

TO: Legal, Ethical, and Social Environment enrollee
FROM: Michael J. O'Hara, LESE instructor
SUBJECTS:

May 17, 2004

1. Welcome to class
2. **Reading assignment for first class**

First, let me welcome you to the "Legal, Ethical, and Social Environment" class, BSAD 8010-301 #10119. I look forward to sharing an enjoyable and challenging summer of critical thinking with you.

For many of you, this will be your first core course from the M.B.A. program, and I want to give you a jump on the process. The reading and writing expectations are quite aggressive, but clearly are manageable if you develop **and** implement a well thought out approach. Students before you offer the warning that a single reading of the text rarely will be adequate. However, you need to avoid excessive underlining. Focus on the rules of law.

For the first night of class, every person should arrive having **read** and understood the **syllabus**,¹ as well as having **read *Natural Capitalism* chapters 1 through 5** as well as have **read all of the Key Slides**. The Memorization Exam on July 7 will focus on your *memorization* of the Key Slides.

The course syllabus² has been posted to my CBA website³ and to BlackBoard.⁴ The last page of the syllabus has the calendar for the course. The Memorization Exam is on Wednesday, July 7 and the *Natural Capitalism* Exam is on Monday, July 12.

The *Natural Capitalism* text is in the UNO Bookstore. The *Introduction to Legal and Economic Analysis* text is expected to reach the UNO Bookstore shelves by noon on Friday, June 18. The course syllabus along with the Key Slides needed for the Memorization Exam have been posted to BlackBoard in the Course Documents section.

Do note, however, that this syllabus is an adhesion contract. An adhesion contract is a take-it-or-leave-it contract drafted in a context of reduced bargaining power and often is used as a vehicle for abuse. Accordingly, in an adhesion contract all ambiguous terms are interpreted against the drafter (*me*), unless the other party (*you*) has had a reasonable opportunity to discover and eliminate the ambiguity. After that reasonable opportunity, any ambiguity is interpreted reasonably. This is your notice. The hearing will be during class on June 28.

¹ Be sure to note the three documents incorporated by reference in the Introduction section of the syllabus.

² The Heads Up email I sent you early mentioned the possibility of class negotiation of graded events for inclusion in the syllabus; however, per feedback from Spring 2004 students, such negotiation will not be done during Summer 2004.

³ The UNO CBA web is undergoing a major upgrade, thus, as of May 17, I have not been able to post to that web site. Both the syllabus and the link it contains to the Key Slides is not yet active. Please use BlackBoard.

⁴ www.myuno.unomaha.edu

WARNING: This is an evening summer class. Some of you may be employed full time, others may have extensive commitments on the home front, or some of you may confront both in addition to this class. To simultaneously accommodate more than one of these means **time management skills are critical.**

Summer school is more difficult, far more difficult, than the fall or spring semesters. Every university course, regardless of when it is offered, typically, has a fixed number of clock minutes.⁵ However, during the summer these class minutes flow by faster than during the fall or spring. At first glance, the speed pick up appears to be 2.1 times faster in the first summer night.⁶ However, appearances can be deceiving.⁷ *The real time crunch is between the end of class on Wednesday night and the start of class on Monday night.* Between M&W there only are 45.0 clock hours instead of the 165.5 clock hours between fall or spring class meetings. While WtoM initially appears to be moving 2.1 faster than normal, the material MtoW is moving at least an *additional* 3.7 times faster. That is, MtoW is 7.8 times faster.⁸ Doing what you plan to do during this summer session, how many *graduate* credit hours have you ever successfully completed during a semester? Was it either 6.3 or 23.4 *graduate* credit hours? Is this task impossible? No. Clearly, it is feasible since 20+ students successfully complete this course every summer. However, you must plan and read ahead.⁹

The law reads slowly. The law reads between 5 pages per hour and 20 pages per hour, depending on the topic and the reader. Typically, there will be about 60 pages of reading per class meeting, thus between 3 and 12 hours of reading between class meetings. Most likely, a single reading will consume a minimum of 4 hours. A single reading rarely will be adequate. An additional item to consider is writing assignments. When there are written assignments, the 4 hours will be wholly inadequate if you have not read ahead.

⁵ That is, 2250 minutes = 15 weeks times 3 classes per week times 50 minutes per class.

⁶ That is, 15 weeks divided by 7 weeks.

⁷ For example, the second summer night is one week shorter. Further, during 2004 the second summer evening session is missing one class meeting (i.e., July 5). Thus, LESE Summer 2004 runs faster than 2.5 times faster than LESE Spring 2004.

⁸ That is, $7.8 = 2.1 * 3.7$.

⁹ The speed up is much worse than that. In those 45.0 clock hours of WtoM summer classes there really only are about 4 hours of feasible study time (*after subtracting sleep, bathing, eating, travel, and job*). In stark contrast, in those fall and spring 165.5 clock hours of MtoM classes there really are about 40 hours of feasible study time (*e.g., six nights of four hours each plus two weekend days of eight hours each*). Thus, the study time speed up of MtoW is 10 fold while the study time speed up of WtoM is 4.2 fold (*i.e., $4.2 = 2.1 * 2.0$*). Thus, the workload of MtoW in a 3-hour summer course is equal to a 30-hour load; while the workload of WtoM in that same 3-hour course equals a 12.6-hour load (*ignoring the fact you were going to move all of your studying onto the time WtoM!*).

I strongly suggest you plan on studying both Friday and Saturday nights. Read prior to the start of class on Monday all of the assigned readings for Wednesday. It is not physically possible to do all of the studying for the Wednesday classes if you consistently start after the Monday class. That is one reason why the *Natural Capitalism* Exam is on Monday, July 12.

Between Wednesday and Monday, you would be wise to read all of you Monday **and** all of your Wednesday reading assignments. *Make Tuesday night your "night off" with family and friends; or if your planning fails, your catch-up night.*

Let me give you a second **warning, about fatigue.** *If you are taking one or more first summer session courses, and if you plan on taking one or more second summer session courses, and if you plan on taking multiple courses during the fall semester, then you really need to plan ahead for making your "Go v. No Go" decisions: especially in the second summer night session. During summer school, if you drop on Thursday of the first week of a summer session, then you will be charged 25% of tuition. This means for a M&W class you must decide to drop immediately after the second class meeting: you can not wait for morning. Dropping on the second Monday of a summer session costs you 50% of the tuition.¹⁰ Any delay in making your decision will be very expensive.*

The weekend before the start of a summer course you need to read ahead. If you do not feel the surge of curiosity that *you* usual feel at the start of a class as you read ahead, then I would advise you to consider [a] the resource base you will bring to that class, [b] the academic wisdom of your summer agenda, and [c] how best you can optimize your **yearly** academic output. Earning an MBA degree is more like a marathon than a sprint. Your yearly output is likely to be greater if you swiftly drop (*especially, a second*) summer session night class rather than exhaust yourself in a performance that generates no-credit, but costs a substantial fraction of the tuition.

In closing, let me again welcome you to the "Legal, Ethical, and Social Environment": with planning and implementation, success can be yours. Also, let me urge you to spark your curiosity into full flame so that the law will be simultaneously fun and educational.

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¹⁰ But note, since that Monday is July 4, you actually must drop by Friday at 4:29 PM.