

U N I V E R S I T Y of H O U S T O N

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TO: Agnes De Franco, Interim Assistant Vice President
for Undergraduate Studies : APPROVED NOV 16 2005

CC: Marsha Daly, Program Manager, Provost's Office

FROM: Elizabeth Anderson Fletcher, Associate Dean, *EA*
Bauer College of Business

SUBJECT: Designation of GENB 4350 as Core Communication-Intensive Writing in
the Discipline

DATE: September 29, 2005

The Bauer College of Business recommends that the Undergraduate Council approve GENB 4350 as a core communication-intensive writing in the discipline. A CBM003 form is being submitted in addition to this memo requesting the following change in the GENB 4350 course description:

Current: GENB 4350: Business Law and Ethics Cr. 3 (3-0). Prerequisite: junior standing. An examination of the basic commercial laws surrounding business transactions and the ethical aspects of organizational decision-making within these contexts. Topics include common law and UCC contracts, business organizations, security regulations, property transactions, and negotiable instruments.

Proposed: GENB 4350: Business Law and Ethics Cr. 3 (3-0). Prerequisite: junior standing. An examination of the basic commercial laws surrounding business transactions and the ethical aspects of organizational decision-making within these contexts. Business law topics include contracts, agency, business organizations, securities regulation, property transactions, and negotiable instruments. Ethics topics include ethical decision-making and study of current events in business ethics. An integral part of the course includes written analysis of cases including a law and ethics component. This course fulfills the undergraduate intensive writing core requirement.

Rationale: The proposed changes to the description of GENB 4350 Business Law and Ethics is to better reflect the content of the course, as well as reflect the nature of the course as fulfilling the undergraduate intensive writing core requirement. A core curriculum course request is attached detailing how it meets this core requirement.

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U N I V E R S I T Y of H O U S T O N

CORE CURRICULUM COURSE REQUEST

Originating Department/College: Bauer College of Business

Person making request: Elizabeth Anderson Fletcher, Assoc. Dean Telephone: (713) 743-4740

Dean's signature: *E. Fletcher* Date: Sept. 29, 2005

I. General Information:

Course number and title: GENB 4350 Business Law and Ethics

Complete catalog description (NOT required if attached to CBM 003 form):
(being submitted)

Category of Core for which course is being proposed (mark only one):

- Communication
- Communication: Writing Intensive Experiences in the Disciplines
- Mathematics
- Mathematics/Reasoning (IDO)
- Natural Sciences
- Humanities
- Visual/Performing Arts Critical
- Visual/Performing Arts Experiential
- Social/Behavioral Sciences
- U.S. History
- American Government

II. Objectives and Evaluation (respond on one or more separate sheets):

Call 3-0919 for a copy of "Guidelines for Requesting and Evaluating Core Courses" or visit the website at www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum

- A. How does the proposed course meet the appropriate Exemplary Educational Objectives (see **Guidelines**). Attach a syllabus and supporting materials for the objectives the syllabus does not make clear. (syllabus attached)
- B. Specify the processes and procedures for evaluating course effectiveness in regard to its goals.
- C. Delineate how these evaluation results will be used to improve the course?

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Attachment to the "Core Curriculum Course Request" form proposing GENB 4350 to become a course that meets the core communication-intensive writing in the discipline requirement.

II. Objectives and Evaluation

A. How does the proposed course meet the appropriate Exemplary Educational Objective? (see syllabus attached)

The content of GENB 4350 covers business law and ethics, and includes a significant writing component (a total of at least 3000 words). One assignment requires students to analyze a unique set of facts containing both legal and ethical issues. The assignment is done outside of class and requires students to write a 4-5 page (single-spaced), 1000-2000 word minimum memorandum that fully analyzes and draws conclusions on legal and ethical issues. The assignment requires each student to prepare (1) an outline of the memo, (2) first draft of the memo, and (3) final version of the memo. Each student must attend at least one meeting with a UH Writing Center consultant during the preparation of this assignment as part of their grade on the final version of the memo. The assignment is returned to the student prior to the end of the semester or term with the instructor's written evaluation of grammar, style, and content. Additional writing assignments are required to meet the 3000 word minimum for a core communication-intensive writing course.

