

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS LAW STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT STUDY OPTIONS:

HILLSDALE COLLEGE'S U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW COURSEWORK ONLINE

Swan, George S., NC A&T State University: 336-285-3368; swan@ncat.edu

Khanlarian, Cindi J., NC A&T State University: 336-285-3383

Winchester, Danielle D., NC A&T State University: 336-285-3413; ddwinche@ncat.edu

ABSTRACT

Recent research evidences coverage of various legal topics in business colleges' undergraduate Legal Environment of Business courses. Often included is U.S. constitutional law. Timely appears expanding undergraduates' constitutional law exposure. For prominent legal scholars assert constitutional law's contemporary evolution justifies concern. Colleges' funds and students' time both are limited. But online lie U.S. constitution courses that can supplement classroom work at no cost. A nationally respected, liberal arts college's completion certificate confirms student success in such courses. Meanwhile, a cry rises to broaden business student-horizons beyond the utilitarian economics-viewpoint. Constitutional law projects might aid that effort. Certificate-exemplars of business student success (built on Legal Environment of Business constitutional law foundations) might *empower business schools* regarding Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation.

KEY WORDS: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, American Council on Education, Business Law, College Board, College Level Examination Program, Constitutional Law, Educational Testing Service, Hillsdale College, Legal Environment of Business, Major Field Test in Business, undergraduate business schools, United States Constitution

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following discussion addresses requirements for a business school baccalaureate degree awarded to majors in business administration or business management. For students in those majors, crucial courses include business law. However, 2023 (Kuzenski, 2023) scholarly research indicated that America's undergraduate colleges of management or business require degree candidates to complete successfully only a single such course. That means a course frequently denominated, e.g., Legal Environment of Business.

Said course typically counts for merely three hours of credit toward their baccalaureate. Students must earn these credit hours in only about fifteen weeks of coursework. A plethora of law topics must be touched upon in such a course, thus inescapably guaranteeing the students' superficial acquaintance with most. Yet, for decades preceding 2025, discussion in academic journals failed to wrestle with identifying the foremost among the more granular legal subjects ideally to be welcomed by Legal Environment of Business professors.

The North Carolina State University's Poole College of Management's Assistant Professor John C. Kuczenski's 2023 investigation of high-profile business law textbooks resulted in his acknowledgement of core topics indispensable to an undergraduate-level business law textbook. It likewise resulted in Kuczenski's recognition of important supplemental topics, e.g., U.S. constitutional law, criminal law, and business ethics. In that perspective, one learns that in so high-profile an institution offering undergraduate business degrees as the McCombs School of Business of the University of Texas at Austin, constitutional law retains a position of notable respect. This demonstrated the continuing validity of a well-known 2011 formulation of a model Legal Environment course that embraced constitutional law issues.

Consistent therewith during 2023, was the set of Business Law topics tested toward earning undergraduate business degree credit through the College Level Examination Program of the College Board. For the clutch of broad subjects representing portions of the Business Law examination encompasses History and Sources of American Law/Constitutional Law. Moreover, the Major Field Tests of the Educational Testing Service are administered with the purpose of ascertaining student achievement and assisting curriculum analyses. The Major Field Test in Business includes a Legal and Social Environment content area. In turn, that content area's Legal Environment section encompasses a "Constitution and Business" element.

Therefore, constitutional law constitutes a serious field with which undergraduates should become familiar. At the same time, the Legal Environment of Business course affords too small a stage for the many legal topics crowding thereon. And those students' scant attention rendered to constitutional law risks keen cost to them hereafter. For experts in U.S. constitutional law voice (or imply) disquiet about current, or fairly imminent, intellectual (or worse) constitutional clashes countrywide. Cass Robert Sunstein counts among them. Sunstein proclaimed that the citizenry was enduring America's "period of constitutional upheaval" (Sunstein, 2023: 6) even pre-2024. Through what recourse might undergraduate business schools relieve an academic *status quo* grown less satisfactory given constitutional law's swelling importance?

Hillsdale College offers noncredit, online coursework to the public. Hillsdale does so free of charge. Two among these courses are its "Introduction to the Constitution" course, and its "Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution" course. Each is self-explanatory for students. An undergraduate Business Law/Legal Environment of Business student offered extra credit (in her own college's degree-requirement course in law) could be

motivated to expand her command of the United States Constitution independently, during her free time (and gratis, no less). *The twenty-first century technology rides to the rescue!*

Inviting students to complete Hillsdale coursework for extra credit provides value to the student. Not only are students introduced to vital information about their own country today, but they also are treated to explanations of the foundations of our nation. If they persevere successfully, they receive a certification from Hillsdale College of their success. It marks deeper background to expertise they can provide to prospective employers, and their comprehension could help boost their business school's standing

2. UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOLS' BUSINESS LAW COURSEWORK

Nowadays the public wants to know what a student must understand about becoming a business management major or business administration major (Gabler, 2023). Jay Gabler cautioned his readers: "Because business administration is intentionally a broad major, course offerings may vary significantly from one college to another, and from one specialization to another even within the same school" (Gabler, 2023). Nevertheless, "Business administration majors can expect to enroll in courses that provide the basics of corporate operations in both theory and practice, including...Business law..." (Gabler, 2023). Atop his "Core Coursework" listing he presented a second field seriously law-related: "Accounting" (Gabler, 2023).

