MGMT 440
Managing the Business-Society Relationship

Spring 2008

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Professor Emeritus

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MGMT 440.  An investigation of the principal domestic and global factors that influence, and are influenced by, business organizations. The implications for managing the business-society relationship are explored from multiple perspectives, including social, cultural, political, economic, ethical, and ecological contexts. Prerequisites:  BLAW 302, MGMT 303
COURSE OUTLINE

Rationale and Overview

In this course, emphasis is placed on the business organization as an element in a system of interdependent and interacting external environments. There seems to be little doubt that the atmosphere in which business operates is rapidly changing. Indeed, it appears that major social, political, economic, and technological changes are in progress, and the impact of these changes is magnified by the “internationalization” of the business community. A period of this nature, full of opportunities and risks, requires recognition of the signals of change. Understanding underlying trends in the environment permits an enterprise to anticipate the types of developments and issues that are forming and to discern what their possible impacts will be. Indeed the more the environment is understood, the greater the chances of recognizing issues that offer opportunities and present threats. Analyzing the environment also aids in the development of an early warning system to deal with high-risk situations or to develop responses that can turn threats into advantages and expectations into public support of a firm's behavior.

Without an understanding of environmental change, managers are ill-prepared to deal with issues when they surface. Obviously, not all issues can be forecasted, but they can be anticipated. To the extent that some or most are anticipated by analyzing the environment, a firm can improve its chances for effective strategy-making. Managers can focus on those issues generated by the analysis rather than deal with any and all issues that surface in an atmosphere of crisis. Such an approach results in greater appreciation of environmental impacts and ways in which a firm can relate to them.

A business enterprise and its environment are interconnected through a sociotechnical system. In this system, technoeconomic forces limit what is possible in a society. These forces deal with resource and technological availability. Societal forces, on the other hand, determine what is acceptable. They have an impact on what and how resources and technologies are used and reflect the nature of society. Political-legal forces in the system resolve conflicts between other forces and determine what is permissible and legal.

A business enterprise is considered a transformation unit in the sociotechnical system where "what is possible, allowable, and legal" is translated into value-added goods and services that satisfy the needs of society. It takes its resource, societal, and political-legal inputs from other portions of the system. It puts them through a business process--developing, producing, financing, and marketing goods and services--and its outputs are fed back into the system. As an entity within a system, it is affected by change and influences it. Through the business process individual companies become implementers of change. Small and large firms thus become instruments of economic, technological, social, and political development. Large corporations in particular seem to have become prime instruments of change, and thus have become institutionalized and a distinguishing feature of the system. As such, the development and operations of corporations have become focal points in understanding how a firm interacts with its environment.

Overall, the sociotechnical system emphasizes firm and environmental interdependence so that the elements function as a unified, systematic whole. Changes in one element most likely will cause a series of shifts in others. Some of these interdependencies can cause a conflict while others are more harmonious. Some may lead to improvements in the standard of living and quality of life, while others may detract from them. The aim, therefore, is to resolve conflicts and preserve harmony so that positive gains are made systemwide.
Course Objectives

Today it is widely recognized that a business firm must manage its external relations with society and the international community with the same degree of professional competence that it has traditionally used in managing its internal economic and technical affairs. The management of corporate policy has therefore become one of the many skills that the managers of organizations must master. As I see it, the central task of the Business-Society course is to explore how an enterprise must in fact deal with all of the complexities and constraints of the societal environments in which it operates, why these cannot be assumed away or ignored, and how they affect strategic decisions.

As much emphasis will be placed during this semester on problem-finding as on problem-solving; on conceptual skills and creative skills as on analytical skills; and on a future orientation as on a present (or historical) one. Not only are there concepts to be understood and applied in this as in any other course, but also in so doing you will develop more confidence in your own style of decision making and come to better appreciate just what it takes to run and manage a company. In charting a company's course for long-term success, you will find that there are no right answers--only difficult choices.

Accordingly, I have established the following objectives of student achievement:

1. To comprehend the scope and nature of the business environment, and to determine how a business interacts with the various elements of its environment.
2. To ascertain the impacts of each environmental element on a business and its operations, and to determine how a business changes with shifts in its environment.
3. To be able to diagnose the real threats and opportunities facing an organization in an increasingly turbulent environment.
4. To understanding the major relationships between business firms and the society in which they operate.
5. To understand and appreciate the global interconnectedness of business, and to develop an "international perspective" of business thought.
6. To develop key concepts and principles that can be used by managers as they cope with various elements in the firm's environment, and to apply these concepts and principles to selected problems and issues confronting the contemporary business manager.
7. To learn an ethical reasoning framework for analyzing controversial issues in business, and to apply various ethical theories to these issues in developing ethical managerial responses.
8. To improve and broaden one's personal philosophy of business, and to improve communication skills and research ability in business-environment relationships.
9. To improve one's ability to present and defend one's recommendations, or argue persuasively for a point of view, recognizing that no set of "answers" is necessarily "correct."
Texts and Materials

