

# IBT Syllabus

## Contents

1. Textbooks
2. Class scheduling
3. Meeting Outside of Class
4. How the Course is Organized
5. Assignments
6. Class Attendance
7. Zoom Classes
8. No Laptops During In-Person Classes
9. Professionalism
10. Grading
11. Medical Conditions

## 1. Textbooks

Be sure to get the most recent editions, which are listed below. If you get a book online, the webpage should show the ISBN. If you use the bookstore, check the ISBN on the book's copyright page (the page right after the title page).

Don't get a digital-only version such as Amazon's eTextbook. It's ok to get a bundled version if it provides a hard copy book in addition to the digital version. But the digital is only for study outside class. During class, you will *not* have access to digital books (see "No Laptops During In-Person Classes" below).

**Casebook:** Chow & Schoenbaum, *International Business Transactions: Problems, Cases, and Materials*  
**5th** edition – 2022  
ISBN: 9781543858778

**Documents Supplement:** Chow & Schoenbaum, *International Business Transactions ... Documents Supplement*  
**4th** edition — 2020 — paperback with a blue cover  
ISBN: 9781454875666

**IBT Supplement:** photocopy booklet  
— pick this up in the basement copy room

## 2. Class Scheduling

Class meets on Monday nights from 8:10 to 10:00.

We will not meet on August 21.

The August 28 and Sept. 5 classes will be on Zoom. Later in the semester two other classes will also be on Zoom. The other nine classes will meet in the law school building.

Because Monday, September 4, is Labor Day, all Monday classes that week meet on Tuesday, September 5. Monday classes do not meet on September 25, which is Yom Kippur.

## 3.

## Meeting Outside of Class

If you wish, I can meet with you for as long as you want and as many times as you want, preferably by Zoom. *Don't be shy about asking.* I can meet with you individually or with your study companions. To make an appointment, contact me by email at [Richard.k.neumann@hofstra.edu](mailto:Richard.k.neumann@hofstra.edu).

### 4.

## How the Course is Organized

Look at the casebook's *summary* table of contents — the one on casebook page ix. (A casebook's TOC gives you the big picture — an overview of the entire course.)

In the IBT Supplement, the chapter numbers are identical to the casebook's chapter numbers. For example, letters of credit are covered in both casebook chapter 4 and IBT Supplement chapter 4. Thus the chapter number listings below apply to both books.

We'll cover the chapters in the sequence below. (But we won't cover everything in every chapter.)

Chapter 1 — *intro*

Chapter 2, 3, & 4 — *international goods sales and letters of credit*

Chapters 5, 6, & 7 — *business relationships, investment, intellectual property*

Chapter 8 — *dispute resolution*

Chapter 9 — *corporate social responsibility*

### 5.

## Assignments

By Thursday each week, you'll receive the assignment for the following week's class.

(This course does *not* use Canvas, TWEN, or Blackboard. Practicing lawyers live on email, and so will we.)

### 6.

## Class Attendance

**In-Person Classes** — A sign-in sheet will be circulated at the beginning of every class. You're responsible for making sure that you sign it. This must be done in the classroom or immediately afterward in my office. My secretary will not allow you to sign the attendance sheet in her office. At the end of every class, ask yourself, "Did I sign the sign-in sheet?" If you can't recall having done it, come up to the front of the room and sign it before you leave.

If you have the sign-in sheet at the end of class, please give it to me on your way out. As a courtesy to other students, please do this quickly. Other students become impatient when they wait in the front of the class to sign a sheet that has not appeared.

**Zoom Classes** — Sign in via the chat box.

**Generally** — Falsifying a signature on an attendance sheet can lead to failure in the course and a charge of academic dishonesty under Part I(3)(e) of the school's Code of Student Conduct. Signatures are spot-checked by comparing them to other examples of your signature on file with the law school.

Unprofessional tardiness can be counted as absence.

## 7. Zoom Classes

During a Zoom class, you must be alone in a quiet space that is 100% under your control and where you can't be interrupted. For most students, that means being at home or in some other private space. For these reasons, you are not permitted to be in the law school building during a Zoom class unless you have another class immediately before the Zoom class.

We use the Zoom chat box only to take attendance. To make comments and ask questions, use the raise-hand feature instead.

Lawyers and judges use Zoom on a daily basis. Start developing professional online habits now.

**Hardware** — During a Zoom class, you must be participating via a computer — not a cell phone or tablet.

**Visual setting** — Don't sit where a light source, like a window, is behind you. Adjust your lighting so your face can be seen on the webcam clearly. You might experiment with moving lamps and your camera until you can see your brightly-lit face on the screen.

**Sound** — Be in the quietest place available to you. Close your door if necessary to reduce background noise. Keep yourself on mute unless you are talking.