Consequently, the Poole College of Management's John C. Kuzenski's, exploration of modern business law coursework via examination of undergraduate textbooks' content (Kuzenski, 2023: 119) proves welcome. His project provides *to the public* a picture of the present. Those U.S. schools or colleges of management or business following the longstanding

semester school-calendar allot only some fifteen weeks to a complete business law core course (Kuzenski, 2023: 120). Among the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)-accredited business colleges, a solitary business law course of three hours is the undertaking demanded for the undergraduate degree by more than 87 percent of them (Kuzenski, 2023: 120). The course typically is styled either “Legal Environment of Business” or “Legal and Regulatory Environment of Business” (Kuzenski, 2023: 120). T

This course often lays lighter emphasis upon formal rules than upon law/regulatory/public policy interconnections (Kuzenski, 2023: 123). So one recalls a juncture in business college curricula-development already reached *circa* 1984. It evoked debate over evolving business law course-expectations (Kuzenski, 2023: 121-122 n. 6). Note two not dissimilar contemporary issues addressing: (1) what best constitutes the nucleus of the undergraduates’ business law textbook; and of (2) what, for efficiency purposes, need not necessarily be there (Kuzenski, 2023: 122).

But between 1984 and 2024, scholarly literature failed to broadly, or even just directly, confront either of those two matters (Kuzenski, 2023: 121-122). Professor Kuzenski's project delivers data concerning textbooks being utilized across America in core business classes (Kuzenski, 2023: 127). It deals with schools or colleges of management or business administration, and with said institutions’ courses identified as each institution’s respective gateway or principal undergraduate business law class. Examined were “adopted textbook” data concerning courses thus identified (Kuzenski, 2023: 126). His project provides a body of evidence *to professionals* refashioning coursework to maximum advantage of tomorrow’s undergraduates undertaking business law study.

3. PROFESSOR KUZENSKI’S REVELATIONS

A. *The Business Law Textbooks upon Which Business Law Professors Draw*

Of the twenty courses he utilized in his analysis, all or almost all used undergraduate business law textbooks that are products of America's college textbook market's Big Three. Those are: Cengage, McGraw Hill, and Pearson (Kuzenski, 2023: 126). His twenty core business law classes' (Kuzenski, 2023: 126-127) textbooks' mean page-count totaled an Everest-like 1,007.27 pages. Their mean chapter-count totaled 34.36 (Kuzenski, 2023: 127) chapters.

Those textbooks' heft proves assessable in perspective of the degree of "business law," "legal environment," and "legal and regulatory environment" course-syllabi discovered via Google searches inclusive of that trio of phrases (Kuzenski, 2023: 128). The syllabi thereby identified were subject to exclusion criteria encompassing, e.g., (1) each course's presentation as a sophomore-level or higher (yet not a graduate-level) course; at a (2) college/school of business/management (Kuzenski, 2023: 128). Across all twenty institutions (embracing three robo-courses and seventeen non-robo-courses) the mean textbook utilization rate equaled 60.9 percent (Kuzenski, 2023: 129). Kuzenski understandably emphasizes: "These data suggest that for any given required business law textbook in an undergraduate business class, most students *will not use* roughly 40%-45% of the work they have purchased for the course" (Kuzenski, 2023: 129 (Kuzenski's italics)).

B. *Professor Kuzenski Opines: Business Law Should Value Constitutional Law*

Such evidence can summon strategies to shrink textbooks' prices and the textbooks' size (Kuzenski, 2023: 136). Kuzenski hence understandably waxes emphatic, afresh:

[I]f a reasonable argument can be made, as I believe it should be, that the focus of introductory or core business law classes is to provide a certain breadth *and meaningful but not overwhelming depth* to the most basic core topics across the

practice of law from which the more advanced and specialized electives may later be taken. Wills and trusts, for example, bloom out of a rudimentary understanding of the common law of property, while environmental law will not make sense to most undergraduates who do not adequately understand the fundamentals of administrative rulemaking and adjudications beforehand. Even with respect to how and why the government has the ability to legislate on most issues and sometimes not others related to business, a healthy dose of federalism, the general police power, and development of the commerce clause with background within the ambit of a chapter on constitutional law seem advisable (Kuzenski, 2023: 136 (Kuczenski's emphasis)).

At this point, the Professor drops this footnote:

As a personal aside, I would point out at this juncture that since dormant commerce clause doctrine has been so profoundly shaped by businesses bringing actions against states which sought to engage in large-scale economic protectionism, even those cases are worthy of time and text in a first-line undergraduate business law course. In addition to a better understanding of the rules and how they protect interstate business operations, students are often encouraged by the fact that the plaintiffs/appellants are business organizations seeking to protect their revenue streams from state or local government interference (Kuzenski, 2023: 136-137 n. 43 (citing three Supreme Court cases)).

The Kuzenski contribution climaxes with a brief roll of “must have” (Kuzenski, 2023: 137) topics in an ideal business law textbook for undergraduates (Kuzenski, 2023: 137-138). He adds: “From there, should time allow and professorial prerogative wish to expand, additional popular topics from the syllabi and textbooks reviewed for this study suggest that business ethics, constitutional law, and criminal law are sort of a second-line list of preferred subjects” (Kuzenski, 2023: 138). Here he drops another footnote:

As a personal note here, I would point out that I consider a week (and chapter) on constitutional law, with an emphasis on interstate commerce, commercial speech, and takings, to be a top-level priority in my own Legal and Regulatory Environment classes owing to my experience with how much easier it is for students to understand the critical linkages between business and government in modern American business. This preference belies the “practitioner list” I have presented herein, but also serves as an example of the need for individual and responsible goal-conscious decisions of faculty about their own courses (Kuzenski, 2023: 138 n. 44).