GENB 4350, as evidenced by the attached syllabus, meets all five of the Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEO's):

1. Students are given an understanding of writing in a business context, and develop writing skills specific to business. Students are taught invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation consistent with business content and criteria.
2. Students are taught and must demonstrate business writing conventions, practices, standards, constructs and methods.
3. Students are taught and demonstrate legal and ethical issues in business through writing.
4. Student are taught and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in business writing through written exposition and argumentation.
5. Students develop the ability to research and write a documented paper that conforms to the standards of business writing and to establish an identity in a business profession.

These objectives are also reinforced through one of the required readings for the course, a 77-page book written by the instructor that discusses the process of analyzing and writing about both legal and ethical issues in business. The book walks through the outlining, drafting, and finalizing of a student memo within the context of business law and ethics topics.

In terms of prerequisites, to take GENB 4350, students must have junior standing and be a business major with a degree plan on file, which requires successful completion of ENGL 1303 and ENGL 1304 or their equivalents.

B. Specify the processes and procedures for evaluating course effectiveness in regard to its goals.

Lori Whisenant, JD, LL.M. CPA, is the instructor for the course, and has been in discussion with the UH Writing Center on the writing component during its development. In addition to the instructor's own internal review with input from the UH Writing Center, the Bauer College has set as one of its learning outcomes for assessment as part of an on-going accreditation process that students have effective communication skills, and specifically writing skills. To that end, all pre-business majors new to the Bauer College starting in fall 2005 are required to take a Business Writing Evaluation (BWE) developed and proctored by the UH Writing Center, with results calibrated by Bauer College faculty. The results of those evaluations become a benchmark for the writing skills of students entering their upper-level business courses, including GENB 4350. Students who meet this new BWE requirement have demonstrated a minimum level of competency, regardless of when or where they completed freshman English, or what grade they made in those courses. Using the BWE as a benchmark, the instructor for GENB 4350 will build upon that base with assignments that are progressively more challenging. Course effectiveness will be based on the ability of students to make continued progress on shorter writing assignments, culminating in a 1000-2000 word memo a student writes in consultation with the UH Writing Center, whose staff is also familiar with the expectations of business faculty. The UH Writing Center will provide objective feedback to the instructor on course effectiveness.

C. Delineate how these evaluation results will be used to improve the course. The content and writing assignments of the course will be modified as necessary in light of how well students perform in the class and based on feedback from the UH Writing Center. The instructor will periodically make changes to course content, writing assignments, and supplementary materials based on student performance and feedback from the UH Writing Center.

GENB 4350 Business Law and Ethics – Syllabus

Course Policies

Introduction

It is crucial that you fully understand all of the class policies and requirements prior to committing to this course. This is your responsibility. Therefore, you should familiarize yourself with all information on the website immediately.

Please be advised that I cannot alter any policies for any student under any circumstances.

Hybrid course expectations

This course is a hybrid course consisting of both an in-class and an out-of-class component. Half of the course is taught in a traditional class-room setting, while the other half is taught via WebCt Vista. You should expect to spend as much time studying for this course as any other non-hybrid course. The one and one-half hour that we do not meet is allocated to self-study.

The out-of-class component requires students to self-study both law and ethics with required textbooks; internet articles; on-line interactive activities; streaming video; and case studies. A discussion board will be available for students to discuss cases, etc. at their option.

The in-class component consists of in-class activities that are designed to enhance student understanding of the materials studied outside class. It is expected that all reading for the week is done prior to class meeting. A typical class session will include a brief lecture/discussion on key portions of the ethics readings (and rarely law readings), followed by either individual or group activities designed to solidify the concepts studied outside class. These activities include short individual writing assignments on cases presented in class; group decision-making on short case studies; and reverse-role-playing.

Because the course meets only once a week, attendance is mandatory and will be monitored.

Finally, it is highly recommended that you review the WebCt Vista tutorials provided on the Home Page. This is guaranteed to reduce unnecessary stress in the class by teaching you how to perform certain functions. It also provides trouble shooting help in case you are having difficulty.

Course objectives

This course examines basic commercial laws surrounding business transactions and the ethical

aspects of organizational decision-making within these contexts.

Course objective 1 - The objective of the course is to provide students with a basic understanding of business law so that students will be able to recognize potential legal issues as they arise in practice. You will achieve this learning goal by outside study of the practice law quizzes, and engaging in the extra credit law quizzes.

