



## Syllabus: Legal Environment of Business

---

LSBA 3233 Sections 201

**Spring Semester 2026**

Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00 am – 9:20 am

Dillard Building Room 178

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher R. Tilker, Professor of Legal Studies

Office: Dillard Building, Room 294

Office hours: 7:30 am – 8:00 am Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

9:30 am – 10:00 am Monday and Wednesday

9:30 am – 10:30 am Tuesday and Thursday

Office phone: (940) 397- 4712

E-mail: [kris.tilker@msutexas.edu](mailto:kris.tilker@msutexas.edu)

### COURSE MATERIALS

*Business Law* by Clarkson, Miller, and Cross, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, Cengage Learning, ISBN 978-0-357-12963-0. Handouts are provided by professor. Do not use other editions of the textbook or handouts.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the procedures of the American legal system and how the law operates in the business environment with international, economic, political, and social influences. Topics include legal process; alternative dispute resolution; legal and ethical decision-making; international law; torts; insurance; contracts; and sales law.

### COURSE PREREQUISITES

POLS 1333 and POLS 1433 plus junior standing

## LEARNING GOALS

Social order is essential to successful commerce. As one of the primary means for maintaining social order, legal principles and processes facilitate the creation and operation of markets by providing necessary assurance to investors, sellers, buyers, employees, and others that their reasonable commercial expectations will be realized. While serving this positive function, however, law simultaneously operates as the most pervasive external constraint on business decision-making.

Students should study the legal and ethical environment of business for the same reasons that they study other core subjects in which they do not intend to specialize. They must be able to identify issues pertaining to the particular discipline; recognize potential problems before they become actualized and costly; know when to consult an expert; understand the language, practices, and methods of reasoning and problem-solving in the discipline so that the expert can be used effectively and efficiently; and have sufficient insight into the discipline so that the service and advice of the expert can be knowledgeably evaluated and incorporated into the firm's decision-making processes.

By the end of the course, students should expect themselves:

- To have acquired an understanding of the unique vocabulary terms in the law.
- To understand the relationship between ethics and law.
- To understand the parallel nature of ethical and moral decision-making and the steps necessary to make objective decisions.
- To understand the processes of business dispute resolution in the American judicial system and in the international arena.
- To be equipped as a businessperson or manager to recognize legal issues and manage legal risks in business decision-making by having a general understanding of the substantive areas of law that affect business on a daily basis: insurance, torts, and contracts.
- To have improved skills in analyzing problems and arriving at well-reasoned explanations.

## COURSE POLICIES

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings for this course, following the university attendance policy. See *Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog 2025-2026a*.

This catalog is electronic only. It may be found on the MSU website using the Registrar button then University Catalogs button. University attendance policy is then found under Registrar. Attendance is deemed essential for this class. Each student is allowed ten (10) absences for the entire semester. Research dealing with class attendance demonstrates there is a direct correlation between the grades students earn and class attendance. Excused absences are only allowed for official university activities documented ahead of time by the proper university official. Roll is taken during the first five (5) minutes of class. If you have been counted absent and you notify the instructor at the end of class that you came to class late, your absence will be changed to late. Being late twice is equal to one (1) absence. The classroom doors will be locked approximately ten (10) minutes after class begins, and students are not allowed to enter the classroom after the doors are locked. Additionally, in order to

not disturb the class, each student is expected to stay seated throughout the entire class period except in case of an emergency.

Notwithstanding anything herein contained to the contrary, any student who misses two (2) consecutive classes will be dropped from class with an F. If this happens before April 28, 2026 (the official drop date for a "W"), the student will be dropped by the instructor and receive a grade of F. When possible, any deviation from this instructor drop policy because of illness or emergency should be approved in advance and documented. You should always contact one of your classmates when you are absent. Many important announcements are made in class.

An instructor may drop a student at any time during the semester for violation of the attendance policy in this class, quiz and test procedures, for an indifferent attitude, disruptive behavior, and other policies contained in this syllabus. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping a student. A written warning will be deemed completed when emailed to your official MSU email or any email you used contacting your instructor. An instructor's drop takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop at a later date. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar is the official drop date.

