

Legal Practitioners' Guide to the Oil and Gas Industry

Spring, 2015 - Mon & Wed - 10:30am to Noon

Lynn Alan Bortka

First Day Assignment: Go to the Law Center's website to view and complete the First Day Assignment well in advance of our first class. It requires you to send information to me as soon as possible. I expect to post that Assignment by January 2nd but if I get bored at home it may be posted much earlier.

Attendance: Students must comply with the University's 80% attendance policy. I have no authority nor ability to allow, nor permit, deviations from that policy...for good cause or otherwise. I will circulate a sign-up sheet each class period which will be the sole record of your attendance. Attending class is critical. If you have to miss a class, enlist a classmate to record the class for you. Listen to the class discussion that you missed. Don't rely solely on another student's notes. Keep track of how many classes you miss.

On the SECOND class period you'll pick your permanent seat for the semester. Use of a master seating chart will help me more rapidly get to know you.

Class Schedule: I will teach an extra 16 minutes during each class period we meet. Class will dismiss at 12:01pm. This will accumulate enough "bonus" time so that five scheduled classes will not be held. Those five class periods have not yet been finalized and will be impacted by Astros day games, trips to Disneyland, rain-outs, locust plagues, hospital visits, flat tires, and other apocalyptic events.

Communication: I will email reading material to you throughout the semester as well as a copy of each class period's power point presentation in advance. Contact me via email at lynnbortka@gmail.com. Do not send email to me at my University of Houston email account. I check that black-hole email account about twice a year.

Office (sic) Hours: I am only scheduled to be on campus Monday and Wednesdays. By prior arrangement, I should be able to arrive early each class day to meet with you. I should also be able to stay indefinitely after each class to help you with no prior notice. Schedule those conversations with me in advance if you can. I have a lot of time to devote to this class. Be a pest.

Course Material: This course is a result of ponderings, observations, experiences, and reflections of my 37 years in the oil and gas business. It is a compilation of subjects and matters on which I have lectured and/or taught, piecemeal fashion, to other lawyers, corporate employees, industry groups, government agency personnel, and (mostly unappreciative) friends and relatives. The material we will cover is that which every lawyer who is going to deal with the industry (or has clients who do so) must know to be most effective and valued. There is nomenclature you *have to understand* along with applicable scientific, business, political, economic, and public-perception concepts and principles.

The one assigned book is the most recent edition of Oil and Gas Production in Nontechnical Language (Production.) published by Pennwell. The campus bookstore should stock it but, of course, it's also available from Amazon and other online sources. Throughout the spring I will provide material from other texts and sources.

There will be some impromptu drawing, sketching, and diagramming on the classroom white-boards. Use your computer, a writing pad, notebook, camera, smart phone, etc to copy the whiteboard diagrams.

Regarding the reading material: DON'T GET BEHIND! ASK QUESTIONS! The reading material is NOT written for experts in the field. It is written for lawyers and other people who need to understand what "oil and gas people" know and do. You will be much better off asking for clarification as we go along versus waiting until late April to clarify the material.

If you're bored during the semester, have no plans for Saturday night, are caught up on the assigned reading, and want to improve your income potential, read the assigned text cover to cover. Contact me when you get stuck and need an explanation and I'll help you through your issues.

Periodically we will see video of oil field activities, practices, and events in class. Links and/or web addresses to those videos will usually be included in the PowerPoint presentations I send you by email.

Grading: There will be a three hour, ***closed-book***, exam at the end of the semester. It will probably require a lot of definitions and include a combination of short essay and short answer questions. You will have to know the industry vocabulary we will cover in class to do well on the exam. If you plan to work at a Mexican restaurant and don't know what taco, enchilada, burrito, and margarita mean you're going to have a hard time impressing the boss that she should hire you. Likewise, if you don't understand what MCF, BOE, Christmas tree, riser, cracker, and mud are, your (soon to be ex) clients will look for a "smarter" lawyer...even though intellectual capacity likely has nothing to do (in your ex-clients' eyes) with your perceived shortcomings.

My goal is to make you more valuable to clients and employers who are in the oil and gas industry and to those who work with or against the industry such as law-firms, landowners, mineral rights owners, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

I am allowed to, and likely will, "bump up" your grade by one-third of a grade if you consistently and constructively participate in class. Participation also can include sending meaningful, pertinent, timely, and succinct articles, pictures, or videos from the press, technical journals, law journals, web sites, etc that I use in this or next year's class or that materially improve and update my knowledge in the subjects we cover.

On a bummer note, I am also permitted to reduce your grade by a third of a grade for poor participation, failure to timely complete any assignments, un-preparedness, frequent tardiness, absenteeism, leaving early, disruption to the class...and maybe other stuff I'm not thinking of as I write this. Although I have never bumped a grade downward, through this legal disclaimer I'm keeping my options open.

Final Comments: I may update this document at any time. Check the on-line version of this document before the semester starts and then every two weeks through February for additions, corrections, and modifications (another great legal disclaimer!) OK....ready to go? STAY IN TOUCH! ASK QUESTIONS! MAKE ME EXPLAIN! If you have problems or complaints about the class, share them with Maria Lopez in the Dean's office or call the Dean's office at 1-800-DUMP-HIM. Proper action is sure to follow.

See you soon....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Lopez', written in a cursive style.