The course may be taught in part by in-person classroom lectures and in part online, depending upon developments in the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students will be notified as far ahead of time as possible as to how the class is going to be taught. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

The overall purpose of the course is to develop in students effective oral and written communication skills and to engage in critical thinking (focusing particularly on the ability to develop and articulate a particular perspective and assess competing perspectives). Through a combination of lectures and a rigorous Socratic teaching method, I will mightily endeavor, in the words of Fred Friendly, legendary Dean of the Columbia University School of Journalism, to make the students so uncomfortable they can only escape by thinking.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will consist of a series of lectures designed to teach legal analysis and the legal method of deciding disputes. Classical principles of contract law will serve as the tools for gaining that understanding. Ancillary legal subjects may also be covered. Students will be required to solve typical disputes according to the applicable principles of law. For the relief of tedium and as a precursor to the second part of the course, anecdotal discussion of various social issues will intersperse the lectures on the law, i.e., I will tell stories.

Testing will require definitions and examples of legal terms and discussions of principles of law applicable to the facts of particular disputes. The questions will be given to the students in advance. The answers will also be supplied in advance. However, without a firm understanding of the subject matter, the answers cannot possibly be memorized. With such an understanding, very little memorizing is required. In addition to written class work and oral presentations, there will be at least one graded test and a final examination. The dates will be announced well in advance.
The following scale will be used for assigning letter grades:

- A = 93 - 100
- A- = 90 - 92
- B+ = 88 - 89
- B = 83 - 87
- B- = 80 - 82
- C+ = 78 - 79
- C = 73 - 77
- C- = 70 - 72
- D+ = 68 - 69
- D = 63 - 67
- D- = 60 - 62
- F = Below 60

The second part of the course will consist of a series of discussions of the intractable issues facing society. Students will confront those issues using the analytical principles learned in the first part of the course. At least, that is the goal. Issues addressed will include, e.g., climate change, abortion, healthcare reform, affirmative action, welfare, women's rights, gay rights/transgender rights, political correctness, the environment, animal rights, foreign affairs, business ethics, legalization of marijuana/drugs, the War on Drugs, capital punishment, stop-and-frisk laws, prison reform, gun control, the Middle East, terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, “Me Too Movement,” “Black Lives Matter,” and possibly others. The students, by consensus with me, will choose the specific issues. Each student will be required to write a paper on one of the issues.

Written class work may also be required.

Generally speaking, the written test will count 1/3 of the final grade, class participation and the paper together will count 1/3, and the final will count 1/3.

Outside reading will be assigned, but no text will be required.

It is very important that I be able to contact every student enrolled at all times. Class e-mails will be generated through OAKS, making it necessary to use official College of Charleston e-mail addresses. Students also need to supply their best contact telephone number. They will be asked to read their e-mail and check for telephone messages every day and respond to anything I send them. If any contact information changes, the student should let me know immediately.

OAKS, including Gradebook, will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted.

Unfailing class attendance and timely class attendance are vitally important, whether the class is being taught in person or online. However, reasonable accommodations will be made for students who must be absent as a result of COVID-19, or for other good reasons.
Course Outline

The lectures, during the first half of the semester, will include introduction to law and to the course, and principles of contract law, including offer, acceptance, and consideration, the characteristics of an offer, revocation of an offer, tangible versus intangible consideration, termination of contracts and damages. The remaining class meetings will consist of discussions of the intractable social issues facing society.

Disability/Access

If there is a student in this class who has a documented disability and has been approved to receive accommodations through the Center for Disability Services/SNAP (Students Needing Access Parity), the student should discuss this with me.

Continuity of Learning
(For Hybrid Classes with Face-to-Face Meetings)

Due to social distancing requirements, this class will include a variety of online and technology enhanced components to reinforce continuity of learning for all enrolled students. Before the drop/add deadline, students should decide whether the course plan on the syllabus matches their own circumstances. The detailed plan is included in the syllabus.

Recording of Classes (Via ZOOM)

Class sessions may be recorded via both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

Online Courses with Exam Proctoring

This course may require the use of an exam proctoring service for the course exams. If so, students will be are responsible for registering, scheduling, and the cost of the service prior to each exam. Instructions and additional information on proctoring can be found at https://academicaffairs.cofc.edu/distance-education/online-proctoring/index.php

Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction

If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning.
Honor Code and Academic Integrity

“Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by the instructor. The instructor designs an intervention or assigns a grade reduction to help prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed both by the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.”

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook.