



Course Syllabus: Civil Liability for the Criminal Justice Professional
College of Health Sciences and Human Services
CRJU 4203-X20
Fall 2021

Contact Information

Instructor: Laura J Estrada

Office hours: MWF 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM (Online. Please email, and I will respond immediately during these hours).

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to examine the growing prevalence of civil liability within the U.S. Criminal Justice System. This course will explore civil liability issues for both U.S. law enforcement and corrections officers. This course will cover the increase in civil litigation in the U.S., the distinctions between civil and criminal law, and the primary foundations for civil liability under both state and federal law, as well as the damages that may be recovered. This course will also cover defenses to civil liability within the criminal justice system. Particular emphasis will be placed on lawsuits based upon 42 U.S.C. Section 1983 and the use of force in both law enforcement and corrections. The course will teach students to integrate this knowledge through examination of detailed case studies of the actions of both law enforcement and corrections professionals in the U.S. Criminal Justice System,

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Ross (2018). Civil Liability in Criminal Justice (7th ed.) Routledge, ISBN: 9780323356459

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2020-21](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of

work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

Course Grade – Two online exams, and one final exam will be given. In addition, you will have weekly critical thinking questions, and a presentation assignment this semester.

Table 1: You will be graded as follows:

Assignments	Points
Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Final Exam	20%
Critical Thinking Questions	20%
Presentation	20%
Participation	10%
Total Points	100%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	60-below

Homework

You will have a critical thinking question each week, for the first half of the semester. You must respond to the question, then respond to two of your classmates questions, in order to receive full credit. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Exams

Two online exams, and one final will be given. Exams will cover material from the assigned readings and critical thinking questions, up to that point in the course. Any material contained in the assigned readings may be tested. Likewise, any material sent to your D2L email, whether or not contained in the assigned readings, may be tested. The final exam will cover the final 2-3 chapters, but may contain material missed in previous examinations. Make-up exams will only be offered in extreme circumstances, at the professor's discretion.

Projects Required

During the second half of the semester, each student will be required to complete a PowerPoint or Prezi "presentation." Each presentation will cover a

special topic in civil liability, as assigned by the professor. You will be given ample time to gather information for this assignment, as well as instructor input and guidance. The task for each individual is to research the assigned material or topic, and present their findings via either PowerPoint or Prezi. The Prezi or PowerPoint should include all major concepts of the material, as well as any relevant case law.

Final Exam

The final exam will be available online on Saturday 12/4/2021 at 7:00 AM, and availability will end at 11:50 PM on Tuesday, 12/7/2021. You will also receive a study sheet for the examination in your D2L email by Monday, 11/29/2021. The final examination makes up 20% of your grade for this course.

Late Work

Students are expected to submit assignments on or before the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Otherwise, students will not receive any credit for an assignment submitted after the due date.

Make Up Work/Tests

Makeup assignments and/or tests will only be allowed in extreme circumstances, and with the proper documentation. You are responsible for letting the professor know if you have any extenuating circumstances before the due date of the assignment/test. In the event of an extenuating circumstance such as an illness, death in the family, etc., please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Assignments and deadlines may be modified on a case-by-case basis. Verifiable documentation of the circumstance may be required. The more quickly you let me know what is going on, the more options I will have for allowing you to complete the course.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. Remember, you are responsible for checking D2L daily for any possible course-related information, critical thinking questions, and/or changes or updates to the course.

Attendance

Please remember to check your D2L Email daily, in order to receive any study materials, changes to the course, etc. There will be occasions I will ask that you respond to my Email. Failure to do so will result in a low participation grade.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings, as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world, which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college can not work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

Students are required to complete assignments on or before the due date. Again, you are responsible for checking your D2L Email for updates, assignments, etc. You are responsible for letting the professor know if you have any questions or concerns regarding an assignment **before** the due date.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. **HOWEVER**, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-

4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

I am available to answer any questions you may have about the course. When a question arises, you may contact me at laura.estrada@msutexas.edu , or call my office phone (listed at the top of the syllabus). The class schedule is subject to change, with notice.

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Class Discussion/Assignment	Class Topic
Week 1 Mon 8/23	Read syllabus. Email Professor with any questions. "Introduce yourself" assignment online	Syllabus
Fri 8/27	Intro. Assignment due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 1, Overview of Civil Liability)	Intro. Assignment Due/Reading assigned
Week 2 Mon 8/30	Critical thinking question available online.	Critical thinking question available
Fri 9/3	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 2, Foundations for Liability)	Critical thinking question due
Week 3 Mon 9/6	Critical Thinking Question available online	Critical thinking question
Fri 9/10	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 3, Civil Liability Under State and Federal Tort Law)	Critical thinking question due
Week 4, Mon 9/13	Critical thinking question	Critical thinking question available
Fri, 9/17	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 4., Civil Liability and Federal Law)	Critical thinking question due
Week 5, Mon 9/20	Critical thinking question available	Critical thinking question available
Fri, 9/24	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM	Critical thinking question due
Week 6, Mon 9/27	Review sheet for test I, Ch. 1, 2, 3, and 4 available in D2L mail	Review sheet in D2L Mail
Fri, 10/1	Test I available online. MUST be completed no later than 11:50 PM	TEST I DUE
Week 7, Mon 10/4	Critical thinking Question available online. (*Read Ross, Ch. 5, Defenses to Civil Litigation and Risk Management)	Critical thinking question available
Fri, 10/8	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM	Critical thinking question DUE
Week 8, Mon 10/11	Critical thinking question available	Critical thinking question available
Fri, 10/15	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 7)	Critical thinking question DUE

Week or Module	Class Discussion/Assignment	Class Topic
Week 9, Mon 10/18	Critical thinking question available online	Critical thinking question available online
Fri, 10/22	Critical thinking question due no later than 11:50 PM (*Read Ross, Ch. 9)	Critical thinking question DUE
Week 10, Mon 10/25	Test II Review Sheet available online (Ch. 5, 6, 7, & 9)	Test II review sheet available
Fri, 10/29	TEST II AVAILABLE ONLINE (Must be completed no later than 11:50 PM)	TEST II DUE
Week 11, Mon 11/1	Read Ross Ch. 10	Read Ross Ch. 10
Fri, 11/5	Presentation topic assigned. Instructions and rubric sent via D2L email	Presentation topics assigned
Week 12, Mon 11/8	Workshop – work on your presentation (*Read Ross, Ch. 11)	Read Ross, Ch. 11
Week 13, Mon 11/15	Workshop (work on your presentation)	Work on presentation
Week 14, Mon 11/22	Workshop/Happy Thanksgiving	Work on presentation
Week 15, Mon 11/29	Last week of classes – finish up presentation (FINAL exam study sheet available online)	Finish up presentation/Final study sheet online
Fri, 11/29	Last day of classes, PRESENTATION DUE NO LATER THAN 11:50 PM	PRESENTATION DUE/LAST DAY OF CLASSES
Sat, 12/4	FINAL EXAM AVAILABLE ONLINE, CH. 10 & 11	FINAL EXAM AVAILABLE ONLINE
Tues, 12/7	FINAL EXAM DUE NO LATER THAN 11:50 PM	FINAL EXAM DUE