

Contracts - PLS 63

Section 1950, Fall 2021 Course Syllabus

Course Description

This is a 3-unit, wholly online course that is designed to acquaint paralegal students, and other interested students, with the formal requirements and legal principles involved in contract law. Our focus will include the history of contract law, as well as the nuts and bolts of drafting legal documents. Ethics in the enforcement and content of contracts will also be studied and discussed. In addition to the material covered in the required textbook, we will also explore online resources available at no cost to students, including current case law. Students will develop an understanding of the underlying legal theory of contracts, while also developing the ability to analyze and draft legal agreements.

I am a practicing lawyer, employed as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of California. In my role, contracts are critical not only to how the law is interpreted, but also how it is enforced. This class will explore the interplay between the components of a contract and the contract's enforceability, as well as any impediments to enforceability. I look forward to spending the fall examining contract law with you. It is my hope that you will develop an appreciation for this area of the law; more specifically, how contract law provides a critical foundation for appreciating and succeeding in other areas of law. Although this course is online, students will be encouraged to engage in regular discussion group posts to create a sense of community.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the law governing contracts and business organizations.
2. Identify, locate, evaluate and apply relevant sources of law to the legal issues of contracts and business organizations.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in analysis and interpretation of data and text regarding contracts and business organizations.
4. Determine validity of contractual documents regarding the parties' intent and subject matter.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Draft simple, legally enforceable contracts.
2. Accurately assess the strengths and deficits of existing contracts.
3. Recommend appropriate changes in contractual language and terms and describe the required steps to successfully implement those changes.
4. Apply appropriate ethical standards in contract administration.

Class Meetings

Material and activities will be offered asynchronously, meaning students can access the assignments for each class at the beginning of each new module or week. That said, for an online class to work and feel cohesive in a meaningful way, it is critical that students complete class assignments in a timely manner and contribute to the discussion group questions each week. Students will be expected to not only contribute to the discussion posts by submitting their own required entry, but also to provide thoughtful feedback in response to other students' posts. Please don't hold back in contributing to the weekly discussion group posts. Your feedback may well inspire someone else to contribute. Additionally, your question(s) may lead to a response that will enable another student to learn something important, or to ask a question that will, in turn, be valuable to someone else.

Instructor Contact

Laura Pedicini, JD

Email: lpedicini@santarosa.edu

Phone: (415) 854-1423 Telephone contact is encouraged, but advanced notice is required. Please text me at 415-854-1423 or contact me through Canvas (below) to request a phone appointment.

Office Hours: I am available every Thursday evening to respond to emails in "real time." Meaning, if you send me an email on a Thursday between 8:00 pm- 9:00 pm, I will review your email and respond as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind that while I will make every effort to respond to your email in "real time," I may be on the phone with another student or communicating with another student by email. As a result, my response may not be immediate.

You may also use the **Canvas Conversations Inbox** to send me a message.

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends/holidays. If I do not respond to your email within these stated parameters, please email me again as it is possible that I did not receive your email.

Course Web Site

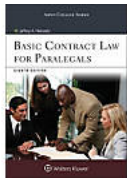
Students will use the Canvas course web site for assignment instructions, submitting assignments, viewing classmates' work, sharing resources, and viewing grades. Please note that I will be posting assignments each Monday, typically by 12pm, utilizing the module format. If I am prevented from posting an assignment by 12pm, I will post an announcement. **For that reason, and because I will periodically transmit important information via class announcements, it is imperative that you keep your contact information updated on Canvas.** Thank you.

Textbook (required)

Basic Contract Law for Paralegals, Eighth Edition, Jeffrey Helewitz; ISBN: 9781454855552

[https://www.bkstr.com/santarosastore/course-materials-results?](https://www.bkstr.com/santarosastore/course-materials-results?shopBy=course&divisionDisplayName=&departmentDisplayName=PLS&courseDisplayName=63§ionDisplayName=1950&programId=4525&tr)

[shopBy=course&divisionDisplayName=&departmentDisplayName=PLS&courseDisplayName=63§ionDisplayName=1950&programId=4525&tr](https://www.bkstr.com/santarosastore/course-materials-results?shopBy=course&divisionDisplayName=&departmentDisplayName=PLS&courseDisplayName=63§ionDisplayName=1950&programId=4525&tr)



You can locate and order textbooks online via the <https://www.bkstr.com/santarosastore/home>. If your class is based out of Petaluma, your books will be listed on the **Petaluma Bookstore** web site.

The book is also on reserve at the SRJC library.

Important Dates

Day Class Begins: 8/16/21

Day Class Ends: 12/10/21

Last Day to Add without instructor's approval: 8/22/21

Last Day to Drop with refund: 8/29/21

Last Day to Add with instructor's approval: 9/5/21

Last Day to Drop without a 'W' symbol: 9/5/21

Last Day to Drop with a 'W' symbol: 11/14/21

Dropping the Class

If you decide to discontinue this course, it is your responsibility to officially drop it. For online courses, a student must check in during the first week of class (typically by responding to that week's discussion group post) or risk being dropped from the course. A student may be dropped from any class when that student's absences exceed ten percent (10%) of the total hours of class time. It is strongly advised that if you need to miss more than one class/homework deadline in a row that you contact me to avoid being dropped from the class.

Attendance

For classes that meet online, students who fail to log on and initiate participation by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time of the second day of the class may be dropped by the instructor.

Instructors are required to drop all No-Show students immediately following the second class meeting. A No-Show is an enrolled student who has not attended any class meeting of the course. For classes that meet online, a No-Show is an enrolled student who has not logged on and initiated active participation by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time of the second day of the class.

Instructor Announcements and Q&A Forum

The instructor will post announcements on the Announcements page in Canvas throughout the semester. As a result, it is imperative that all students ensure that their contact information is accurate, and up to date, on Canvas. Canvas notifies students according to their preferred Notification Preferences. A "Q&A Forum" is also available as a pinned Discussion to ask for assistance of your classmates or of the instructor.

Late Policy

All assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on the due date. A late submission will receive a 20% penalty, unless a student has notified me in advance of a conflict and I have deemed the basis for the late assignment acceptable. Submissions more than one week late will not receive full credit, and if a pattern of late assignments emerges, students may be dropped from the class.

Do not let your concerns about a late assignment paralyze you from reaching out for help, or communicating with me. I would always rather assist you than not. It is important to take responsibility by communicating early and effectively. Again, if you contact me and I do not respond within 24 hours on a weekday or 48 hours on a holiday or weekend, please contact me again.

Exams

There will be regular quizzes and a final exam, but no midterm. The material comes from the textbook, discussion group postings, and supplemental materials. As students in this online format, you are co-instructors. As a result, it is important that you not only put care and effort into your own discussion group posts, but that you read and respond to the posts of fellow classmates. These posts will be incorporated into exam questions.

If a quiz is missed, and the student has not reached out to me to explain why, the student will receive a zero. It is your responsibility to take quizzes by the assigned due date. The quizzes will be posted online via Canvas.

Grading Policy

Click the "Grades" link in Canvas to keep track of your grades. I make every effort to grade regularly and post grades and comments in the Canvas gradebook. However, I may occasionally fall behind due to illness, competing work interests, or other unanticipated conflicts. Please be patient. As long as you have followed the instructions and completed the assignment, you do not need to be concerned about your grade. My focus on grading is about ensuring that you've demonstrated effort, interest, and respect for the assignment. I am not interested in making things "tricky," but rather in developing assignments that are interesting, enjoyable and designed to ensure that you will complete the course having mastered the required objectives. As with me, I understand that "real life" happens with you, too. In the event that you will be late with an assignment, please email me to let me know. We will figure out a strategy together that enables you to move forward without losing too much traction.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A 90% 90-100 points

B 80% 80-89 points

C 70% 70 to 79 points

D 60% 60 to 69 points

Standards of Conduct

Students who register in SRJC classes are required to abide by the SRJC Student Conduct Standards. Violation of the Standards is basis for referral to the Vice President of Student Services or dismissal from class or from the College. See the **Student Code of Conduct page**.

Collaborating on or copying of tests or homework in whole or in part will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and result in a grade of 0 for that test or assignment. Students are encouraged to share information and ideas, but not their work. See these links on Plagiarism:

SRJC Writing Center Lessons on avoiding plagiarism

SRJC's statement on Academic Integrity

Special Needs

Every effort is made to conform to accessibility standards for all instructor-created materials. Students should contact their instructor as soon as possible if they find that they cannot access any course materials. Students with disabilities who believe they need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Resources (527-4278).

List of assignments

Note to students: This is a module-based online course. To view course content, go to *Modules*. A new module will appear each Monday, typically by 12:00 pm, providing that week's list of assignments and corresponding due dates.