**Identification** — Make sure that Zoom shows your full name under your picture. If you haven't already done this, click on the three dots in the upper-right corner of your picture and rename yourself. If you're known by a nickname instead of your given first name, please use it instead of your first name. But you must use your last name as well.

**Webcam** — To be counted as present, you must keep your webcam on during the entire class unless you have permission in advance to turn it off.

**Multitasking** — Don't even think about it: When you're in a Zoom meeting, it will be obvious to a teacher if you check email, look at websites, text, or do other things with your phone. Shut down all other windows on your computer during your Zoom session so you can be fully present during class.

## 8. No Laptops or Other Electronic Devices During In-Person Classes

When we meet in-person, ***you may not use a laptop, tablet, cell phone, or any other electronic device.*** If you violate this rule, I will ask you to see me after class, and you may be counted as absent.

Research shows that students who take handwritten notes learn more than students who use laptops.<sup>1</sup>

**Several studies have shown that laptop-using students do worse on exams than handwriting students.<sup>2</sup> According to two of these researchers, “students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual [exam] questions than students who took notes longhand” because laptop note takers tend to “transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words.”<sup>3</sup>**

**Commenting on these studies, another writer said that “there is something about typing**

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1 . Colleen P. Murphy, Christopher J. Ryan, Jr. & Yajni Warnapala, *Note-Taking Mode and Academic Performance in Two Law School Courses*, 68 J. Leg. Educ. 207 (2019) (“when controlling separately for LSAT, handwriters had a higher combined GPA in [two required casebook] courses than laptop users”); *The Writing’s on the Wall*, NATIONAL JURIST, Fall 2018, at 10; and *Students are Better Off without a Laptop in the Classroom*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, July 11, 2017.

2 . *Should Teachers and Professors Ban Student Use of Laptops in Class?* N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 27, 2017.

3 . Pam A. Mueller & Daniel M. Oppenheimer, *The Pen Is Mightier Than the keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking*, PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE (2014).

that leads to mindless processing. And there is something about ink and paper that prompts students to go beyond merely hearing and recording new information — and instead to process and reframe” so they learn more deeply.<sup>4</sup>

Students say in surveys that they are more satisfied with the learning environment in no-laptop courses. Although some students prefer to use laptops, a larger number of students in the surveys say that classrooms are quieter, they can hear the teacher and other students better, and they feel more engaged in the classroom experience with fewer distractions.

(An exception to this policy exists for a student who has been designated by the Office of Student Affairs to take notes for another student who is receiving an accommodation. This exception doesn't cover taking notes for your friends. In fact, a student designated by the Office of Student Affairs doesn't know the identity of the student who will use the notes. If you are a designated note-taker, please sit in the last row of the classroom.)

## 9. Professionalism

Class is a business meeting. *You are expected to behave in class with the same level of professionalism that governs a lawyer's behavior in any meeting where the lawyer is an active participant.*

- It's unprofessional to **arrive late** without a compelling reason. If you arrive late, you *must* see me after class and explain why. If you don't have a compelling reason, you'll be counted as having an unexcused absence. Compelling reasons do **not** include things like "I couldn't find a parking space." A professional plans ahead and allows extra time to arrive early at professional obligations.
- Using your phone or other device to check your texts or email during class is unprofessional behavior. If you do it, you can be counted as absent for that class. *Class is a business meeting.*

## 10. Grading

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<sup>4</sup> . Wray Herbert, *Ink on Paper: Some Notes on Note Taking*, at <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/were-only-human/ink-on-paper-some-notes-on-note-taking.html>

The course grade is the sum of the exam grade (85 %) and class participation (15 %) minus a deduction for excessive absences (see below).

**The exam** — It will primarily involve problem-solving. You'll be given fact situations and asked how you would go about solving the problems in the facts to advance your client's interests. You'll need to know law to do that. But you'll also be graded on how well you've learned how to think like a problem-solving lawyer (which is one of the goals of the course).

**Grade effect of unexcused absences** — You are allowed two unexcused absences. If you miss more than two classes and haven't provided an excuse for the extra absences, your semester grade point score will be reduced by four points for each excess unexcused absence. For example, if your exam scores and class participation, add up to 80 points and if you have four unexcused absences (two of which are penalized), your semester grade will be based on 72 points.

**Excused absence definition** — An absence is excused if illness, a compelling family situation, or something similar prevents attending class — and if you provide notification of that before or as soon as possible after class.

It's up to you to keep track of how many times you've been absent and which of those absences have been unexcused. No one will notify you when you have used up your limit of two unexcused absences.

## 11.

### Medical Conditions

If you have a medical condition that might be relevant to school work, such as ADHD or dyslexia, please feel free to discuss it with me privately so we can work out something that could be helpful to you in this course and perhaps in school generally.