Manifestly, there lies a practical moral in this up-to-the-minute Kuzenski investigation into realities of commerce colleges' undergraduate business law coursework. Constitutional law *ought to* hold its own regarding competition for the time and focus of undergraduates enrolled in business law. It is thus that these undergraduates gird themselves for marketplace and regulatory realities.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND UNDERGRADUATES' LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF BUSINESS LAW STUDY

A. *University of Texas McCombs School of Business: High-Profile Example Among a Multitude*

And indeed, during the 2023-2024 academic year one readily encountered gateway or principal undergraduate business law coursework consistent with Kuczenski's findings. For example, the nationally esteemed McCombs School of Business in the University of Texas at Austin offers (to McCombs School students alone) its LEB [Legal Environment of Business] 323. It embraces three lecture hours weekly through a single semester. Undergraduates encounter “An investigation of the role of law in society; introduction to legal reasoning, dispute resolution, judicial process, constitutional law, agency, torts, governmental regulations; business ethics; study of contracts” (<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/coursesatoz/leb/>). Consequently, in McCombs School of Business, this familiar one-semester, lectures three hours-weekly style of teaching constitutes a course wherein constitutional law is holding its own.

B. *Miller and Crain's Model Legal Environment Course*

This McCombs School of Business news is unsurprising. Several years ago, Two of the present authors quoted, several years ago, from the composite description by C. J. Miller and S. J. Crain of their model Legal Environment course this sentence: “Sustainability of business practices, social responsibility, and rights & duties are explored through discussion of environmental law, employment discrimination, deceptive advertising, products liability, torts, and agency principles, along with related constitutional law issues” (Swan, et al., 2020: 74, citing Miller and Crain, *The Legal Environment v. Business Law Courses: A Distinction Without a Difference?*, *Journal of Legal Studies Education*, v. 28(2), pp. 149-206, at p. 203). Hence, one lesson implicit in that Miller and Crain study producing description of a composite Legal Environment is that during 2011, constitutional law held its own.

C. *The College Board’s College Level Examination Program*

In the present day, the College Board’s College Level Examination Program provides a family of College Board examinations produced and administered by the Board. Approximately 2,900 colleges award credit for a specific course to examinees meeting each institution’s own standards as evidenced by performance on the Board’s corresponding subject-matter test. Numbered among such CLEP examinations has been Business Law, Introductory (College Level Examination Program - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/College_Level_Examination_Program).Undergraduate).

In the appraisal of the American Council on Education:

The 34 CLEP examinations include subjects that are generally taught in the first two years of an undergraduate degree program. Topical areas include Composition & Literature, Science, Mathematics, Foreign Languages, History, Social Sciences, and Business. Students...can enrich their degree programs with higher-level courses in the same discipline, expand their horizons by taking a wider array of electives, and avoid the need to repeat material that they already know. Research indicates that individuals earning credit...are more likely than their peers to perform well in subsequent course-

work and to persist in their degree progress (College Board's College Level Examination Program (CLEP). <https://www.acenet.edu/National-Guide/Pages/Organization.aspx?old=e9089b28-9016-e811-810f-5065f38bf0e1> (last visited November 1, 2023).

Very many undergraduate programs nationwide recognize CLEP degree credit for Introductory Business Law. These undergraduate programs include those of, e.g., the University of Texas at Austin; the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Johns Hopkins University; the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; the University of Virginia, Charlottesville; Washington University (St. Louis); the University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Ohio State University; and the University of Wisconsin, Madison (CLEP College Credit Policy Search, clep.collegeboard.org/clip-college-credit-policy-search (last visited November 23, 2023). *That* is mainstream.

The CLEP Introductory Business Law's website lists broad test topics as proportions of the examination. The first such is History and Sources of American Law/Constitutional Law (5%-10%) (no subtopics listed). The second is American Legal Systems and Procedures (5%-10%) (no subtopics). The third is Contracts (30%-40%) (fourteen subtopics listed). The fourth is Legal Environment (20%-25%) (eight subtopics). The fifth is Torts (10%-15%) (no subtopics). The final one is Miscellaneous (5%-10%) (two subtopics) (Introductory Business Law, www.clep.collegeboard.org/clep-exams/introductory-business-law (last visited November 22, 2023).

Thus, numerous undergraduate institutions salute students' success in the CLEP Introductory Business Law examination. They understand that success to justify award to those students of their respective institution's own degree credit. This broadcasts a clear signal. In such business schools, constitutional law continues holding its ground as one among valued elements of undergraduates' study of business law.

D. *The Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test in Business*

Yearly, almost 1,500 universities and colleges utilize at least one of the Educational Testing Service's Major Field Tests. Each is a tool to facilitate the evaluation of student achievement and to facilitate the analysis of curricula. Since its initial administration in 1990, the Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test in Business has been appraising graduating business students' command of concepts, knowledge, and principles. The examination is revised roughly every half-decade to ensure its content's relevance. (ETS Major Field Tests, p. 1 (Business) (2021) ets.org/pdfs/met/bachelors-deg-bus-test-description.pdf.)

The content of the Major Field Test in Business is based on two assumptions. The first is that the majority of institutions will present a common core encompassing law. The test's nine content area's distribution with examples of covered topics includes Legal and Social Environment (10%). And the Legal and Social Environment content area embraces four sections: Legal Environment (with five exemplary covered topics, one of which is "Constitution and business" while another is "Tort law"); Regulatory environment (with six exemplary covered topics); Business relationships (with four exemplary covered topics, one being "Contract and sales law (UCC)"); and Ethics and Social Responsibility (with two exemplary covered topics). ETS Major Field Tests, p. 2 (copyright 2021), ets.org/pdfs/msft/bachelors-deg-bus-test-description.pdf.

One lesson implicit in this Major Field Test in Business is that constitutional law holds its own.