Course objective 2 - Another objective of this course is to develop an awareness of the challenges of creating and maintaining an ethical corporate climate and of preventing significant ethical and legal misconduct. An assumption of this course is that being a successful business organization today involves not only an understanding of the laws surrounding business transactions, but also what is ethical behavior. Our primary focus will be on analyzing consequences to actions and determining how a person makes an ethical choice, based on a given ethical theory.

Course objective 3 - A final objective is to provide students with the opportunity to develop an extremely valuable skill of effectively and efficiently analyzing the potential legal consequences and ethical issues of a variety of business transactions, and recording such analysis succinctly in a memo. These skills will be developed both outside and inside the classroom. Therefore, actual participation (as opposed to merely attendance) in class activities will be critical to your success in the class. This class is both writing and analytically intensive. Therefore, you must understand the laws and ethical theories fully before coming to class in order to benefit from our class discussions and activities.

Turning in assignments

Attaching a Word document - All assignments MUST BE turned in via WebCt Vista by ATTACHING a Word document. If you turn in an assignment in any other format (i.e., by copying and pasting into the submission link, sending the TAs your Word document via email, or bringing a hard copy to the TA office), you will be penalized by a reduction of 50% of the points you would have earned.

The reason for this policy is that formatting is lost when text is copied and pasted into Vista. Further, Vista serves as a file cabinet for all student records. To ensure your ability to perform this function, you will be asked to complete a Mandatory Technology Quiz designed to ensure your ability to attach Word documents in Vista to an Assignment link (as well as a Mandatory Syllabus Quiz, testing your understanding of the course requirements).

Late assignments – If you turn in a late assignment (for any reason), you will be penalized by a reduction of 50% of the allowable points.

There will be two due dates - (1) an "on time" due date (which means if you turn in your assignment by this date, it is "on time" and no penalty is imposed, and (2) a "late" due date (which means that if you turn in your assignment after the "on time" due date but before the end of the "late" due date, your assignment will be accepted but considered late and points deducted, as described above. Any assignments turned in after the "late" due date WILL NOT be accepted. Please do not forget this. I will not alter this policy.

Examples of policy

If your late outline was insufficient but you submitted it via the assignment function (and you would

have earned 25 out of 50 possible points), then you will earn 12.5 points (50% of 25 points) since it was late.

If your sufficient outline was submitted on time but by turning in a hard copy (and you would have earned 50 points), you will earn 25 points (50% of 50) since it was submitted by turning in a hard copy.

If you turn in an assignment by means other than using the assignment function, and it is late, you will earn zero points.

Class attendance and behavior

Attend class every day - It is expected that you attend class on each day. Class attendance will be monitored.

No cell phones without permission - All cell phones must be turned off completely. If a cell phone rings, vibrates, or otherwise goes off, you will be removed from the class and counted as absent that day. A cell phone may be kept on vibrate with prior approval from me. However, if a cell phone goes off during an exam, you will be removed from the exam with no opportunity to finish the remaining exam. If your cell phone goes off during a class meeting, you will be removed from the class and be counted as absent that day.

No disruptive talking - It is extremely rude and disruptive to talk to your neighbors in class. It distracts from the class discussion. You will be removed from class if you engage in excessive talking during class and counted as absent that day.

Other important policies

Check for announcements each day - It is your responsibility to check Web Vista every day for class information and announcements. You can expect to receive announcements during any given week.

No individual extra credit - I do not give individual extra credit projects. All extra credit opportunities will be provided to the entire class, via Web Vista through the weekly questions described above or, possibly, in class. If you want extra credit opportunities, I suggest you keep up with the reading and participate in the questions provided on-line.

Academic dishonesty

Harsh penalties will be imposed on any student who cheats or engages in any other form of academic dishonesty.

Your papers will be analyzed through Turnitin, a program that compares documents for plagiarism. If it even appears that you worked together on any writing assignment, you will earn a zero for that assignment.

Course Requirements

Mandatory Syllabus Quiz and Technology Assignment

You must complete both the Mandatory Syllabus Quiz and Mandatory Technology Assignment by January 30th (Sunday 10 PM).

The Mandatory Syllabus Quiz consists of a set of questions designed to test your understanding of the course requirements. To prepare for this quiz, you should read all links on the Home Page and browse the links under Weekly Assignments to familiarize yourself with the course policies, requirements, and general format of the course. You must answer each question correctly to receive credit.

