Syllabus
Spring 2020
BLW 335-002: Business Law
Rusche College of Business
Stephen F. Austin State University

Instructor: Drew Thornley, J.D.
Office: McGee Business Building, Room 229H
Office Phone: (936) 468-1630
SFA Email: thornleyam@sfasu.edu

Class Days/Time/Room:
TR, 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM, McGee 161

Office Hours:

Office:
Tuesday: 12:30-2:30 PM
Wednesday: 1-4 PM
Thursday: 10:00-11:00 AM
Otherwise, by appointment.

Online (Skype, Google Hangout, etc.):

*If you desire online office hours during the designated times below, schedule an appointment with me in person or via email.

Wednesday: 8-11 AM
Thursday: 8-9 AM
Otherwise, by appointment.


Course Description: An introduction to the United States’ legal system, with specific focus on civil procedure, litigation, and laws in such subject matters as contracts, torts, sales, business organizations, intellectual property, and agency. Prerequisite: Junior Standing. Expected weekly hours of work outside of class: six (6).

Program Learning Outcomes: Program learning outcomes define the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of an academic program. These learning outcomes are regularly assessed to determine student learning and to evaluate overall program effectiveness. You may access the program learning outcomes for your major and particular courses at http://www.sfasu.edu/cob/ugplo.asp.

Student Learning Outcomes/Course Goals and Objectives: Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize the legal terms introduced in the course and apply or relate these terms to specific situations.
2. Analyze information to recognize legal issues and legal problems in fact situations and to determine what legal principle(s) should be applied.
3. Integrate knowledge of the legal principles that are covered to solve problems that are unfamiliar.
4. Apply problem-solving skills to legal issues, using logic and critical thinking.
5. Appreciate and identify ethical dilemmas in the business/legal context and use ethical reasoning in decision-making.
6. Describe the impact of constant change and lack of certainty, which are inherent aspects of the U.S. legal system.
7. Develop an awareness of the need for a continuing acquisition of new knowledge about changes in the law.

Course Requirements:

Exams: Each of the course’s four (4) in-class exams covers only the material assigned for that exam. Thus, after the first exam, exams are not cumulative. Students are not permitted to use the textbook, notes, or any other resources during the exams. Any instance of the following results in an exam grade of zero (0): talking of any kind, wearing a forward-facing hat/cap, use of headphones or earpieces of any kind, & any personal belongings (other than pencils, erasers, & drinks that I have pre-approved, each of which must be placed on your desk) not placed against the wall at the front of the class. If an exam conflicts with a university-excused absence, you must contact me at least seven (7) days before the exam. Failure to do so will result in an exam grade of zero (0). (Note: Field trips for other classes are not excused absences, nor are meetings for other classes’ group projects or any other choice by you to spend time working on other classes during our class meeting times.) In case such an event
arises within seven (7) days of the exam, notify me immediately upon learning of it. Failure to do so will result in an exam grade of zero (0). In case of an extreme emergency that prevents you from taking an exam, contact me before the scheduled exam, if possible. (In the case of illness, a doctor’s note specifying that you are too ill to attend class is required, in order for me to consider your illness as reason for an exam makeup.) If it is not possible to contact me before the exam, contact me no later than 2 days after the emergency is resolved. Failure to do so will result in an exam grade of zero (0). Any excused exams must be scheduled for make-up within two (2) days of the missed exam or two (2) days after the emergency has resolved itself, or students will receive an exam grade of zero (0). It is entirely the student’s responsibility to make arrangements with me to take a missed exam.

Assignments: The remainder of your grade will be comprised of various assignments. Examples of assignments are in-class writings, out-of-class writings, research assignments turned in via email, and research assignments turned in at the start of class. The number of assignments is not pre-determined. Assignments will be announced during class only, so if you miss class, you run the risk of missing the announcement of one or more assignments. It is your responsibility to find out from a classmate what you missed in class. Do not email me to ask what we covered during a class you missed. The policy for making up missed assignments is the same policy as for exams, as stated (in bold and underlined) in the section immediately above.

Grades: Grades will be determined according to the following percentages:

- Exam 1: 20%
- Exam 2: 20%
- Exam 3: 20%
- Exam 4: 20%
- Assignments: 20%

All grades are calculated by percentage. I don’t assign a point value for exams or assignments. So, if an exam has 25 questions, it doesn’t matter if each question is worth 1 point or 4 points or 100 points. Your grade is the number correct divided by 25. So, 25/25 = 100%, 20/25 = 80%, etc. Same with assignments. It doesn’t matter that one assignment might be scored out of 10, while another is scored out of 100. All that matters is the percentage you earn. Your participation grade will be the average score of all of your percentages. So, for example, if you earn an 8/10, that’s 80%. And if you earn 90/100, that’s 90%. If these were your only assignments, then your assignment grade would be 85%, which equals the average of 80% (8/10) and 90% (90/100). Grades are not rounded up. For example, 79.99 = 79.
Attendance: If you choose not to come to class, that is your choice. I will be there and want you to be there, too, but I will not take roll every time we meet. That said, if you are not present for an in-class assignment (for an unexcused reason), you will receive a zero. If I happen to take roll one day and count it as an assignment grade, you will receive a zero. Again, the policy outlined above for missed exams applies to all missed assignments. In addition, if you miss class, and during class I announce an out-of-class assignment, you will be unaware of the assignment, unless you find out from a classmate. As stated above, if you miss class, do not email me and ask what you missed in class.

Course Calendar: The course is divided into four stand-alone units. By “stand-alone,” I mean that each unit has an exam that tests material covered during that unit only. I expect to divide the semester (roughly) evenly among these four units. In other words, each unit will consume approximately 25% of the semester. During the first week of class, I will announce projected dates for each exam. The exam for Unit 4 will be given during exam week, on the day & time assigned by the University (see below). Material covered and dates of exams may vary slightly, as necessitated by the pace of the course. What follows is a general outline of the material I expect to cover for each exam. Any significant deviation(s) from the following list of unit topics will be announced to students either during class or via email:

Unit 1 (approximately 25%): Introduction to Law in the United States; U.S. Court Systems; Civil Procedure
Unit 2 (approximately 25%): Remedies; Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR); Torts
Unit 3 (approximately 25%): Contracts
Unit 4 (approximately 25%): Sales; Products Liability; Agency; Business Organizations; Intellectual Property

Schedule of Topics & Exam Dates (PROJECTED)

*NOTE: The following schedule is my estimation of weekly topics and exam dates. These are subject to change, but I will let you know in class of any material deviation from this schedule.

Week 1: Introduction to law; Introduction to courts
Week 2: Civil procedure
Week 3: Civil procedure
Week 4: Exam 1 & ADR
Week 5: Remedies; Torts
Week 6: Torts
Week 7: Torts
Week 8: Torts & Exam 2
Week 9: Contracts
Week 10: Contracts  
Week 11: Contracts  
Week 12: Contracts & Exam 3  
Week 13: Sales  
Week 14: Product Liability; Agency  
Week 15: Business Organizations; Intellectual Property 

Exam 4 will be given during Final Exam period, on the day and time and in the location chosen by the University (http://www.sfasu.edu/registrar/194.asp): Tuesday, May 5, 10:45 AM – 1:15 PM, McGee 161.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Student Code of Conduct: Policy 10.4

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This policy applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare: Early Alert Program at SFA. Information regarding the iCare program is found at https://www.sfasu.edu/judicial/earlyalert.asp or call the office at 936-468-2703.