

Western State College of Law  
Corporate Finance & Accounting for Lawyers  
Law 460A  
Spring 2020 Syllabus

Wednesday 4:20 p.m. – 6:20 p.m.  
Room: 217  
Professor John Ohashi

Business and financial principles, such as cost/benefit analysis, time value of money, and accounting play significant roles in clients' business transactions and in how lawyers and clients plan litigation strategies and settlements. A lawyer's knowledge of business and financial principles is essential to providing effective legal advice. The class: (1) introduces students to basic business, financial, and accounting principles that are essential to the practice of law; (2) explores the interrelationships between legal and business/financial issues; and (3) develops skills to integrate business and legal issues in client communications. The financial principles discussed in class are also applicable to the students' own personal financial planning.

The class incorporates the Western State College of Law Programmatic Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are attached to this syllabus.

### **Required Text Book**

Fundamentals of Financial Management (14<sup>th</sup> ed.) by Brigham & Houston. All references to Chapters in reading assignments refer to the text book.

### **Required Financial Calculator**

Students must have a financial calculator by the sixth week of class. The financial calculator can be a stand-alone calculator or a smart phone app. The class will discuss this requirement before the sixth week.

### **Class Preparation**

Students are expected to complete reading assignments before class. As stated in the Grading section below, students will have homework assignments that track the reading assignments and a stock portfolio project that must be submitted weekly. Students can expect, on average, about 4 hours of class preparation for each week's class. The preparation can take the form of reading assignments and homework, preparation of the weekly stock portfolio project, and study time for class quizzes and the final exam.

### **Email**

Emails from students to me regarding the class are treated as though the student asked a question or made a comment during class. Any email sent to me regarding the class, including, but not limited to general questions regarding homework assignments and exams are not

confidential and your email and my response may be shared with the class. If your email is personal, then you must state so in the email, and I will not share your email or my response with the class.

## **Office Hours**

I am available to meet with students on Wednesdays before and after class and by telephone on other days. Please contact me by email to make an appointment.

## **Grading**

Grades are based on:

(1) Mean average of quizzes and final exam. The quizzes consist of multiple choice questions and the final exam will consist of an essay and multiple choice questions. The final exam will be cumulative and cover all topics discussed during the semester; and

(2) 2 bonus points will be added to a student's final score for **TIMELY** completion and submission of **ALL**: (a) homework problems; and (b) weekly student stock portfolio analysis.

The final score and bonus points will be totaled and the student's final grade will be on a percentage basis. For example: 70 = 2.0; 75 = 2.5; 80 = 3.0; 83 = 3.3; 90 = 4.0.

## **DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:**

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Students Services Suite 119. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Dean Allen Easley at aeasley@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."

**Class Schedule (Subject to change at the Professor's discretion):**

- Week 1     **READ BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS:**  
Chapter 1 An Overview of Financial Management; and  
<https://www.businessroundtable.org/business-roundtable-redefines-the-purpose-of-a-corporation-to-promote-an-economy-that-serves-all-americans>  
  
Discussion of differences (if any) between “Business” and “Legal” Issues  
Forms of business entities with emphasis on corporations
- Week 2     Read Chapter 2: Financial Markets and Institutions  
Introduce Weekly Stock Portfolio Assignment
- Week 3     Review Weekly Stock Portfolio Assignment  
Introduction to Financial Statements  
Quiz on Chapters 1 and 2
- Week 4     Read: Chapter 3: Intro, 3-1 and 3-2;  
Continuation of Financial Statements
- Week 5     Read: 3-3 to 3-7; Chapter 4: 4-2 and 4-2B  
Continuation of Financial Statements  
Differences between Accountant’s Compilation, Review, and Audit Reports
- Week 6     Review of Financial Statements  
Introduction to Time Value of Money  
Use of financial calculators
- Week 7     Quiz on Chapter 3  
Read: Chapter 5, Sections 5-1 to and including 5-9  
Continue Time Value of Money
- Week 8     Read: 5-10 to 5-18  
Continue Time Value of Money
- Week 9     Review Chapter 5  
Read: 3-9 Income Taxes  
Discussion of Federal Income Taxation
- Week 10    Chapter 5 quiz  
Introduction to Chapter 6 Interest rates
- Week 11    Read: 6-1 to 6-6  
Continuation of Interest Rates

Week 12 Chapter 6 Quiz

Tools to Understand Your Client's Business

Economic Concepts:

- (i) value
- (ii) opportunity costs
- (iii) sunk costs

Business Concepts:

- (i) product or service based
- (ii) the importance of margin (buy low/sell high)
- (iii) difference between "aspirin" and "vitamins"
- (iv) market pull or product push (is it "steak" or "sizzle")
- (v) start up costs and staying power
- (vi) customers, growth, and competition
- (vii) exit strategy issues (liquidation event; payday)

Week 13 Applying corporate finance concepts to personal finances

View: <http://www.wi65.org/video/> (Full episode)

<https://www.morningstar.com/articles/958352/strategies-for-young-investors>

Week 14 Discussion of effective client communications

(lawyers inform-clients decide)

Review for final exam; Closing

## **Western State College of Law – Programmatic Learning Outcomes**

**Western State College of Law’s curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:**

**(1) Doctrinal Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedures, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

**(2) Practice Skills**

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student’s chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student’s particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

**(3) Legal Analysis**

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule, and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

**(4) Legal Research**

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

**(5) Communication**

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone, style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

**(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument**

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications, and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

**(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency**

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

**(8) Legal Ethics**

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.