The required text for this course is:


Additionally, the regular (or even occasional) reading of the following periodicals is strongly recommended for those business students wishing to become “students of business”:

- *Business Week, Fortune, The Economist, Wall Street Journal*
- The "Business" section of a regional or metropolitan newspaper (e.g., San Francisco *Chronicle*, Sacramento *Bee*)

The reading assignments from the text for each week are shown in the accompanying schedule of topics, assignments, and activities. Not surprisingly, those who take the reading seriously understand the course material better and have less difficulty in the other elements of the course. Reading assignments and the course material contained within them are the responsibility of the students as part of their contractual obligation in the learning experience of this course. Lectures, cases, and class discussions are designed to supplement and elaborate upon the assigned readings and textbook content; do not expect lectures or discussions to be merely a "rehash" or restatement of the contents of the textbook. Discussions of current developments, events, and issues are an integral part of this course.

Participation and Attendance

To the extent possible due to the large size of the class, this course will be structured as a discussion-based seminar. The success of the seminar is dependent upon each student being prepared and actively contributing to the discussion. Therefore, it is imperative that each student attends class fully prepared, willing and able to offer constructive criticism, analytical insights, and encouraging support.

Active participation is necessary not because you "do it for a grade," but because it is simply "the right thing for upper-division, professional school university students to do"! Accordingly, each student should try to contribute significantly to the discussion and analysis of the day's scheduled topics and cases. Each student is expected to be an active participant and to make meaningful comments on the topics being discussed. You should, therefore, make a conscientious effort to attend every class and to be sufficiently prepared to actively contribute to our discussions. Merely coming to class and sitting stone-cold silent is not sufficient, and it is not consistent with a university-level, professional school education!

Simply put: Don't miss class! Understandably, there are circumstances (e.g., job interviews, family matters, etc.) that may cause you to miss class; nevertheless, excessive absences will significantly impair your learning experience. As a matter of common courtesy, arrive to class on time. *While liquid refreshments are allowed, the consumption of food is not.*
The quality of class participation is typically more important than the quantity, and the following points tend to characterize effective participation:

1. Are the points made substantive and relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?
2. Do comments show the participant has been listening?
3. Do comments clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments and lead to a clearer statement of the concepts being covered?
4. Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?
5. Do comments show evidence of analysis?
6. Do comments add to our understanding of the issue?
7. Does the participant distinguish among different kinds of data (i.e., facts, opinions, beliefs, etc.) and between positive and normative analysis?
8. Is there a willingness to test new ideas or are all comments "safe?"

Unless you participate, I guarantee that you will not learn very much. Since true learning comes from discovery, you will learn much more by taking personal risks and continually testing your ideas. I would much rather you made poor arguments (at first) than none at all; that way you will at least learn from others' comments and improve the next time around. You will also find that the more prepared you are, the easier it will be to participate more effectively. Everything is discussed in class is proper grist for your participative mill, and open to question, dissection, challenge, debate, and (perhaps) even laughter.

A Note on Cell Phones: **Turn them OFF (and not just merely switch them to “vibrate”)!**

Because cell phone usage in my classroom is considered unprofessional, uncivil, and disrespectful conduct, there is a “no tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage (including text messaging). The first instance of a violation of this policy will result in a “fair warning;” subsequent violations will incur a one-half grade deduction for the course for each instance of noncompliance.

**Debate/Term Group Project**

Each student will be required to participate in a debate on one of the following issues (only four or five will actually be debated, and alternative topics may be selected upon approval by the instructor):

1. Resolved, affirmative action programs continue to serve important social, political, and economic purposes in the workplace and should be retained as a matter of public policy.
2. Resolved, that given the nature of the evolving global economy, "free trade" policies of the federal government are always preferable to "protectionist" trade legislation.
3. Resolved, that we should return to the principle of "caveat emptor"--i.e., let the buyer beware--in all relationships between producers, sellers, and purchasers.
4. Resolved, the employment-at-will principle (where the burden of proof of wrongful termination is on the employee) is preferable to the just-cause principle (where the burden of proof for lawful termination is on the employer).
5. Resolved, labor unions (i.e., organized labor) continue to serve useful economic, social, and political purposes.