5. THE UPSHOT

It has been found that undergraduate study of constitutional law held its own in the composite description by Miller and Crain of their model Legal Environment course. Too, constitutional law continues to be a recognized feature of the widely accepted College Board's CLEP Business Law, Introductory course testing. Yet constitutional law does so as one course-cohabitant among a throng of legal topics or subtopics, e.g., contracts and torts. Likewise, constitutional law remains a recognized portion of the broadly embraced Major Field Test in Business. Yet therein, also, it does so as one examination-cohabitant among a cluster of legal topics or subtopics, e.g., contracts and torts. Correspondingly, one witnesses constitutional law holding its own in Austin's LEB 323. Yet constitutional law cohabits LEB 323 like a commuter in a crowded subway car. It must do so even while the University of Texas at Austin's Legal Environment of Business field situates within the Business, Government and Society Department found within the McCombs School of Business

(<https://catalog.utexas.edu/undergraduate/business/courses/business-government-society/>). Yes: *Government* and *Society*. The LEB 323 course's legal topics inescapably squeeze one another.

Concededly, contemporaneously stretch more wide-open academic spaces for business law at the University of Texas. These include Texas' one-semester, three-lecture hours weekly courses LEB 361 Law of Business Organizations, and LEB 366 Commercial Transactions. At-hand as well appear Texas' approximately nineteen one-lecture hour weekly, one-semester courses addressing various Topics in the Legal Environment of Business. But so rich an array of options is unlikely on-offer inside the halls of a host of smaller, not financially-blessed, undergraduate business schools.

Notwithstanding hasty first impressions they might make upon incoming business college undergraduates, those crowded LEB 323 legal fields do *not* all look alike. As renowned jurist Richard A. Posner instructs:

Common law refers to judge-made legal doctrines governing private disputes in such fields as torts, contracts, and property. There is general satisfaction with these doctrines, in part because state legislatures can revise state common law and Congress can revise federal common law, whereas amending the federal Constitution is immensely difficult. Common law, whether state or federal, is not a current focus of political controversy. Constitutional law relates primarily to rights against government, is highly controversial, indeed highly politicized (Posner, 2016: 96).

Tel Aviv University's Stewart and Judy Colton Professor of Legal Theory and Innovation Hanoch Dagan explains the guidance perception of law. Thereby, law provides practical guidance to the populace (Dagan, 2021: 161, citing Joseph Raz, *The Rule of Law and Its Virtues*, in *The Authority of Law: Essays on Law and Morality* 210, 222, 225, 228-29 (1979)). If legal dispute results relate to stable doctrines of law, then comfortably within the law's sturdy walls can each member of the community self-confidently chart his/her own life-course. Such doctrines are both of broad applicability and premised upon rationales accessible to the citizenry (Dagan, 2021: 162, quoting Joseph Raz, *The Law's Own Virtue*, 39 *Oxford J. Legal Stud.* 1, 2 (2019)). Thereby emerges that widespread satisfaction Posner perceives with American common law doctrines in areas like contracting, property and torts.

However, this guidance conception is often associated with the idea that the rule of law is the law of rules, namely, that law's prescriptions must be concrete and sufficiently clear and determinate to be followed "without first resolving the very normative questions [they] are

designed to settle” or “considering whether the local outcome of the rule conforms to the values [they are] supposed to advance.” By contrast, open-ended standards that allow judges to consult law’s underlying commitments in each case jeopardize this virtue of “the rule of rules” (Dagan, 2021: 162 (footnotes omitted) (Dagan’s bracketed insertions), citing Antonin Scalia, *The Rule of Law as a Law of Rules*, 56 U. Chi. L. Rev. 1175 (1989), and quoting respectively Emily Sherwin, *Rule-Oriented Realism*, 103 Mich. L. Rev. 1578, 1589 (1590, 1591 (2005), and Larry Alexander & Emily Sherwin, *The Rule of Rules* (2001)).

If, to apply Dagan’s lesson, constitutional litigation can examine the law’s fundamental commitments in case after case, then constitutional law contrasts with areas of law like, e.g., contracts, property, and torts. Moreover, to learn Posner’s lesson, constitutional law primarily revolves around rights against government. Understandably, Posner depicts constitutional law as a phenomenon not unlike a league of its own. It is, to reiterate: “highly controversial, indeed highly politicized” (Posner, 2016: 96).

Explaining state or federal regulation of commerce, e.g., of business contracting, is critical to teaching American business law. This surprises no one. Yet an additional summons to professors of undergraduate business law could become salient during the latter 2020s. Those professors might be mobilized to teach constitutional law as *timely*. That perhaps surprises some business law academics.

Between 2009 and 2012, the noted constitutional scholar Cass R. Sunstein administered the White House’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. As it describes itself: “OIRA is the United States Government’s central authority for the review of Executive Branch regulations, approval of Government information collections, establishment of Governmental statistical practices, and coordination of Federal privacy policy” (Office of Information and Regulatory

Affairs, 2023). It is a division within the Office of Management and Budget. As far as the eye can see, *regulation* looks to be here to stay.

The Harvard Law School Robert Walmsley University Professor, Sunstein, during 2023 published his *How to Interpret the Constitution* (Sunstein, 2023). Therein, Sunstein proves blunt. Do not ignore his forthright *How to Interpret the Constitution* message: “The United States is in a period of constitutional upheaval, in which long-standing understandings are being jettisoned and new ones are taking their place” (Sunstein, 2023: 6). Have post-2023 events proved the Professor prescient?

On July 29, 2024, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., announced the need for surgery upon the United States Supreme Court. As declared on that date by a White House Fact Sheet: “In recent years, the Supreme Court has overturned long-established legal precedents protecting fundamental rights. This Court has gutted civil rights protections, taken away a woman’s right to choose, and now granted Presidents broad immunity from prosecution for crimes they commit in office” (Fact Sheet, 2024: 1). Therein, the President identified *symptoms* crying for the surgery.

