

COURSE SYLLABUS

POLITICAL SCIENCE 323: BUSINESS LAW FOR PARALEGALS (3 semester hours)

Thursdays, 7:20 – 10:00 PM
BA - 338 (Commerce Campus)
Rock – 143 (Rockwall Campus)

Instructor: Steven Lilley, Attorney at Law
Phone (work): (903)408-4185
Phone (cell): (903)243-8519
Email: slilleylaw@gmail.com

Availability: 30 minutes after class or by appointment

Materials:

Miller, *Business Law Today: The Essentials*, Tenth Edition, ISBN# 9781133191353

Cases and Statutes as provided by the instructor

Course Description:

This course provides the paralegal student with a basic and thorough understanding of laws governing the creation and operation of businesses. Topics covered include the formation of business entities (including sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and other business structures), corporate filings, minute book preparation, ethical obligations of the paralegal working in this field, and computer applications being utilized in corporate law practice.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide an overview of the American legal system including its history and how the system is designed both at the state and Federal level
2. To cultivate skills in working with legal materials, including reading and understanding case law and statutes and being able to understand and summarize cases.

3. To provide a general understanding of fundamental business law concepts and how business law affects both businesses and individuals.
4. To understand and discuss current topics in business law and the future of business.

Expectations:

- Each week, we will be covering from one to three chapters in the textbook. You are expected to have read the corresponding chapters before class. In addition, we will also cover certain topics that may not be explicitly covered in the textbook. I have included those topics in *italics* (more may be added). You are not expected to have read any materials on those topics before class.
- Bring your textbook to class in the event it is needed to aide our discussion.
- You may take notes either by hand or via a laptop or tablet that includes a keyboard.
- Classes may not be video or audio recorded.
- No texting, phone calls or use of personal electronic devices except during breaks.
- Attendance in class is an absolute necessity, particularly since we only meet once a week. I will not be able to provide summaries or notes for anyone who is unable to attend a particular class session. Failure to attend class the day of an exam will result in a 0% on that exam, unless you are able to demonstrate that the absence was the result of an unexpected emergency.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required and roll will be taken at every class. If you miss more than 2 classes I reserve the right to drop you from the course. If a student leaves before the end of class, it will be considered 1 absence.

Grading:

Your grade will be dependent upon the following

Attendance and Participation – 10% - You are expected to attend each case as per the attendance policy. In addition, you are expected to have read and be prepared to discuss the topics of the day along with the rest of the class.

Two Semester Exams – 20% each - There will be two exams during the semester. Exam 1 will cover all material that preceeded the exam. Exam 2 will cover all material subsequent to the first Exam.

Written Assignments – 25% - There will be periodic written assignment that must be completed outside of class. The details of the assignment and the date it will be given out and due will be provided at a later and the syllabus will be supplemented accordingly.

Final Exam – 25% - The final exam will cover all material subsequent to Exam 2, it will also include a review of the concepts of *Reading and Understanding Cases* and *Reading and Understanding Statutes*

The grading system will be as follows:

A = 90% - 100% B=80%-89% C=70%-79% D=65%-69% F=64% and below

Course Schedule (Please note that these topics and dates are tentative and subject to change):

September 3 **No Class** – Please review the syllabus and be prepared for class next week.

September 10 The Constitutional Foundations – Chapter 1
The American Court System – Chapter 3
Reading and Understanding Cases

September 17 Torts and Cyber torts – Chapter 4
Intellectual Property and Internet Law – Chapter 5
Reading and Understanding Statutes

September 24 **No class**

October 1 Criminal Law and Cyber-crime – Chapter 6
Ethics and Business Decision Making – Chapter 2

October 8 **Exam 1 in class**
Agreement and Consideration in Contracts – Chapter 7

October 15 Capacity, Legality, Enforceability – Chapter 8
Contract Performance, Breach and Remedies – Chapter 9

October 22 Sales and Lease Contracts – Chapter 10
Performance and Breach in Sales and Lease Contracts – Chapter 11

October 29 Warranties, Product Liability and Consumer Law – Chapter 12
Creditor’s Rights and Bankruptcy – Chapter 15
Alternative Dispute Resolution – Chapter 3

November 5 **Exam 2 in class**
Mortgages and Foreclosure after the Recession – Chapter 16

November 12 Agency – Chapter 17
Employment Law – Chapter 18

November 19 The Entrepreneur’s Options – Chapter 19
Corporations – Chapter 20

November 26 Thanksgiving Holiday

December 3 Investor Protection, Insider Trading and Corporate Governance – Chapter 21
Antitrust Law and Promoting Competition – Chapter 22

December 10 Personal Property, Bailments, and Insurance – Chapter 23

--Course Review for Final--

December 17 **Final Exam**

Classroom Etiquette

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) You are expected to exhibit respect for the instructor and fellow students at all times. All electronic devices (except laptops) must be turned off during class. Laptop use is limited to reading notes made for class and taking notes during class. In the event you choose to use a laptop, sound features must be disabled. Surfing the internet and playing games on your laptop during class time are strictly prohibited. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from class.

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 have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University – Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132
Phone: (903)886-5150 or (903)886-5835
Fax: (903)468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

“What is Plagiarism

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized." (www.plagiarism.org)

If you plagiarize, you will receive a ZERO for the assignment in question. I also reserve the right to give you an F in the course. The matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.