

COURSE SYLLABUS

BUSINESS LAW 280: BUSINESS LAW I Professor Dosanjh Spring 2004

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TH: 3:15-3:45 p.m.
TH: 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Also available by appointment.

Website: <http://www.csun.edu/~kkd61657>

**PLEASE CHECK THIS WEBSITE BEFORE EACH CLASS SESSION
FOR ANY HANDOUTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.**

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the legal environment in which business decisions are made, and to develop the skills needed to be effective business leaders. Students are introduced to the complex legal rules and court decisions affecting those in business. Particular attention is paid to the law governing contracts (creation of enforceable agreements between parties) and torts (“private wrongs”). Students will also explore the U.S. court system and civil procedure to gain a framework for their understanding of the law’s operation.

Students’ analytical reasoning skills will be developed, as students read actual court decisions, prepare written briefs of the decisions, orally communicate and support their interpretations of cases, and answer hypothetical questions in open class discussion. Students are taught to recognize similarities and differences between different cases and different factual situations. Further, students will be asked to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments made (or that could be made) by opposing parties in actual and hypothetical cases. Students will also consider effective approaches to minimizing the risk of liability and maximizing the protection offered by the law to businesses and individuals.

Class sessions will consist of lecture, discussion, and active learning exercises designed to develop students’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Course Text

The text for this course is *Business Law for a New Century*, 3rd ed., Beatty and Samuelson (West 2004).

The website for this text is <http://beatty.westbuslaw.com>

Policy on Academic Honesty

Cheating (or any other form of academic dishonesty) on exams, the term project, or in relation to any aspect of the grading process will *not be tolerated*. Please read and become familiar with the section of the current section of the CSUN Catalog entitled “Academic Dishonesty” during the first week of classes. Unless stated otherwise, *everything* that you turn in for course credit *must* represent *your own work*.

Preparation, Attendance, and Contribution to Class

The learning objectives of this course mandate students’ advance preparation, attendance, and contribution to class sessions.

Preparation and Case Briefs:

The reading list found below shows the order of topics presented in the course, along with corresponding text chapters, court opinions (“cases”), “You be the Judge” exercises, and chapter-end questions. ***Students are responsible for briefing each listed case.***

Each of these cases must be briefed by the individual student *in writing* and on *separate paper*. Directions on briefing cases and a sample brief are available on my website.

Additionally, directions on how to prepare the “You be the Judge” exercises and chapter-end questions are on my website: Responses to these exercises and questions should also be completed by the individual student in writing and on separate paper.

Please keep your written briefs and responses to questions in a two-pocket folder. At different times, students’ folders will be collected for feedback. You should ***stay two cases ahead*** of the last case covered in class. “You be the Judge” exercises and chapter-end questions will be assigned at appropriate times throughout the semester. Occasionally, special “homework” may be assigned .

Attendance Policy

Missing class, arriving to class late or leaving class early will adversely affect your final grade. I will use my discretion to weigh attendance in calculating the final grade as follows:

- 1-4 absences: Will be considered in determining preparation / attendance / contribution portion of your grade. (Note: arriving late or leaving early counts as “1/2 absence.”)
- 5 or more absences: final grade in the course will be reduced one level. For example, if your total points equate to a “C” for the semester (including the 10% component for preparation/attendance/contribution), your final grade in the course will be reduced to a “D” if you miss five or more class sessions.
- Absences for more than 50% of the total class sessions: final grade in the course will be “F.”

Excused Absences:

Absences due to religious observation or medical emergency will be excused if the following requirements are met: If you plan to miss class for religious observation, please notify me of those dates as soon as possible. If you are absent for a medical reason, a note signed by your treating physician on his or her stationary identifying the date missed will be needed.

While I appreciate being informed of other planned absences, those absences will not be considered “excused.” In other words, informing me of absences which are due to reasons other than religious observation or medical emergency does not make the absence is “excused.”

Contribution to Class

You will be called at random throughout the semester to present and discuss your briefs, your responses to homework questions, your opinions on what has been raised in the readings and class discussion, etc.. It is *crucial* that you are prepared to respond and to participate in class.

If you are not prepared for a class, please let me know in advance via a written note given to me prior to the beginning of the class session. You will be allowed ***one excused*** “no preparation” ***but only if you give me advanced notice.*** If you are called on and you are ***unprepared without giving me advanced notice, one point will be deducted*** from the preparation/attendance/contribution portion of your grade.

Voluntary participation in class discussions and exercises is strongly encouraged. Quality, not simple quantity will be measured in evaluating contribution to class.

Additionally, courteous conduct “contributes” to class while discourteous conduct detracts from it. Courteous conduct includes **turning off cell phones and pagers before class**, not talking while others are talking, and showing respect for others’ points of view and contributions.

Grade Determination

In addition to the rules noted above, your final grade in the course will be decided as follows:

First Midterm Exam:	20%
Second Midterm Exam:	20%
Term Project:	10%
Preparation/Attendance/Contribution:	10%
Final Exam:	40%
TOTAL:	<hr/> 100%

There will be no makeup exams. If for some reason you know you must miss an exam, you should arrange to take this course another semester.

Grades are determined by a careful process designed to ensure fairness. Therefore, grades will *not* be changed unless there has been a clerical or computational error.

