



Peru State College

BUS 251 – Legal Environment and Contract Law

Syllabus – Summer 2011

Instructor: Christy L. Hutchison, JD
Telephone: (800) 742-4412 (Peru)
Email: chutchison@peru.edu

Course Summary and Strategies for Success

This course is the study of the legal system and basic law that impacts individuals and organizations. Course activities include 7 weekly assignments, a Group Study Project and a final exam. There are no quizzes and no multiple choice or true/false test questions. Your work will consist mostly of discussing legal principles, debating controversial issues, and applying legal concepts to “real life” case scenarios. I recommend that you read the materials thoroughly and pay attention to the broad principles and major themes. Your ability to write well is critical. You should proofread carefully every posting and assignment that you submit in this course. Finally, you cannot earn an A without participating fully in the Group Study Project.

Course Description & Objectives

This course examines the sources and origins of law and the legal system, legal processes, and fundamental legal principles, with an emphasis on the obligations of parties to a contract. Prerequisites: None

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Discuss the nature of law and legal reasoning and identify the sources of American Law;
2. Describe the federal and state court systems and the alternatives to dispute resolution in the courts;
3. Identify the constitutional authority to regulate business and examples of how business is regulated by federal and state governments;
4. Discuss the nature of torts and crimes and the differences between them;
5. Identify the elements of a legally binding contract and describe the nature of each element;
6. Discuss the obligations of parties to a contract, enforceability of agreements and remedies for breach;
7. Apply principles learned in the course to analyze and resolve hypothetical cases;
8. Demonstrate effective written communication skills and evaluate and critique the reasoning of others in a mature, thoughtful and respectful manner

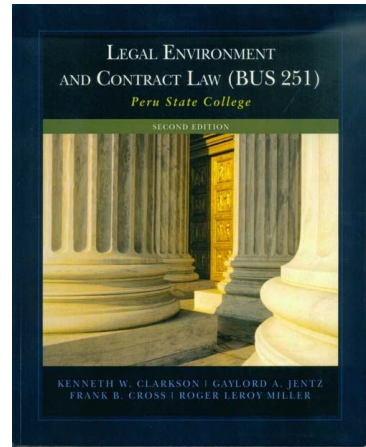
Text Book Information

Option A – Purchase the Custom Textbook Created for Peru State College and this specific course (paper bound, contains only 23 selected chapters)

Title: Legal Environment and Contract Law (BUS 251)
Peru State College (2009 or 2010)
(May use Edition 1 or 2)
Customized Textbook for PSC
Taken from: Business Law, Text and Cases
Authors: Clarkson, Jentz, Cross, and Miller
Publisher: Southwestern Cengage Learning
ISBN: 1-1113-9788-0

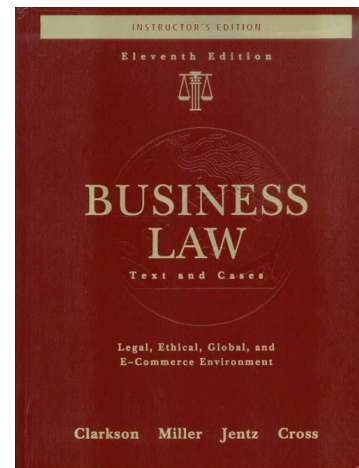
Available from PSC Bookstore:

- New Purchase: \$141.00
- New Rental: \$133.95
- Used Purchase: \$105.75
- Used Rental: \$100.46



Option B – Purchase the Full Textbook generally available to public

Title: Business Law, Text and Cases,
Edition: 11th (2009)
Authors: Clarkson, Jentz, Cross, and Miller
Publisher: Southwestern Cengage Learning
ISBN 13: 978-0-324-65522-3
ISBN 10: 0-324-65522-3
May use 10th or 9th edition, if desired
Available from many used book dealers
Note: You might want to buy this version if you plan to take BUS 252 – Commercial Law as we will cover the second half of the book in that course.



Option C – Purchase the whole book or selected chapters in electronic format from iChapters.com

Title: Business Law, Text and Cases, Edition: 11th (2009)
Authors: Clarkson, Jentz, Cross, and Miller
Publisher: Southwestern Cengage Learning
ISBN 13: 978-0-324-65522-3
ISBN 10: 0-324-65522-3
Available for \$122.99 for whole book or \$3.99 per chapter.
Order from this link:

<http://www.cengagebrain.com/tl1/en/US/storefront/ichapters?cmd=catProductDetail&ISBN=978-0-324-65522-3&echapterView=true>

Weekly Assignments

Because this is an eight-week accelerated course, we will move very quickly through a lot of material. Each week you will be assigned the following tasks:



Read:

Two or three assigned chapters from the text book. In addition to the reading, you might be assigned a pod cast, video, or web site to review



Discussion Board:

Discuss the answers to one or more questions and post your discussion on the Main Discussion Board (*worth up to 15 points each week*); Post a reply to a classmate on the Main Discussion Board (*worth up to 5 points each week*).



Individual Homework Assignment:

Complete an individual homework assignment related to the material (*worth up to 30 points each week*); Turn in via Assignment Page

All weekly assignments (except Weeks 4 and 8) are due on Mondays at midnight (11:59 pm.)

Group Study Project

Every student will be required to participate in a Group Study Project. The project will be worth 100 points and will require special readings and discussions about a constitutional topic. In order to work with your group, you will need to access the "Group Study" tab of the course site. You will be allowed to choose your study topic at the start of the second week of the course. Your Group Study Project grade will be assessed based on your individual participation and contribution to your group. More information about the group projects will be posted on the course site.