6. Resolved, current environmental regulations are adequate to "preserve, protect, and defend" the natural environment from human-induced degradation and destruction.

7. Resolved, the minimum wage should be abolished.

8. Resolved, illegal immigrants are entitled to exactly the same kinds of workplace protections (i.e., rights and privileges) enjoyed by all other American citizens.

9. Resolved, that the only social responsibility of business is to make a profit; business is truly responsive to society only when it relentlessly pursues economic efficiency.

10. Resolved, internet-based commerce should be free of taxation (i.e., sales tax).

11. Resolved, business should be able to pursue scientific experimentation without government restraints on research, discovery, and technological innovation.

These debates require that you investigate thoroughly the various major arguments on each side of the issue, anticipate and examine the pros and cons of each argument, forcefully and convincingly argue your case via the presentation of evidence, and effectively rebut challenges to your position. It is expected that these debates will reflect a diligent effort to surface the issues involved in the resolution through substantial library research (i.e., about two months worth!), to organize your arguments and supporting documentation (relying upon the expert opinion and scientific data contained within scholarly journals and books), and to successfully defend your position in light of opposing arguments and evidence. Teams are strongly advised to seek out the instructor's advice and counsel early and often during office hours. Please note that reliance on popular internet search engines (e.g., Google) or popular encyclopedia sites (e.g., Wikipedia) is likely to be insufficient for uncovering the necessary scholarly data required to do even a mediocre job on the debate; students are strongly advised to make heavy use of the scholarly databases found at our library's "Research Station." Students may find it necessary to utilize the Interlibrary Loan services if our library does not have the books, journals, or on-line resources you require. The oral arguments on each issue will be heard during the last weeks of the course.

Grades for the groups' performances in the debate will be established according to the following criteria:

A = Excellent--Exceptionally powerful, well-reasoned, persuasive arguments; superior presentation and command of the issues; outstanding rebuttal; BRAVO!!

B = Good--Effective, well-reasoned, persuasive arguments; strong presentation and command of the issues; impressive rebuttal; NICE JOB!

C = Adequate--Generally competent arguments, but not altogether persuasive; satisfactory presentation, acceptable understanding of the issues; mediocre rebuttal; OK, BUT . . .

D = Inadequate--Generally weak, often flawed, unpersuasive arguments; ineffective presentation and apparent lack of a grasp of the issues; ineffective rebuttal; minimally acceptable performance; AN EMBARRASSING EFFORT!

F = Incompetent--Weak, unpersuasive arguments; wholly ineffective and unacceptable presentation, and a complete lack of a grasp of the issues; completely ineffective rebuttal; woefully inadequate and unacceptable performance; A WASTE OF TIME!
Individual grades will not be assigned for the debate. It is each group's responsibility to "manage" the group process and to deal with the inevitable problems that arise when individuals work together in groups. Group members are mutually responsible and accountable for the behavior and performance of every other group member! On those occasions when teams experience internal disagreements, disputes, personality clashes, or dysfunctional behavior by team members, the team is expected to resolve these management challenges internally (i.e., without individual members running to the instructor to "tattle-tale" on other team members). When a particular team member is engaging in value-destroying "free-rider" behavior, is disruptive, or is simply not acting mature and responsibly as a member of a team, the team is expected to be able to document such behavior, and to make an honest attempt to correct that individual's dysfunctional behavior (by confronting the individual with the documented evidence, and by setting performance objectives for that individual so that the person is given a chance to correct the behavior). If the individual persists in behaving irresponsibly and unprofessionally, the team may "fire" the individual for cause (in which case the individual will be removed from the team and therefore be assigned an "F" for the debate).

Don't take this assignment lightly, and don't wait until the last minute to prepare--the utmost professionalism is expected, and shabbily or haphazardly prepared oral presentations based on inadequate library-based research will be severely penalized! Remember, 30% of the course grade is riding on this one semester-ending activity!!

**Quizzes**

From time to time, and on an unannounced and irregular basis, brief quizzes will be given to test the student's preparedness for that day's class discussion. Under no circumstances will makeup quizzes be given--no exceptions, and don't ask!. Miss class?!--then risk missing a quiz (and therefore miss the opportunity of accumulating quiz points). Not prepared?!--then risk missing out on accumulating quiz points on quizzes designed to be "easy" for those students who have assumed the responsibility for their own learning in this seminar. The lowest quiz score will be deleted in the calculation of the quiz component of the student's course grade.

