BUS 493 – INTERNET LAW

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Required Textbooks
- Supplemental Course Materials – provided by instructor. Student will need internet access.

Course Description and Objectives
Electronic commerce is an important business model in today’s competitive environment. Managing in this milieu necessitates a basic understanding of how today’s business law impacts cyberspace. Courts, legislatures, administrative agencies, and international directives all contribute to the e-commerce landscape. This course will examine the various legal issues impacting cyberspace and examine methods to succeed in a virtual commercial setting where the law is still struggling to catch up with emerging technologies and business methods.

The objectives of this course are to obtain an understanding of: 1) How legal and ethical strictures are an embodiment of social policy and how social policy affecting business has changed over time and with technologies; 2) The legal and administrative structure within which business operates in cyberspace; 3) Some of the most important legal, ethical, and social issues facing cyberspace, 4) The major tools of ethical analysis and how they can be used to address ethical issues that arise in the practice of cyber-business, and 5) How to perform a legal audit for an entity wishing to become an internet service or content provider.

Course Topics
This course will cover the following material. Please see the Assignment Schedule for details.

Unit I – General Legal Concepts: This unit will be an introduction to the most basic legal concepts: federalism, the court system, legal reasoning, and jurisdiction. Here, we will also examine the similarities and differences between “real-space” and Cyberspace, and the difficulties involved in adapting “real space” law to situations found in Cyberspace. This unit will provide the necessary background for the more in-depth coverage in Units II thru IV.

Unit II – Tort and Constitutional Law Issues in Cyberspace: Privacy, defamation, and obscenity.


Unit IV – Conducting Business in Cyberspace: Online contracting, planning an entry into cyberspace as a service and content provider.

Grade Components:
You will receive a grade based on your performance in the following areas:
There are four graded components to this course.
1. **Class Contribution** (15%): Classes will consist of both lectures and discussions. Students are to be prepared for class each day. Mastery of the content and decision-making skills developed in this course can only effectively come about through quality contributions to discussions of the assigned material. Attending class regularly, and actively contributing to the learning environment, is essential for success in this course. *Expect to be called on in class frequently.* Here are some specific ways you can contribute:

- Asking relevant questions about the assigned material that go beyond the literal text
- Providing well-reasoned answers to questions from the professor and others
- Providing well-reasoned opinions on issues being discussed
- Providing relevant hypothetical cases for discussion

There is not an attendance requirement per se, but poor attendance will obviously affect the quality of your contribution.

2. **Current Events Presentations, Legal Audit Presentations, and In-class Writing** (15%):

- Current Event (5%): Each student will find an article on a current legal issue or topic in cyberspace and do some brief background research on that topic of the article. Each student will give a five minute presentation summarizing the event and his or her research findings. The student should be able to field questions about the topic from the instructor and fellow student. A copy of the article and an outline of the research path will be handed in to the instructor. No other written requirement is necessary.

- Legal Website Audit (5%): Each student will explore a website and identify one or two potential legal problems with the site’s design or content. The requirements of the current event presentation will apply here, but rather than bringing a copy of the article the student will bring up the site on the classroom computer and point out to the class the design or content that they believe represents a potential legal problem.

- In-Class Writing (5%): From time to time during class you will be asked to respond to a question relating to that day’s assigned material. These may be one of the Case Questions (following an assigned case) or one of the Case Problems (at the end of the chapter).

3. **In-Class Exams** (30%): There will be two exams during the semester each counting 15% of the course grade.

4. **Group Project and Presentation** (25%): Students will be placed into groups and will complete a significant research project. The project will focus on legal aspects of a company’s entry into an online environment. A more detailed description of this project and the presentation will be handed out at a later date.

5. **Individual Paper** (15%): Each student in the project group will serve as an expert in a specific area of the law affecting the group’s business client. Each student-expert will individually write a research memorandum that identifies and analyzes the legal issues from the perspective of their area of expertise.
Grading Standards: I do not grade on a curve; rather, I assess your work as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent Earned</th>
<th>Performance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>Student demonstrates <strong>excellent</strong> performance in written work and oral presentations. Content, organization, originality, analysis, demonstration of understanding, and application of course material significantly exceed the minimum requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>Student demonstrates <strong>above average performance</strong> in written work and oral presentations. Student exceeds the minimum requirements in some, but not all of the above mentioned areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Student demonstrates <strong>average performance</strong> in written work and oral presentations. Student has satisfactorily completed the content and structure of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Student demonstrates <strong>below average performance</strong> in the quality of the written and oral presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>The quality of work is <strong>not acceptable</strong> for a college student.</td>
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"Dark clouds may hang o'er me sometimes, but I'll work it out..."

--Dave Matthews Band, "Dancing Nancies"

Late Work Policy
It is rarely justified to submit assignments after the class which they are due. Late submissions will receive a lower grade as follows:
- Minus 10% if turned in after class but before 4:00 on the same day.
- Minus 25% if turned in before 4:00 the next day
- Minus 25% for each additional day

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

--Eleanor Roosevelt

"Behavior can imply consent."

--Keith Maxwell