Final Examination

In addition to the weekly assignments, there will be a comprehensive Final Examination. The examination is in "take home" format so you may print it out and work on it over a ten day period. The exam includes case analyses requiring that you be able to apply legal principles to factual situations.

Academic Honesty

Unless directed otherwise, students are expected to do their own work on assignments and examinations. Academic dishonesty will result in actions in accordance with the college's disciplinary policy and may also result in loss of credit for the assignment. I maintain assignments turned in by students in previous semesters for comparison purposes. Please do your own work! If you do not, you are cheating yourself and wasting your tuition money.

Grading Policy and Scale

You will have the opportunity to earn a total of 600 points. Your final grade will be determined by the number of points you earn as noted below.

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Weekly Assignments | <i>(7 weeks @ 50 points each)</i> | 350 pts. |
| Group Study Project | | 100 pts. |
| Final Examination | | 150 pts. |

| <u>Points</u> | <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 540 – 600 | (90-100%) | A |
| 510 – 539 | (85-89%) | B+ |
| 480 – 509 | (80-84%) | B |
| 450 – 479 | (75-79%) | C+ |
| 420 – 449 | (70-74%) | C |
| 390 – 419 | (65-69%) | D+ |
| 360 – 389 | (60-64%) | D |
| Below 360 | (below 60%) | F |

How to Submit Course Work

All weekly assignments are located in the “Weekly Assignments” tab of the course site. All discussion board answers and replies should be posted to the Main Discussion Board. Your weekly homework should be submitted via the submission instructions located on the page of the assignment. Group Study Projects will be discussed on the Group Discussion Board located in the “Group Study” tab of the course site. You must observe all due dates in order to be successful in this course. Please keep a copy of all of your course work, just in case there is a technical problem that requires you to re-submit an assignment or posting. Also, please print out this syllabus so that you have contact information for me in case you lose access to Blackboard or have computer problems.

Assignments Submitted After the Due Dates

The due date associated with each assignment and examination is definitive and will not be waived or excused except in extraordinary circumstances. Assignments will be accepted up to 3 days late with a one-half credit penalty (the most you may earn on the assignment is one-half of the otherwise available points). Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted unless there are extraordinary circumstances. It is therefore critical that you keep up with your reading and course work. If you anticipate being unavailable for some portion of the semester, you may complete your work ahead.

Check Your Acornmail Often!

All of my private correspondence with you will be via PSC Acornmail. You must have an account created for you and check it often. I will send you notes about your course performance and comments about your work via Acornmail.

Title IX Compliance Notice

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

College's Incomplete Coursework Policy

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

College's Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student's transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

Course Decorum

In order to foster a climate conducive to learning, please join me in treating your classmates with respect. A part of your grade will be based on your demonstrated ability to evaluate and critique the reasoning of others in a mature, thoughtful and respectful manner.

Announcements and Student Questions

I have created a special discussion board forum for announcements and student questions. It is the first one on the discussion board page and it is titled: "Announcements and Student Questions." This is where I will post comments about the course materials and weekly assignments. My preference is that you post your questions to this forum, so that all students see your questions and the answers I have provided. However, if you prefer to email me your question privately, you may do so and I will respond to you by private email. I would recommend that you review your assignments for the coming week before Friday, so that you can contact me on Friday if you have any questions about the material or assignments. I will respond to all emailed and posted questions within 24 hours following your correspondence, unless your correspondence occurs after noon on Friday. All postings after noon on Friday will be answered no later than noon on Monday.

Modification of Course Syllabus and Course Schedule

The instructor reserves to right to modify any part of this course syllabus and course schedule. Any such modifications will be communicated to students in advance of becoming effective.

Permission to Post Your Papers

I have found that posting the best student work for other students to see is a helpful learning tool. In the event that your paper is selected for posting, I will notify you of my intention to post your paper. If you do not object to my posting of your paper, I will assume that I have your permission to post your paper in the "Announcements and Student Questions" discussion forum. If you prefer that your papers not be posted, please notify me at the start of the course and I will refrain from posting your papers.

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

| <u>Week of</u> | <u>Topics</u> | <u>Assignment Due Dates</u> |
|---|---|--|
| June 6-13 Chapters 1, 2 | Introduction to Law and Legal Reasoning Courts and Alternative Dispute Resolution | Week 1 Assignments Due June 13 |
| June 14-20 Chapters 3, 4 (skip chapter 5) | Court Procedures Constitutional Authority to Regulate Business | Week 2 Assignments Due June 20 Students choose topic for Group Study Project |
| June 21-27 Chapters 6, 7 | Intentional Torts Negligence and Strict Liability | Week 3 Assignments Due June 27 |
| June 28 - July 5 Chapters 8, 9 | Intellectual Property and Internet Law Criminal Law and Cyber Crime | Week 4 Assignments Due July 5 Note: TUESDAY Due Date |
| July 6-11 Chapters 10, 11, 12 | Nature and Terminology of Contracts Agreement Consideration | Week 5 Assignments Due July 11 |
| July 12-18 Chapters 13, 14, 15 | Capacity and Legality Mistakes, Fraud, and Voluntary Consent The Statute of Frauds – Writing Requirement | Week 6 Assignments Due July 18 |
| July 19-25 Chapters 16, 17, 18 | Third Party Rights Performance and Discharge Breach of Contract and Remedies | Week 7 Assignments Due July 25 Final Posting of Group Study Project is Due |
| Final Exam Due Thursday, July 28 | Covers Chapters 1-18 (excluding 5) The Examination will be posted on Monday, July 18 | Final Examination is due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, July 28 Note: This is a THURSDAY due date. |