As soon as possible, you'll want to select your choice of case study topic. Possible case study topics are listed on the syllabus. They are presented, and the paper is handed in, on the week the topic is covered in class. Pick your topic based on interest and also based on your own time schedule.

Once you select your topic please e-mail me your choice of topic. I'll confirm your topic via e-mail and put your name and topic on the Course Calendar on Blackboard. Please check the course calendar to see the topics and dates already selected.

I realize that when one starts researching, it may take a great deal of time at first to find the information needed, but with practice, it becomes easier and quicker. The library's webpage is an excellent source of resource material. You may find your case through the library's web page through databases available free while you are a student such as Westlaw or Lexis-Nexis. Supreme Court cases are at the U.S. Supreme Court's web page, supremecourt.gov, under opinions. Other federal and state court's webpages also have the cases. Findlaw also has cases and statutes at findlaw.com/casecode/.

When doing research, please remember that primary sources, i.e., the law itself, or the actual cases and statutes, are much more important than secondary sources, or what the media says that the law states. We will emphasize this throughout the class, but when getting a start on your research, remember to always go to the primary source whenever possible. In the experience of prior MBA students, Wikipedia is a risky source to use, because it occasionally has incorrect information. Since Wikipedia is fluid and anyone can add to it, there has been incorrect or out of date information, especially concerning the law, on the Wikipedia web site. Do not cite to Wikipedia.

I realize that initially your research may be frustrating and slow. Once you've gathered sufficient research material, you'll organize and write your papers. Below is a suggested format for the research papers. This is just a suggestion, though, and different papers may vary depending on the topic.

Title page - the title of your case study, your name, and at the bottom a copyright notice (we'll discuss why this is important later in the course): Copyright 2015 your name or © 2015 your name

Introduction - You may want to write this last, or towards the end of the writing process, as you may not know initially exactly where your paper is headed. Here, you'll catch the reader's attention, perhaps with a quote or a scenario, and get the reader intrigued and involved with your topic. You may want to tell the reader (me) why you wrote this particular paper. The most important thing is to give the reader a "roadmap" of what's coming in the paper, and perhaps tell the reader what is not covered in the scope of the paper.

Body of the paper - You may also want to break the body down into subheadings to help the flow. This is the heart of your paper. You'll want to give a factual, objective discussion of the issue(s), case(s), statute(s), and/or other issues related to the topic. If you've selected an actual case, a chronological explanation of what has happened is usually very helpful, instead of skipping around. In the body, you'll also want to discuss the legal issues involved.

Be sure that you are fair and balanced, giving both or all sides of an argument. It's fine to have strong opinions on issues; I do, too. But one is a much better negotiator or advocate when one is able to understand, and if necessary, refute the arguments on the other side of an issue.
Be sure to use paragraph breaks; sometimes writers have paragraphs that last a page or more, and this is really difficult to follow for the reader.

A key thing to discuss is why this case matters, what I call the “so what” factor. I then want a subjective analysis of what you think, what could have been done or what should be done, what other businesses can learn from this, recommendations, predictions, etc.

Conclusion - Wrap it all up. William Zinsser, author of "On Writing Well," states that if your reader has stuck with you thus far, you owe your reader a strong conclusion.

Bibliography - I'm looking for an extensive bibliography of substantive resources. Most, if not all, resources may be Internet resources. The bibliography and the paper may use either MLA, APA, Chicago style, or any other uniform system of citation. The Chicago style uses footnotes or endnotes, which are great with me, but I also want a bibliography. MLA and APA both refer the reader, in the text, back to the bibliography when material is taken from sources other than the writer's own mind.

Microsoft Word also puts sources into MLA or APA format, under references.

If you're discussing a case, give me the name of the case and the case's citation, which includes indicators of the court and the year. For example, 52 US 27 (1976) means a US Supreme Court case found in volume 52 of the US reporters starting on page 27, decided in 1976. This indicator is always found at the beginning of the case, even if the case is retrieved electronically from a credible source such as Lexis-Nexis or findlaw.com.

To summarize about citation format, any uniform system of citation is fine with me so long as it gives me enough information to find the source you're discussing.

The paper may be double spaced with any normal font and margins. The papers typically run seven to ten pages, but may go longer.

To avoid plagiarism, a Student Code violation, cite very frequently to your sources. Even if you paraphrase, still cite to the original source of your material. A reasonable number of small quotes is also acceptable. When quoting, be sure to either put the direct quote in quotation marks, or single space and indent five spaces, plus cite your reader to where the quote came from. One of the most difficult parts of my job is dealing with plagiarism, and I don't like to do it, and the sanctions are very high. So always cite to others' words or ideas. Cutting and pasting is not acceptable, unless done sparingly, indicating to the reader that this is a direct quote by putting the quote in quotation mark, and in-text cite plus put the source in the bibliography.

Finally, your papers may have appendices, not counting towards the page limits. For example, if you have long quotes, such as from a statute such as the Affordable Care Act, put it in an appendix, and paraphrase in the text and refer the reader to an appendix. If you don't, it can really bog down the flow of your paper.

I also like you to use a spell-check and make the suggested corrections, and I do like proper and conventional grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

The grade for the case study also includes a presentation aspect. Very often, class members learn a great deal of valuable information from hearing other class members present, and often you'll learn more from each other than you'll learn from me. Presentations should be approximately 15 minutes, including questions. The presentations may go over that time, though, due to class discussion sparked by the topic. I intersperse the presentations during my lectures because you'd be very tired of hearing me talk for the whole class! The problem you may have as you prepare is not that you won't have enough to talk about for that time, but rather that it's hard to condense all the material down to that time.
You will want to make power point slides of the presentation. Please send them to me by e-mail before class, and I’ll post them for all to see.

If you have any questions in our class, concerning the case study or presentation or anything else, please let me know!