GE 400 - Engineering Law

Instructors:

The course has been taught by Professor Joe Barich, who is a practicing patent lawyer and an alumnus of the ECE Department.

Prerequisites:

The only official prerequisite is RHET 105, which most students take during their freshman year. This class used to have a fairly hefty writing portion but in recent years, the amount of writing decreased and seems to have been replaced by quizzes. As of Fall 2012, writing skills were not a concern when taking this class.

When to Take It:

The only restriction is that students must have Junior or Senior standing to take this course. Students typically take this course during their Junior or Senior year.

Class Content:

In this class, students will get a brief overview in law, specifically Engineering Law. This class is based on the US legal system, however connections are made to the European legal systems. The class covers the following subject matters:

- Nature and development of the legal system
- Legal rights and duties important to engineers in their profession
- Contracts
- Uniform commercial code and sales of goods
- Torts
- Agency
- Worker's compensation
- Labor law
- Property
- Environmental law
- Intellectual property

All of the reading materials and lecture notes can be found on Joe Barich's personal website:
http://www.joebarich.com/Pages/EngineeringLaw.aspx

Work:

The work required is not too intensive. Students should be able to receive an A or B with little difficulty if they attend lectures, take notes, and occasionally ask questions. This class is similar to GenEd style classes without requiring the heavy memorization of one. The exams and quizzes will test the knowledge that students have gained during a certain section of the class. The lectures are well-done, relevant to industry, and fairly enjoyable.

Life After:

Some students take this class to pursue a Law Degree and become patent lawyers. However, this class should be useful for all majors. This class will give students the tools to protect themselves and their ideas when dealing with the laws as an engineer. If a student plans on inventing something or creating a start-up, it is heavily suggested that they take this class so they will know about legal complications that might arise. Also, a student can learn how they may want to design their product to avoid infringement or being infringed upon.