The Mandatory Technology Assignment requires you to submit a Word document via the Assignment link by attaching the Word document. You must attach the document, as provided in the Assignment link instructions to receive credit.

You must do both items as described above to receive credit. This counts toward 26 points (4% of your total GENB 4350 grade). If you do not complete either the quiz or assignment, you will earn zero points - you will not earn partial credit.

Both the quiz and assignment are under Weeks 1 and 2.

Written case study assignments

General explanation

Almost every week you will have a case study that will require you to apply the laws and ethical principles studied to a set of facts by describing, in a short memo, the potential legal and ethical issues (and the appropriate resolution). There will be 8 case studies. Each case memo should be approximately 300-400 words.

The purpose of these case studies is to (1) reinforce the laws and ethical principles that you have studied throughout the semester, and (2) prepare you for the written portion of the exams and the paper. Therefore, you **MUST** read the law and ethics assignment before attempting to analyze the case.

A major focus will be on how the case is analyzed and written. You should frequently refer to your *Legal Analysis and Writing for Business Majors* book.

Turning the assignment

You must turn in your assignment by attaching a Word document via the submission link under the appropriate week. No late assignments will be accepted. These are due by 10 PM Sunday, the week before class meets to discuss the case.

Grading and feedback

The case studies will be reviewed by your assigned TA (and general comments will be provided). The purpose of these exercises is to give you feedback on (1) your understanding of the law and ethical principles, and (2) your ability to write effectively about the issues.

For substantial completion of all case studies, you will earn 24 points (4% of your total GENB 4350 grade). Therefore, each case study is worth 3 points.

Substantial completion means that you have (1) followed the format provided in Legal Analysis and Writing for Business Majors, (2) fully analyzed the situation, and (3) turned the assignment in on time by attaching a word document in the submission link. If any of the (3) items above is not fulfilled, you will earn zero points for that case study. No exceptions.

Feedback on your written case will be available approximately 2-3 days after the assignment is due. As soon as feedback is provided, points will be recorded in the grade book. You can access your feedback by going back to the original submission link for that week.

Bring your case to class

You are also required to bring a copy of your case to class. The reason for this is - First, the class will separate into groups to discuss the case for about 20 minutes. The purpose of this group discussion is for your group to agree on how to present the arguments for the case as well as how to write the memo. Since you will bring your memos to class, this group process should be relatively quick. This exercise is intended to allow students to interact with each other on the cases face-to-face AND to learn from each other regarding the writing of the cases. Then we will discuss the case and how to present the case in memo format as a class.

Note - there is a general assignment list with due dates for all assignments on the Home Page.

Mandatory Class Attendance

You are required to attend class each week. Since the course meets only once a week, it is critical for you to attend EVERY class. Therefore, attendance will be monitored and will count 50 points (8% of total GENB 4350 points) toward your grade as follows:

Classes missed	Points earned
0-2	50 points
3-4	35 points
5	15 points
More than 5	Zero points

Paper

Explanation of paper

You will be required to analyze the potential legal and ethical issues contained within a set of facts, and record your analysis in a memo. The paper will ask you to perform analysis and writing similar to the weekly case studies, but in much more detail and difficulty. Examples of similar questions (and the required answer format) are located in *Legal Analysis and Writing for Business Majors*.

This paper/memo must be approximately 4-5 pages single-spaced (approximately 1500-2000 words). You will be required to turn in the following items:

1. Outline of the paper (50 completion points, 8% of total GENB 4350 points)
2. First draft of the paper (50 completion points, 8% of total GENB 4350 points)
3. Final version of the paper (150 graded points, 23% of total GENB 4350 points)

Outline

You will be required to create an outline. For substantial completion of the outline, you will earn 50 points (8% of total GENB 4350 points). Substantial completion means that you have fully described your analysis - no parts of left "open" or "to be completed." This step should take approximately 75% of the total time you put into the entire paper process (outline, draft, final version).

First draft

You will be required to create a first draft of your memo. For substantial completion of the first draft, you will earn 50 points (8% of total GENB 4350 points).