**Midterm Examination**

The midterm examination may consist of a combination of true-false, multiple choice, and short answer or essay questions. It will cover textbook reading assignments, class discussions, and all other assignments and activities in the course to date. The only excuse permitted for missing the midterm examination is illness requiring a doctor's care. The midterm examination can be made up only after presentation of written verification of illness by an attending physician; in every case, all make-up examinations must be completed within one week of the originally scheduled examination date. Make-up midterm examinations are usually more difficult than the original examination; it is always to your advantage to take the examination when it is originally scheduled. *The scheduled examination date will not be changed under any circumstances, and no late or early examinations will be considered to accommodate the personal plans or activities of individual students.* Grades on the midterm examination will be calculated by applying the grading scale (see "Evaluation and Grading" below) to the mid-point between a perfect score and the highest student score attained on the exam (in effect, this results in a modified curve that factors in the difficulty of the exam while still maintaining high expectations concerning student performance).
Final Examination

The final examination will be similar in format to the midterm examination, and it will cover subject matter and materials included in the textbook and class discussions. Although the final examination is comprehensive in nature, it will primarily address the subject matter and materials covered since the midterm examination. In this case, approximately 67% of the final examination is derived from the second half of the course (i.e., material covered since the midterm), and approximately 33% of the final examination is derived from the first half of the course (i.e., material covered on the midterm). The scheduled examination date and time will not be changed under any circumstances, and no late or early examinations will be considered to accommodate personal plans or activities of individual students.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation will be made via conventional means so that students can judge their level of performance and achievement against accepted undergraduate, university-level, professional school standards. Each student's performance will be evaluated via the following components:

- Quizzes: 20%
- Debate: 30%
- Midterm Examination: 20%
- Final Examination: 30%

Along with the faculty of the College of Business, I regard the achievement of a grade of "B" not as average work, but as highly motivated, competent, undergraduate-level performance. Consistently superior work will earn a grade of "A." A grade of "C" reflects satisfactory work and an acceptable mastery of the concepts and tools discussed in the course. On the other hand, work that shows a consistent lack of understanding, effort, or application—in other words, unsatisfactory undergraduate-level work—will receive a grade of "D" (or less). In other words, as stated in the University catalog, the following grading criteria apply:

- **A** = superior work; achievement so outstanding that it is normally attained by relatively few students.
- **B** = very good work; achievement clearly better than adequate competence in the subject matter/skill, but not as good as the superior achievement of students earning A's.
- **C** = adequate work; achievement indicating adequate competence in the subject matter/skill. This level will usually be met by a majority of the students.
- **D** = minimally acceptable work; achievement which meets the minimum requirements of the course.
- **F** = unacceptable work; achievement that fails to meet the minimum requirements of the course.
When it is possible to obtain quantitative evaluations of various elements of the course (e.g., quizzes, midterm/final examinations), the following grading scale applies:

- 90 - 100% = A
- 80 - 89% = B
- 65 - 79% = C
- 50 - 64% = D
- below 50% = F

Plusses and minuses will be assigned to scores at the extreme upper and lower ends of each range.

Please note that grades are assigned on the basis of achievement and performance, and not on the basis of effort. Nevertheless, you will find that I go out of my way to assist those students who genuinely want to learn, who are not afraid of making mistakes in an effort to learn, and who come to class prepared. Students who take the initiative and use me as a resource are pleasantly surprised at both my availability and eagerness to help them. In my experience, students who do the minimum "just to get by" in fact do not learn much and do not receive a very good grade.

If you need a certain grade in this course to graduate—or even preserve an "honors level" grade-point average—you must put in the extra effort from the beginning of the semester to assure yourself of getting it, rather than "hoping" that you have done well enough by the end of the semester to get the grade that you "need." As a general approach, I assume that the opportunity and responsibility for learning are in your hands. I am happy to suggest ideas, serve as a resource, and provide extensive feedback, but if learning takes place, it will be because you decide to make it happen. I expect you to identify your learning goals (beyond the general overview suggested here), pursue them in various ways, and develop a means to communicate the learning to me (individual or group efforts as appropriate). It would not be unusual if the class-average GPA for this course ranges from 2.0 (C) to 2.5 (B-/C+).

**Ethical Standards and the Honor Code**

California State University, Chico, has a tradition of respect for students' integrity in academic work. The *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* delineates standards and policies of behavior. Faculty expect students to maintain a high standard of academic integrity. If you are unclear about a specific situation, ask! I will explain what is and is not acceptable in my class. A summary of University guidelines appears in the latest edition of the Catalog. You are encouraged to work together in preparing for class, but it is a violation of the "honor code" to secure and use another person's notes or papers to prepare for class or written assignments unless the assignment specifically calls for (and is intended to be) a group effort, submitted by a group, and to be evaluated as a product of a group. Sorting out the issues for yourself is an important value-adding experience; sharing your ideas and synthesis with others after doing the basic work, but before class, is also an important component of the learning experience. **Any instance of cheating or plagiarism (i.e., the use of the words or ideas of another, without attribution, and with the intent to deceive) will result in an "F" for the course for all parties involved in this ethical lapse.**
Academic Rigor (University Policy Statement)

Academic rigor means the consistent expectation of excellence and the aspiration to significant achievement. It should pervade the entire atmosphere of the University--teaching and learning, curriculum, evaluation of student and faculty, outreach, admissions, advising, and student life.