This Fact Sheet elaborates Presidential endorsement of three major changes. First is a No One Is Above the Law Amendment. It “will state that the Constitution does not confer immunity from federal criminal indictment, trial, conviction, or sentencing by virtue of previously serving as President” (Fact Sheet, 2024: 1-2). Second: “President Biden supports a system in which the President would appoint a Justice every two years to spend eighteen years in active service on the Supreme Court” (Fact Sheet, 2024: 2). Thereby, the President *prescribed* the surgery. Third: “Supreme Court Justices should not be exempt from the enforceable code of conduct that applies to every other federal judge” (Fact Sheet, 2024: 2).

On July 30, 2024, *The New York Times* provided a Guest Essay by Erwin Chemerinsky. He is the well-known Dean of the University of California's Berkeley School of Law. Chemerinsky's then-forthcoming book was *No Democracy Lasts Forever: How the Constitution Threatens the United States*. The Dean asserted: "I agree with Mr. Biden's proposed reforms and hope that eventually they will be adopted" (Chemerinsky, 2024: 3).

Whereas on July 29, *The Wall Street Journal* differed:

Never mind the spectacle of a man in public life for 50 years demanding term limits. The "breach" is his. As a Senator in 1987, he helped to defeat the superbly qualified Robert Bork for the Court because Bork endorsed judicial originalism. But the originalists have prevailed in the long run and now have great influence on the Court. This is what infuriates him.... So they are now willing to destroy the Court to supposedly save it (Biden's Political Assault on the Supreme Court, 2024: 1).

Quaere, to what extent the *constitution* looks here to stay!

6. RELIEVING BUSINESS UNDERGRADUATES' DEARTH OF CONSTITUTIONAL

LAW EXPOSURE

A. *Where Do Americans Learn about Their Constitution?*

Optimistic business college undergraduates of 2025 anticipated extended careers in America. The careers of more than one among them could reach 2100. Discomfortingly, constitutionalists like Sunstein hint at futures colder and darker than young, ambitious adults might credit (let alone, welcome). And if contemporary Americans fail to study the U.S. Constitution seriously while college undergraduates, it is doubtful they ever will.

The American Bar Association's Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice produces the magazine *Human Rights*. And *Human Rights* reported during 2022 that (as best ascertained) at the middle-school level a stand-alone civics course was required in five states. But such a course

taught year-long was required in Massachusetts alone. Another twenty-five states and the District of Columbia mandate instruction in civics. However, none is required in twenty states (Healy, 2022).

At the high school-level, the District of Columbia and thirty-eight states require a civics course. However, only seven thereof require this be a year-long course. And eight thereof do require instruction in civics, albeit not requiring it as a stand-alone course. Seven states do not exact civics instruction in high school (Healy, 2022). Consequently, what immediate measures might nudge business law's undergraduates from discounting, or effectively overlooking, U.S. constitutional law? Just attempt to imagine any practical, off-the-shelf tool whereby to facilitate their initial steps in the right direction.

B. *What Is Hillsdale College?*

In the *Forbes* 2023 annual listing of the finest American colleges, Hillsdale College ranked nineteenth among small, private institutions. <https://www.forbes.com/top-colleges/>. And in 2024 the U.S. News & World Reports ranked Hillsdale College as tied for number 50 among America's colleges of liberal arts (National Liberal Arts Colleges Rankings, usnews.com/best-colleges/hillsdale-college-2272 (last visited September 24, 2024)). This liberal arts college's proportion of 2023 graduates whose Major was in "Economics, General" reached fourteen percent. Its proportion of 2023 graduates who had Majored in "Finance, General" totaled eight percent (Hillsdale College Academics, [https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/hillsadale-college-2272/academics#:~:text=for 2022 Graduates-,Economics%2C General,4%25](https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/hillsadale-college-2272/academics#:~:text=for%2022%20Graduates-,Economics%2C%20General,4%25) (last visited September 24, 2024)). This reassures business college professors everywhere that the liberal arts scholars of Hillsdale College communicate fluently with undergraduates inclined toward financial or economic lines of thinking, even as business schools' students so incline.

Ms. Emma Green covers academia for *The New Yorker*. During 2023, she reminded its readership that in 1844 abolitionists who were Free Will Baptist preachers founded Hillsdale College. The sons of Hillsdale College who marched to war for the Union came to number more than four hundred. Hillsdale College's contribution marked the heaviest of any among the North's private colleges. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/04/10/the-christian-liberal-arts-school-at-the-heart-of-the-culture-wars> (last visited November 20, 2023).

By the 2025-2026 academic year, Hillsdale College had been rendering more pacific service for years to our nation's populace overall. It specifically has been doing so online. For Hillsdale offers free of charge, approximately thirty online, noncredit courses. These entail lectures by Hillsdale's professors.

C. Hillsdale College's Contribution as Relieving Scant Constitutional Law Exposure

Supporting those lecture videos are study guides, readings, discussion boards, supplementary videos, and quizzes. Students can pursue this coursework at personal convenience. For each is self-paced. About Online Courses, online.hillsdale.edu/about (last visited September 9, 2024). Any unfinished coursework will continue to be available for students' completion into "the foreseeable future." Online Courses Help, <https://online.hillsdale.edu/help> (last visited September 9, 2024).

Respecting every lecture, course audio is available for downloading. Course completion requires viewing every lecture video, taking every lecture-quiz, and mastering the final-quiz. This final-quiz success demands a minimum score of 80 percent. Online Courses Help, online.hillsdale.edu/help (last visited September 9, 2024). Of potential value in expanding the

exposure to constitutional law of undergraduate students of the Legal Environment of Business can be two such Hillsdale College online courses.