Final version

Finally, you will be required to prepare a final version of your paper (i.e., the memo). This will be a fully graded item and will count toward 150 points (23% of total GENB 4350 points). Part of this grade includes one meeting with a UH writing center consultant on your paper. This meeting should take approximately 15-30 minutes. The purpose of this meeting is for you to receive general feedback on the grammar and writing style of your paper (not on the content). More information about this meeting will be distributed when the assignment is provided.

Turning in assignments

You must turn in your assignments by ATTACHING a Word document to the submission link. If you turn in any assignment by using any other method (i.e., you copy and paste your document into the textbox, or send the document via email, or bring a hard copy), your grade on the relevant assignment will be penalized by a 25% point reduction of the points you would have normally earned.

Assignment due dates and times

There are two due dates - (1) for on time assignments, and (2) for late assignments. (Note - this applies only to the paper, not the weekly cases - no late cases will be accepted).

If you turn in an assignment after the "on time" due date, but before the end of the "late" due date, your assignment will be accepted but considered late and will be penalized by a reduction of 50% of the points you would have earned.

If you turn in an assignment after the end of the "late" due date, you will earn zero points.

All due dates expire at 10:00 PM. Assignments turned in at 10:01 are considered late. It is your responsibility to plan accordingly. If you try to submit your document at 9:45 and have computer difficulties (not associated with WebCt Vista being "down"), I will not accept that as an excuse for a late paper.

Note - there is a general assignment list with due dates for all assignments on the Home Page.

UH Writing Center Meeting Required

Part of your grade will include your attendance and participation at least one

meeting with a UH Writing Center Consultant on your first draft or final version of your paper. The purpose of this meeting is to receive feedback regarding the writing style of your paper (i.e., how you have presented your arguments). The purpose is not to receive feedback on legal or ethical content. Additionally, the purpose is not to receive editing comments. The consultants will merely provide overall guidance on how to make your paper a better one.

This is part of your grade. More information in this regard will be provided when the assignment is handed out.

Additional comments

Complete detail about the assignment (and a rubric showing how the paper will be graded) will be provided under Week 8.

Academic dishonesty

All portions of the writing assignment are to be written as individual students, not in groups. You may not speak to other students about the paper.

You will be required to submit your paper in two ways - (1) by attaching it as a Word document in Vista, and (2) by uploading it into www.turnitin.com, which compares papers for plagiarism from the internet, other popular resources, and among the class itself. Appropriate action will be taken, which may include earning a zero on the paper, having to write another paper, and/or being reported to the Dean. It is in your best interest to closely guard the content of your papers. If someone has copied from you, you will be subject to penalty as well. Any type of student cooperation will be considered academic dishonesty.

Exams

You will have 3 exams (not comprehensive). Each exam will consist of the following items:

1. Approximately 40 multiple choice and/or true-false questions on law.
2. Approximately 20 multiple choice and/or true-false questions on ethics.
3. 5 short answer questions requiring you to analyze the potential legal and ethical issues contained within a given set of facts (similar to the exercises performed in and outside class). - This portion of the exam is notably the most difficult for students, therefore, I suggest you seriously practice this skill by putting sufficient time in the weekly cases.

Each exam is worth 100 points (15% of total required points for the semester).

You will need a small Scantron (green) for each exam.

IMPORTANT NOTE - You will not be able to take the exam unless you provide a student ID or drivers license at the exam. There will be no deviation from this policy. If you are denied admittance into the exam for this reason, you will not be allowed to make-up the exam.

Course Grading

Required items	Points	Approximate % of Total Points
Mandatory syllabus quiz and Mandatory technology assignment	26 points	4%
Weekly written case studies	24 points	4%
Class attendance	50 points	8%
Law and ethics paper - outline (completion grade)	50 points	8%
Law and ethics paper - first draft (completion grade)	50 points	8%
Law and ethics paper - final version (fully graded item)	150 points	23%
Exam 1	100 points	15%
Exam 2	100 points	15%
Exam 3	100 points	15%
Total points	650 points	100 %

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Points Required	Actual Percentage
A	585-650	90%
B	520-584	80%
C	455-519	70%
D	390-454	60%
F	0-389	50%

You must earn exactly these points to earn the grade shown to the left. There will be no deviations from this schedule. For example, if you earn 584 points, you will earn a B. I will not

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re-grade exams or projects at the end of the semester to "find" more points for you.