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93 - 100 %	B-	80 - 82.9 %	D+	67 - 69.9 %
A-	90 - 92.9 %	C+	77 - 79.9 %	D	63 - 66.9 %
B+	87 - 89.9 %	C	73 - 76.9 %	D-	60 - 62.9 %
B	83 - 86.9 %	C-	70 - 72.9 %	F	0 - 59.9 %

Exams

There are two midterm exams and one final exam. As noted above, the first and second midterms will each constitute 20% of your final course grade, and the final exam 40%. The first midterm exam will be given in class on **Tuesday March 9**. The second midterm exam will be given in class on **Tuesday April 20**. The final exam will be given on **Thursday May 27 at 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**, the scheduled time under the CSUN Catalog. The final exam will be cumulative.

The exams will consist of multiple choice-and essay questions. The essay questions will require students to analyze factual situations, identify legal issues, and apply the law in determining the outcome of hypothetical cases. This method of analysis is called "IRAC" (Issue/Rule/Application (or Analysis/Conclusion). The IRAC method will be introduced, discussed, and used throughout the course. Directions for using IRAC are on my website.

Term Project (Due: Thursday May 20 at the beginning of class.)

The term project offers you the opportunity to research a topic covered in this course in the context of current events in business. It will be graded on a ten-point scale.

- **Research:** After reviewing the table of contents of chapters covered in this course (see Course Reading List below), select one topic of interest (e.g. Punitive Damages, Defamation, etc.). Find an article in a “major newspaper” or news service such as *Los Angeles Times* or *Wall Street Journal*, or legal news service or legal journal such as *National Law Journal* or *New York Law Journal*, perhaps using a CSUN Library Database such as Lexis/Legal News or WilsonBusiness, relating to this topic. The article might report on a lawsuit, litigation trends, a proposed statute or regulation, business practices designed to prevent liability, etc.
- **Submit typewritten abstract for approval on or by the beginning of class on May 6:** Write an abstract (short summary that is no more than 50 words) of the article. Please also state the title of the article, the journal/news service in which it appeared, the date of the article, and a short description of how you found it (e.g. searched “defamation” in Lexis/Legal News) (**one-half point will be deducted from the term project grade for each day the abstract is late.**)
- **Write:** Using the article as a basis, write a three to four page typewritten, double-spaced report that:
 1. Summarizes the article;
 2. Explains how the course material enhances your understanding of the article;
 3. Describes what a business owner should learn from this article; and
 4. Offers your opinion on the subject of the article.
- **Attach:** Please attach a copy of the article used in your Term Project to your report.

Quality of writing, organization, grammar, and the depth of analysis offered will be evaluated in assigning a grade for the term project.

Class Taping

Periodically, class sessions will be videotaped for my use in reviewing my teaching. Audiotaping may also be employed on occasion without further notice.

Reading List * = please note break in numerical order of text chapters.
REMEMBER TO CHECK MY WEBSITE AT www.csun.edu/~kkd61657 before
each class for any handouts, announcements, etc.

Topic	Chapter	Court Opinions (Cases) to Brief	“You be the Judge” (“YBJ”) & Chapter-End Questions (“CEQ”)
Introduction to Law	One	<i>Osborne</i> p. 17	YBJ p. 20
Business Ethics and Social Responsibility	Two	{none}	CEQ 2, 10 pp. 41-42
Dispute Resolution (includes Court Systems)	Three	<i>Klupt</i> p. 58; <i>Jones v. Clinton</i> p. 60	CEQ 8 p. 71
Intentional Torts and Business Torts	Six*	<i>Jane Doe</i> p. 134; <i>Ford</i> p. 139	YBJ p. 130; CEQ 3,4, 5, 6 pp. 148-149
Negligence and Strict Liability	Seven	<i>Palsgraf</i> p. 152; <i>Ann M.</i> p. 156; <i>Reynolds</i> p. 162; <i>Alden Leeds</i> p. 166	CEQ 3,4,6,7 pp.168-169
Introduction to Contracts	Ten*	<i>Davis v. Mason</i> p. 233; <i>Vortt</i> p. 241; <i>Pass</i> p. 243	CEQ 4,5 p. 246.
Agreement	Eleven	<i>Quake Construction</i> p. 251; <i>Bayway</i> p. 262; <i>Soldau</i> p. 265	CEQ 5,9 p. 268
Consideration	Twelve	<i>Kelsoe</i> p. 272; <i>Hamer</i> p. 274; <i>Meztista</i> p. 284	CEQ 7 pp. 287-288
Legality	Thirteen	<i>Stanley</i> p. 299 <i>Worldwide Insurance</i> p. 302	CEQ p. 2,9 pp. 304-305
Capacity and Consent	Fourteen	<i>Fimbel</i> p. 320; <i>O'Rourke</i> p. 322	CEQ 3,4,7 pp. 328-329
Written Contracts	Fifteen	<i>Hershon</i> p. 336; <i>GPL Treatment Ltd.</i> p. 343	CEQ 7 p. 350
Third Parties	Sixteen	<i>El-Sadig</i> p. 356; <i>Rosenberg</i> p. 367	CEQ 1,2 pp. 368-369
Performance and Discharge	Seventeen	<i>Folk</i> p. 379; <i>Campbell</i> p. 381	CEQ 2 p. 389
Remedies	Eighteen	<i>Hadley</i> p. 396; <i>Sullivan</i> p. 399	CEQ 2, 4 p. 413