D. *Hillsdale's Online Introduction to the Constitution Course*

In 2023, the Hon. James F. McHugh, III, of the American Law Institute (*ALI Members: 2023*) welcomed the publication of *The Words That Made Us: America's Constitutional Conversation, 1760-1840* (Amar, 2021). Its author, Akil Reed Amar, is a Yale University professor of law and political science. The theme therein is the thirteen colonies and their colonists' own dialogues as America advanced toward a nationhood of her own. The volume is less engaged with particular episodes ensuing during that history (McHugh, 2023: 91). For Amar propounds that the American founding's total history demands comprehension of the colonists' legal theories utilized to raise the ordered framework of their country (McHugh, 2023: 91, citing Amar, 2021: xii-xiii).

Meanwhile, Hillsdale's online Introduction to the Constitution course entails a dozen short lessons. These probe America's Founders' political philosophy. Introduction to the Constitution, <https://omnline.hillsdale.edu/courses/promo/intro-to-the-constitution> (last visited September 9, 2024). As McHugh understood: "The Declaration of Independence immediately produced new conversations about the form of government that should replace the form that had been jettisoned. Initially, the conversations took place separately in each of the Colonies as the Colonists began to think and talk about constitutions for their own self-governance" (McHugh, 2023: 93).

The Introduction to the Constitution course discloses an intimate connection of the United States Constitution to the Declaration of Independence. Examined are the meanings of

consent, equality, natural law, representation, and sovereignty. This online course encompasses a course study guide gratis. This course is delivered by President of Hillsdale College Larry P. Arnn, Ph.D., himself. Introduction to the Constitution, <https://online.hillsdale.edu/courses/promo/intro-to-the-constitution> (last visited September 9, 2023).

E. *Hillsdale's Online Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution Course*

A lengthier course is Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution. Students learn the American Founding's political theory and those challenges to that theory arising through U.S. history. Subjects covered therein encompass, inter alia, natural rights theory, America's Founding, the meaning in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution, and the crisis that was the Civil War. On-offer now is "this new version of Hillsdale's most popular course" Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution, online.hillsdale.edu/promo/constitution-101?utm_medium=search_paid&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=brand_search&utm_term (last visited September 9, 2024).

Hillsdale College's Professor Thomas G. West co-presents Constitution 101. He has investigated the documents of the American founding, i.e., those of the 1760 to 1800 period, produced by major officials in the government (West, 2017: 1). The consensus in the founders' documents hands us the lens whereby the founders knew government is understood: "natural rights and the laws of nature" (West, 2017: 4). Additional traditions, e.g., Protestantism, and the common law, America's founders embraced solely insofar as those traditions facilitate securing those rights (West, 2017: 4). Too, natural rights *means* those "just claims against others, while the laws of nature are rules of just conduct that all are obliged to obey" (West, 2017: 5).

Hence, envision affording business college undergraduates in, e.g., Legal Environment of Business courses, a wholly voluntary option to earn extra credit toward their course-grade via successful completion of one or both of these Hillsdale College online, noncredit courses. Said enrichment of Legal Environment of Business coursework could feed students' knowledgeable recognition that, in U.S. legal studies, constitutional law enjoys some realistic claim to one of a kind-status. Students could become exposed to academic evidence that the variety of legal study areas appertaining to their undergraduate business studies never "all look alike." Furthermore, a modest participation-incentivizing carrot awaits them, beyond potential extra course credit.

For those who complete that final quiz for the course successfully "can download a personalized certificate of completion" Online Courses Help, <https://online.hillsdale.edu/help> (last visited September 9, 2024) in a printable format. Each course entails its respective Hillsdale College course completion certificate. Each such eight and one-half inches by eleven inches document is in color and dated. This businesslike credential arrives suitable for framing.

Thus, further envision the professor awarding course credit contingent upon the professor's timely receipt of the Hillsdale College certificate or certificates of the corresponding coursework's online completion. Each completion certificate is dispatched by Hillsdale to the successful enrollee via email as an attachment. The freshly online-certified student then relays, at the push of a button, a color copy of the certificate to the professor. The professor amasses the students' newly minted credentials semester-long. Each confirms the respective student's entitlement to prearranged course credit. Post-semester, this documentation can be shared by the professor with her business school's administration. These documents verify the students' achievement "above and beyond" their assigned classwork. An academically well-reputed, third party-academic institution attests to the world the students' achievements.

Some readers may think our hopes too high, because business students earning such a certificate might learn little profiting them in a commerce career. But the AACSB uses encouraging language. It reassures that the “Benefits of a Business Education” delivered by an AACSB-accredited school prepares the student with “high-demand durable skills such as strategic agility and **ethical leadership**, problem-solving and critical thinking, analytics, financial and technological literacy, and communications and collaboration.” (AACSB website, <https://www.aacsb.edu/learners> last viewed July 26, 2024 (emphasis added)).

7. U.S. CONSTITUTION STUDY: BUSINESS SCHOOLS’ BROADER BONUSES

A. *An Ethics Bonus*

As for the preparation of students for ethical leadership in business, recall that the economics discipline (logically enough) delivered a curricular foundation to the pioneering colleges of business (Ong, et al., 2024: 41). The very latest research by Madeline Ong of Texas A&M University, Julia Lee Cunningham of the University of Michigan, and Bidhan L. Parmar of the University of Virginia investigates if, and by what means, specialization in economics, e.g., earning an undergraduate degree with a minor in economics or majoring in economics as an undergraduate or graduate student (Ong, et al., 2024: 46) links to beliefs addressing honesty (Ong, et al., 2024: 42). Economics revolves about utility maximization and rational choice. Each assumes decisionmakers’ cost-benefit calculations. (Ong, 2024: 45). Understandably, economics specialists are more likely to evince utilitarianism than do their counterparts (Ong, et al., 2024: 45 and 51).

