BUS615HY: Current Topics in Business Law Course Syllabus – Spring 2017

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Office Location: Center for Graduate Studies – CGS 118
Office Hours: Wednesday Evenings 5:00-6:00 PM
Class Time & location: --W--, 6:00 p.m. - 9:50 p.m., CGS118, Course runs 3/1 -4/26 no class 3/15 Spring Break

Course Information:
Course description: This course expands on foundational concepts and legal principles that are applicable to the American legal system, its development, and inherent ethical considerations. Course topics include the basis and structure of business contracts; the creation and characteristics of agencies, partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations; and the rights and liabilities of agents, partners, directors, and shareholders; personal property, sales and the UCC, international transactions, product liability, secured transactions, insurance, negotiable instruments, employment law and discrimination, banking, and bankruptcy.


Attendance Policy:
Each class meeting is broken into two sessions, with a 15-20 minute break in between. Your preparation, attendance and participation each week are expected and account for 25% of your grade. One excused absence is permissible and will not affect your grade. If you need to miss more than one class, please speak to me ahead of time. An interim participation grade will be given at the midpoint of the class to avoid surprises at the end of the class.

Purpose of this course:
This course will use the current focus by regulators, courts and the popular press on corporate scandals to explore a number of important topics in business law. We will study in depth scandals involving securities law, employment law, regulation and other business law topics. Your textbook collects some terrific articles that analyze the Enron scandal and its aftermath; we will use the Enron case as a jumping off point, reviewing the case from a number of angles.

Beginning in Week 6, groups of students will present a legal case study of another corporate scandal to the class. The reading material each group will need to prepare for their Legal Case Study and a detailed grading rubric will be available on our eLearning site. We will review this assignment in depth during Week 2.
Course Objectives:

*Knowledge of and facility with fundamental legal concepts, the laws and particularly regulations, administrative guidance and statutes that affect business.
*Ability to perform basic legal research.
*Present legal arguments and thought through effective oral and written communication.
*Discuss and reach consensus on legal issues in a group setting with a variety of differing viewpoints

Learning Outcomes:

Measures of Achievement:

Content and Skills Goals:

Because this is a hybrid course, we will be extending our discussions of course topics online. Each week, the class will participate in a discussion about a short article, case or editorial related to the week's readings, which will be provided on eLearning. Your discussion contributions should take place after you have had an opportunity to do your reading. At a minimum, you are required to post a substantive answer or reaction to each of the questions I pose. Your posts should use the concepts from your weekly reading that demonstrates your mastery of the material, as well as references to outside sources. You are also required to post a minimum of two responsive posts to your colleagues' posts. Your posts should be spaced throughout the week. A detailed grading rubric with my expectations for your participation will be provided. Your participation in the Weekly Discussions is worth 25% of your grade.

Legal Case Study Presentations

During Weeks 6 and 7, small groups of students will present an analysis of a corporate legal scandal, including the factual background, legal proceedings, perception by the media and public, and any regulatory response to the scandal. Students will be graded on the quality of the presentation – there is no written component to this assignment. A detailed grading rubric with my expectations for your participation in this group presentation will be provided. Your participation in the legal case study presentation is worth 25% of your grade.

Final Exam

The final exam is this class will be an open-book, open-note essay exam. You may not use electronics of any kind during the exam other than those approved as an accommodation by the Walter Young Center. The exam will present three legal issues similar to, but factually different than, the issues we will be studying throughout the course. You will write an essay giving your legal analysis of two of the issues provided. The final exam will be on April 26, 2017. You will have the entire class period to complete your exam, which will be more than enough time for two essays. Your final exam is worth 25% of your grade.
**Grading Scale/Weight:**
All of your weekly discussion grades will be averaged for a cumulative total of 100 points. Your participation in a Case Study Presentation will be worth 100 points. Your final exam will be worth 100 points. Your Class Attendance and Participation are worth 100 points. These graded activities will be averaged at the end of the semester to obtain your final grade, and will be graded based upon the scale below:

| 95-100% | A     | 70-79% | C     |
| 90-94%  | A/B   | 60-69% | D     |
| 85-89%  | B     | <60%   | F     |
| 80-84%  | B/C   |        |       |

Individual grades will be rounded to the nearest whole integer. Your final grade will not be rounded.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1:

Class on W 3/1/17

Session 1: Introduction and Course Overview

Session 2: The Enron Trials

Suggested Viewing: Smartest Guys in the Room:

http://www.hulu.com/watch/337496/enron-the-smartest-guys-in-the-room?c=News-and-Information/Documentary-and-Biography (also on reserve at the Carroll University Library) or you can google the title and find other free websites to view the documentary.

Week 2:

Class on W 3/8/17

Session 1: In-class Legal Research Assignment (Computer Lab - LL18)

Session 2: Review Legal Case Study Assignment and Resources, Sample Legal Case Study: Healthsouth

Assigned Reading: Auditors and Analysts: An Analysis of the Evidence and Reform Proposals in Light of the Enron Experience, p 95 – 103; Everything I Needed to Know about Enron I Learned in Kindergarten (and Graduate School), p 171-201 in The Corporate Scandal Reader

Week 3:

Class on W 3/22/17

Sessions 1 and 2: Groupthink and Obedience as a Cause of Illegal Behavior in Business

Assigned Reading: The Enron Board: The Perils of Groupthink, p 431-508 in The Corporate Scandal Reader
Week 4:
Class on W 3/29/17
Employment Law Issues – Non-Competes, Confidentiality and Trade Secrets and Discrimination.

Assigned Reading: Provided on eLearning site and handouts.

Week 5:
Class on W 4/5/17
Inside Job, Koss Corporation Theft Scandal and Madoff and Associates Ponzi Scandal


Week 6:
Class on W 4/12/17

Sessions 1 and 2: Legal case studies presentations

Assigned Reading: The Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the Making of Quack Corporate Governance, p 529-610, and Of Bad Apples and Bad Tress: Considering Fault-Based Liability for the Complicit Corporation, p 739-761.
Week 7:
Class on W 4/19/17

**Sessions 1 and 2:** Legal case studies presentations and Final Exam Review

**Assigned Reading:** *Getting the Word Out About Fraud: A Theoretical Analysis of Whistleblowing and Insider Trading*, p 317-356 and *Enron, Titanic and The Perfect Storm*, p. 203-224 in The Corporate Scandal Reader

Week 8:
Class on W 4/26/17

**Final Exam**

The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, or any student considering obtaining documentation should make an appointment with Ms. Martha Bledsoe, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities, no later than the first week of class. She can be reached by calling 262-524-7335 or contacting her via email at mbledsoe@carrollu.edu.

The Carroll University Academic Integrity Policy is located in your student handbook (https://my.carrollu.edu/ICS/Departments/Student_Affairs). I encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. If a student violates this policy in any way, I reserve the right to impose a sanction of failure on the assignment/assessment or failure in the course. If you have questions about appropriate citations, please ask.