Rigorous Teaching

Rigorous faculty are role models for the behaviors and accomplishments the University seeks to promote. They demonstrate a high level of professionalism and commitment to the University and to their discipline and inspire in students an excitement about learning. Guiding students toward excellence, they

- Communicate high expectations and demonstrate them through a demanding syllabus and well-prepared classes.
- Encourage student-faculty contact in and out of class and offer conscientious advising and consistent availability.
- Encourage collaboration and active learning, fully involving students in the learning experience.
- Provide students early, prompt, and frequent feedback and develop appropriate assessment strategies.
- Emphasize time on task, clearly communicate time required for learning, make it clear that full-time study is full-time work, and design learning experiences so that homework matters.
- Develop approaches and strategies geared to diverse talents and ways of learning, while maintaining high standards of accountability.
- Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty and challenge its occurrence.

Rigorous Learning

Rigorous students are part of the equation of rigorous teaching and learning. A rigorous education is vigorous, difficult, deeply satisfying work, and it requires a lifestyle conducive to achieving excellence. College is not a temporary diversion or a period of entertainment, but a fundamental piece of student character, citizenship, and employment future. A diploma and good grades from a demanding institution count for something. Rigorous students

- Set high personal standards, develop a strong sense of purpose, come to class well-prepared, and complete assignments on time.
- Develop an effective relationship with the instructor, in and outside of class, and make the most of University advising and other services.
- Treat fellow students and the classroom environment with complete respect. Give each class full attention and participation. Do not miss class, arrive late, or leave early.
- Accept continuing responsibility for learning and for grades earned.
- Approach each class in a professional manner, as if the class were real employment. Treat a full-course load as full-time work and spend no less time on it. Determine exactly what is expected.
- Experiment with all teaching and learning strategies used in classes, and also determine which work best for them.
- Demonstrate complete honesty and integrity.
Individual Assistance

I am available for any individual assistance that you might require. You are strongly encouraged to use your instructor as a valuable resource. If you are willing to learn, I am willing to teach (even outside the normal classroom setting). Accordingly, my office location, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and office hours are:

Office: Tehama 461
Phone: 898-6289 (Dept. Office-Message: 898-5663)
Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30-10:45am; 12:30-1:45pm
E-Mail: ggomes@csuchico.edu
Internet: http://www.csuchico.edu/mgmt/gomes/gomes.html

Unfortunately, due to past abuses of the privilege, and out of respect for the instructor's privacy, students may not telephone the instructor at his residence.
# SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

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<td>Tuesday, January 29</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<td>Thursday, January 31</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course (concluded)</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 5</td>
<td>The Corporation and Its Stakeholders</td>
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<td>Thursday, February 7</td>
<td>Public Issues Management</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 19</td>
<td>Ethics and Ethical Reasoning</td>
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<td>Organizational Ethics and the Law</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 26</td>
<td>The Challenges of Globalization</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Thursday, February 28</td>
<td>Business-Government Relations</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 4</td>
<td>Influencing the Political Environment</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 6</td>
<td>Antitrust, Mergers and Competition Policy</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 11</td>
<td>In-Class Debate Preparation; Midterm Examination Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 13</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</td>
<td>Chapters 1-10</td>
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**March 17-21**

**!!! SPRING BREAK !!!**

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<td>Tuesday, March 25</td>
<td>Ecology and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<td>Managing Environmental Issues</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 27</td>
<td>Debate Preparation</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 1</td>
<td>Technology: A Global Economic-Social Force</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Managing Technological Challenges</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 3</td>
<td>Debate Preparation</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 8</td>
<td>Stockholder Rights and Corporate Governance</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 10</td>
<td>Consumer Protection</td>
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<td>The Community and the Corporation</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 17</td>
<td>Employees and the Corporation</td>
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<td>Managing a Diverse Workforce</td>
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<td>Business and the Media</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 29</td>
<td>In-Class Debate Preparation; Final Examination Review</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 1</td>
<td>DEBATE #1</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 6</td>
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<td>May 19-23</td>
<td>FINAL EXAMINATION WEEK</td>
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