Utilitarian decision making anticipates defining and quantifying every possible decisional consequence, each consequence to be measured against alternative outcomes (Ong, et al., 2024:

45). *Effort* plus time must be invested in such mental calculus (Ong, et al., 2024: 45). The exploration of cognitive biases by the late psychologist Daniel Kahneman might inform consideration of this time-consuming, effortful mental calculus. He, with Chapman University's professor of law and economics Vernon L. Smith, was awarded the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

In his *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011), Dr. Kahneman utilized the term "cognitive ease" (Kahneman, 2011: 60). Easy denotes matters running smoothly, with "no need to redirect attention or mobilize effort" (Kahneman, 2011: 60). Whereas "cognitive strain" (Kahneman, 2011: 60) is experienced under influences from "both the current level of effort and presence of unmet demands" (Kahneman, 2011: 65). Cognitive strain tends towards "shifting people's approach to problems from a casual, intuitive mode to a more engaged and analytical mode" (Kahneman, 2011: 65).

Economics specialists predictably have regarded honest behavior as effortful more than have their counterparts (Ong, et al., 2024: 47 and 51). Unfortunately, there is a relationship between deeming honesty to be effortful and a propensity to exploit unethical negotiation tactics. That relationship is significantly positive (Ong, et al., 2024: 51). In other words: "The indirect relationship between economics specialization and willingness to use unethical negotiation tactics, through utilitarianism and beliefs about honesty as effortful behavior (i.e., serial mediation), was significant..." (Ong, et al., 2024: 52).

Quaere whether some academics might smile reading the effortful mental calculus-point presented by Ong, Cunningham, and Parmar. In their book, *The Ethical Professor: A Practical Guide to Research, Teaching and Professional Life* (2018), Lorraine Eden, Kathy Lund Dean, and Paul M. Vaaler reflected: "Ultimately, while software programs like CrossCheck and

iThenticate and organizations like COPE [the Committee on Publication Ethics] can help journal editors and reviewers find and evaluate possible cases of scholarly misconduct, the ‘rubber meets the road’ through student and faculty education. This is where our professional associations and journals can and do already play an important role...” (Eden, et al., 2018: 50). *The Ethical Professor* fixed upon “reporting on how our major professional associations in the social sciences are currently dealing with ethical issues, in terms of professional codes of ethics, as of February 2017” (Eden, et al., 2018: 51).

Dr. Eden of the Mays Business School of Texas A&M University “looked at websites for the major professional associations in the social sciences to determine whether or not they have a Code of Ethics for their members” (Eden, et al., 2018: 51). Of the thirteen social science professional organizations for which a definitive answer was provided, the websites of all but two evidenced such a Code of Ethics. The organizational list opened with: American Accounting Association, American Bar Association, American Economic Association, American Finance Association, American Institute of CPAs, American Marketing Association, Academy of Management, American Psychological Association, American Political Science Association, American Sociological Association, and the American Statistical Association. Only one of these named numbered in the pair failing to evidence such a Code of Ethics: American Economic Association (Eden, et al., 2018: 51-52).

Today lies well inside the third decade since Dennis A. Gioia decried business colleges’ neglect of corporate social responsibility and ethics courses (Ong, 2024: 41, citing Gioia, D. A. 2002. Business Education’s Role in the Crisis of Corporate Confidence. **Academy of Management Perspectives**, 16: 142-144). And Ong, Cunningham, and Parmar themselves capsule a lesson from their research into the impact of specialization in economics. Their

challenge rings clear: “We call for business schools to do more to encourage students to question the assumptions underlying the theories they are taught and to broaden their perspectives beyond economic and utilitarian considerations” (Ong, et al., 2024: 41). Constructive methods previously have been promoted whereby commerce colleges could answer that challenge.

Incorporation of other social sciences, and of humanities, into commerce college curricula could nurture students’ thinking critically (Ong, et al., 2024: 54). More specifically, scholars of management long have endorsed for colleges of business the incorporation of courses in, e.g., history (Ong, et al., 2024: 54, citing Wright, R. E. 2010. Teaching history in business schools: An insider’s view, **Academy of Management Learning & Education**, 9: 607-700). Yet where can budget-constrained, practical schools of business begin overnight their assimilation of history study relevant to their institutional role on campus? In the air nowadays one hears talk concerning Constitution 101: The Meaning and *History* of the Constitution. Quick, uncomplicated registration accesses that resource. The course already awaits online, available to every student at any time.

Benefits await students who complete the course. Not only do they have a better understanding of what happened in the past, it paves the way for making sense of the present! The course employs recorded video lectures of the professor. But he is doing more conversing than lecturing: almost story telling. And he is passionate about the topic, which makes it easier to pay attention. We suggest people listen to the lectures because they are worth listening to.

To summarize, it is important for students to learn about the U.S. Constitution. But where is knowledge thereof offered in handy, digestible form? Most schools lack such a course for business majors, but many might agree it should be there. The study of the Constitution helps students understand about:

- Their rights and freedoms (freedom of speech, religion and due process)
- Its historical context as it was drafted in 1787 and thus reflects society and the government of the time
- Civic Knowledge or knowledge of how the government functions (separation of powers, checks and balances, and the roles of different branches of the government)
- Legal Framework as the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Understanding it is essential for anyone involved in the legal field or interested in how laws are interpreted and applied.
- Social and Political Impact or how constitutional principles influence social change
- Critical thinking: analyzing the Constitution encourages critical thinking about how its principles apply to contemporary issues and debates, helping individuals engage more thoughtfully in discussions about policy and governance.

