter of accommodation to be provided within the first week of the course in order to allow sufficient time to honor the accommodation.