Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
College of Business  
Standardized Course Syllabus  
(Revised and Approved by ACCBL on September 5, 2008)

Course Number: ACCT 5371

Course Name: Tax Consulting, Planning and Research

Instructor: Dr. Valrie Chambers

Office: Dr. Valrie Chambers – Faculty Center 258

Phone: Dr. Valrie Chambers (361) 825-6012

Office Hours: Six hours per week as posted.


Prerequisites: Accounting foundation courses or their equivalent.

Course Description:

An advanced study of the Internal Revenue Code and related materials to identify tax-saving opportunities for businesses and individuals. Emphasizes sound tax planning and research techniques as applied to real or case study situations.

Relationship to Other Coursework:

This course is appropriate for MBA students, students in the profession, and MACC students. Subjects overlap with financial accounting, finance, business strategy and communications.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- identify, describe, and apply sources of legal and ethical standards and federal tax law common to tax practice
- delineate, elaborate on and apply the steps of the tax research process to actual federal research problems
- advise hypothetical clients as to audit selection factors and probable litigation success, and construct taxpayer defenses
illustrate effective tax planning
identify penalties that may be applied to tax practitioners who fail to perform responsibly

Instructional Methodology:

Instructional methods include lectures, class discussions and applications, case studies, preparation of client letters, valuations, and the conduct of electronic tax research and policy analysis. The goal of these methods is to guide the student to a technical understanding of tax research and the development of professional judgment in tax matters, including recognition and consideration of the importance of non-tax factors in decision-making.

Performance Evaluation and Grading:

Student performance evaluation may be based on tax consulting, planning and research projects and independent accounting judgment. A sample of the relative weights of each of these components is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax Consulting, Planning and Research Projects</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent accounting judgment</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A letter grade will be determined based on the percentage earned of total points possible, as follows: A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 0-59%. In some instances, a curve may be applied in determining letter grades.

Oral and Written Content:

Students are expected to read assigned material prior to class and to contribute to class discussions. Students will address the appropriate form and content of client letters and develop agility in communicating complex tax issues in clear and common language. Students will make professional presentation in the form of client letters, workpapers, and oral presentations.

Technology Applications:

Students will use electronic research applications during the course. In addition, students should be comfortable with producing quality word-processed letters and memoranda and with at least one spreadsheet application. Students will use one of the two most widely adopted research tools in their Internet version, the full-featured versions of RIA's and CCH's Internet-based tax research libraries. These libraries include the Internal Revenue Code and Code history, Treasury Regulations, selected Committee Reports, and Tax Treaties. Lexis-Nexis is also available and its use is strongly encouraged. The libraries also include the publishers' tax services with explanations and annotations. Students will have the opportunity to develop tax research skills using these widely adopted
professional tools. These tools are available for student use at the library, through the Business Computer Lab, or via their own Internet service from an off campus location. All students should have a student computer account and access to e-mail. Students may be required to submit certain assignments via e-mail and e-mail attachments.

**Global Perspectives:**

International issues are addressed in a broad way, through an overview of comparative ways of determining income and of collecting tax in the tax systems employed in other major industrial nations.

**Ethical Perspectives:**

The integrity of our financial and tax systems depends, in part, on the integrity and principled behavior of those who advise clients and report information. This tax course addresses these issues through discussion of Circular 230, which outlines the expectations of governmental authorities with respect to tax preparers, through mention of certain taxpayer and preparer penalties under the law, and through review of the more common issues encountered and addressed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statements of Responsibilities in Tax Practice.

**Demographic Diversity Perspectives:**

An example of a demographic issue in tax law is the "marriage penalty" that imposes higher taxes on two individuals that file as one married couple than would be imposed if the two individuals had never married and filed as single individuals. Such issues extend throughout the study of individual taxation and raise interesting policy and design questions. Some of these questions are raised and may be addressed by students in the context of case discussions and sample return projects. Class discussion of proposals for reforming the U.S. tax system also raise interesting questions about who should bear the burden of taxation and of what and who should be, or should not be, taxed.

**Political, Social, Legal, Regulatory, and Environmental Perspectives:**

Throughout the history of the United States, tax laws have been used to encourage or to discourage certain types of activities or investments. In addition, taxes may ultimately not be born by those on whom the tax is imposed, but may be passed along to others. Case studies and other sources of class discussion address the social, political, and regulatory agendas advanced by various aspects of the tax law.

**Attendance Policy:**

Students are held responsible for class attendance and are advised that excessive absences may adversely affect their grades.

**Academic Honesty:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.)

**Code of Ethics**

This course, and all other courses offered by the College of Business (COB), requires all of its students to abide by the COB Student Code of Ethics (available online at [www.cob.tamucc.edu](http://www.cob.tamucc.edu)) Provisions and stipulations in the code are applicable to all students taking College of Business courses regardless of whether or not they are pursuing a degree awarded by the COB.

**Disability Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Summary of Topical Coverage:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Tax Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Tax Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Tax Authority</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using Citators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading, Interpreting and Evaluating the Code, Regulations, and Landmark Court Cases</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Electronic Tax Research</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Planning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Practice and Procedures (includes ethics)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Consulting (E-Commerce, Business Valuations, Ligations Support, and Jurisdictional Problems)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
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