B. *An Accreditation Bonus*

Imagine additional potential payoff from undergraduate business schools' supplementing Legal Environment of Business classes with those Hillsdale constitutional study opportunities. Naturally, numerous business school faculty members are aware that the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) *2020 Guiding Principles and Standards for Business Accreditation* were updated on July 1, 2024. Likewise was the AACSB *Interpretive Guidance for AACSB Business Accreditation* updated on July 1, 2024. Ponder how renewed study of these then-updated authorities could prove constructive.

For background behind this payoff possibility, consult Standard 5: Assurance of Learning, in the AACSB's updated *Guiding Principles and Standards*. It provides in section 5.1:

“The school uses well-documented assurance of learning (AoL) processes that include direct and indirect measures for ensuring the quality of all degree programs that are deemed in scope for accreditation purposes. The results of the school’s AoL work leads to curricular and process improvements” (Standard 5.1, in AACSB, *Guiding Principles and Standards*: 44). Recognized among Standard 5.1’s Definitions is that: “*Direct measures* refer to evidence from learner work such as examinations, quizzes,...and internship or externship feedback that is based on direct observation of individual performance behaviors or outcomes” (Standard 5.1, Definitions, in AACSB, *Guiding Principles and Standards*: 44 AACSB’s emphasis)). More particularly: “A key difference between an indirect and direct measure is whether the assessment can be conducted at the individual level in a detailed/specific/granular way (direct assessment), or the group level (indirect assessment)” (Standard 5.1, Definitions, in AACSB, *Guiding Principles and Standards*: 45).

Perhaps of greater immediate relevance to matters at hand is Standard 7: Effectiveness and Impact. The AACSB’s updated *Interpretive Guidance for AACSB Accreditation* provides in section 7.4: “The school demonstrates teaching impact through learner success, learner satisfaction, and other affirmations of teaching expertise” (AACSB, Standard 7.4, in *AACSB Guiding Principles and Standards*: 53). The Basis for Judgment for Standard 7.4 further explains: “Teaching effectiveness results in impact through demonstrated learner success and satisfaction...” (AACSB, Standard 7.4, in *AACSB Guiding Principles and Standards*: 54). The updated Interpretive Guidance for Standard 7 emphasizes the importance of using a wide range of measures and sources to assess teaching quality and effectiveness, including peer reviews and learner evaluations (AACSB, *Interpretive Guidance*: 40). Additionally, the AACSB’s “Suggested Documentation” (AACSB, *Guiding Principles and Standards*: 54) for Standard 7.4

advises schools: “Provide exemplars of learner success, either with respect to the school’s current learners or alumni” (AACSB, *Guiding Principles and Standards*: 55).

Yes, means whereby directly to measure degree program quality can include learners’ examinations. Direct measurement ensuring program quality seems substantiated if appraisal is conducted at the individual-student level in specific, detailed and granular fashion. Too, effective teaching impact is displayed by learners’ success as affirmation of teacher-expertise. In its accreditation endeavors each institution can document teaching impact by providing exemplars of its business school-learners’ success.

Weigh whether faculty members’ invitation to students to exploit online opportunities can exhibit (via learner success) *teachers’* impact. *Quaere* whether, in particular, student success in an online project like those herein evidences that business law teachers’ laying a foundational knowledge of constitutional law positively impacts students’ further enrichment. Then recall the aforementioned broad array of steps available to appraise *teaching* quality via *learner* evaluations. Thereby, to evidence teaching impact business schools might deliver to accreditors exemplars (e.g., personalized certification of *learners’* proficiencies independently evaluated elsewhere) which attest to current students’ learning achievements. That accreditation/exemplar practice would seem substantially to comport with a determination rendered a half-decade ago (Swan, et al., 2020: 71-83).

8. CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion recognizes research affirming some salience of business law among undergraduate business management or business administration baccalaureate degree-courses. Yet often that means a solitary course called Legal Environment of Business. And one

law subject after another finds itself jammed into a Legal Environment of Business course wherein time is rationed. Among such legal topics lies U.S. constitutional law.

John C. Kuzenski's review of high-profile undergraduate-level business law textbooks discerned that U.S. constitutional law survives as a serious component of undergraduate business law study. It also retains its role among subjects tested toward undergraduates' business degree credit via the College Board's College Level Examination. As much is true regarding the Constitution and business portion of the Legal Environment element of the Legal and Social Environment part of the Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test in Business.

Unsettlingly, some American constitutional experts anticipate mounting friction concerning constitutional issues. So, seemingly, did then-President Biden (himself an attorney) during 2024, That suggests expanded concentration on U.S. constitutional law is requisite for future business professionals. Yet limits both on students' time and on colleges of business-budgets loom. Luckily, Hillsdale College (a liberal arts institution) delivers online educational projects. Its online coursework possibly can relieve time/budget challenges to needed enrichment of U.S. constitutional law study in undergraduate business schools.

For Hillsdale's online Introduction to the Constitution course concerns debates once rising across America. These addressed the appropriate nature of the government in postcolonial America. The 1776 Declaration of Independence is revealed as closely bound to the subsequent Constitution. That earlier document informs readings of the latter instrument.

Furthermore, Hillsdale's online Constitution 101: The Meaning and History of the Constitution course examines the political theory of the American Founding. It observes that storms confronted that political theory, generation after generation. Between them, this pair of

courses can expand students' command of their country's constitution. Thanks to Hillsdale College, their enhanced understanding can be accomplished free of charge.

To draw upon these two resources would enrich undergraduate business school studies. It can do so while entailing a bonus for such colleges. The bonus could arrive through easing students' attainment of a rather fresh outlook on business ethics. A fresh perspective would arrive at exactly the juncture when business school scholars highlight business colleges' need thereof. And as if in reward for institutions' job well done, drawing upon these two resources might reinforce business colleges' AACSB accreditation and reaccreditation bids.

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