### **Zoom Attendance:**

If you do have COVID, flu, or another infectious illness or the possibility exists you may have COVID, flu, or another infectious illness, please do NOT attend the physical classroom session. Instead attend class via the Zoom, assuming you feel well enough to do so. Students may attend a maximum of one (1) Zoom session and be counted as present. Permission to attend more than one class by Zoom may be granted on a case by case basis by your instructor. Students requesting to attend more than one session by Zoom will be required to submit documentation requisitioned by your instructor. All students attending via Zoom, should be dressed as if attending class in person. Also, your camera must be on and your face visible at all times. If called upon, be prepared to unmute your microphone and speak promptly. I won't consider you "present and participating" in the class if you don't follow these instructions. Students may not attend via Zoom when you are presenting your assigned law case.

## **OTHER RELATED POLICIES**

### **Class Participation:**

It is important for you to read all the assigned text materials and to do a written brief on all assigned law cases. Classroom time will be spent clarifying and analyzing the basic material and applying material to different fact situations. Knowing rules of law has little value if you cannot apply them to solving problems.

### **Assignments:**

Lesson plans provided with this syllabus clearly indicate the material covered for each class. There will be a significant amount of reading. I optimistically expect that all assignments will be read on time

by all students. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to come to class well-prepared. I strongly recommend that you apply this rule of thumb: expect to spend a minimum of two hours studying out of class for each hour of class time.

Business and industry expect to hire college graduates who are self-reliant, have good communication skills, and display good critical-thinking skills. Being prepared for class teaches you self-reliance. Preparing case briefs and explaining cases strengthen your communication skills. My use of the Socratic Method elevates your critical-thinking skills.

### **Testing Policy:**

Each student is responsible on every test for material covered in class and for reading that is assigned outside of class. This includes all text material and all lecture material unless the instructor specifically excludes particular items. Any information in this syllabus is considered part of classroom notes and may be tested.

### **Midwestern State University Student Handbook:**

Questions not specifically addressed by this syllabus are governed by the most current student handbook and the MSU Catalog. Make sure you know how to access these on the MSU website and are familiar with all the procedures therein. Pay close attention to the Code of Student Conduct section in the handbook and the Student Honor Creed. The MSU catalog is found using the Registrar button on the main page of the MSU website. The Student Handbook and the Student Honor Creed are found using the Student Life button on the main page of the MSU website. Do not hesitate to ask if you need help accessing the Student Handbook, Student Honor Creed, or University Catalog.

### **Medical or Other Serious Problems:**

Please take time and make the effort to advise your instructor if you have difficulties that require his attention in order to properly evaluate your classroom participation and activities.

### **Student Responsibility:**

The first obligation, particularly operative the first day of class or sooner, is to read and understand the content of this syllabus. The second obligation is to be devoted to learning the material assigned. College is supposed to be a demanding and, at times, an uncomfortable experience. College is where a student leaves behind the rote learning of high school and accepts the anxiety, discomfort, and challenge of complexity that leads to the acquisition of deeper knowledge and improved critical-thinking skills. You should expect me to spur your achievement rather than inflate your self-esteem. I do not give grades; you earn grades. Grades are based on performance on scheduled assessments, not on how deserving you feel you may be because of external hardships. Extra credit is not available to correct poor performance on tests and assignments. An outstanding student who attends an excellent college is an outstanding student. Likewise, an unengaged student attending an excellent college is an unengaged student. Your priorities are 100% your responsibility.

There is ample time to be a serious student, enjoy extracurricular activities, and work part-time. However, organizing your study time should be your highest priority. Cal Newport has written two superior books about this topic: 1. How to Become a Straight A Student and 2. Deep Work. I strongly encourage you to read both of these books before asking me any questions about how to study and learn material for this class.

### **Safety and Security:**

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#).

### **Food and Drink Policy:**

Food and drinks, other than water with a secure lid, are NOT permitted in the classrooms.

### **Use of Electronic Devices:**

Use of cellphones is strictly prohibited with two exceptions. You may review cellphone texts in class if required by your employer or if you are responsible for a minor who is in childcare or elementary school. You must notify your instructor by the third class period if one of these exceptions applies. This exception does not apply when tests are being given or reviewed. Additionally, sending texts or emails while in the classroom is prohibited. See Lower Grade (G) below. If you need to send an email, text or make a cellphone call, you may leave the class to do so. You are also expected not to return to the class for the remainder of the period.

### **Grade Postings:**

Test grades will be posted on D2L. You are expected to keep records of your grades and to be able to audit grades when posted. Additionally, you are expected to keep records of your grades and provide your grades to your instructor in the event of a D2L technology failure.

### **Testing Policy:**

You must take each and every test at the date and time announced in class. Failure to do so will result in zero (0) credit for that test. Any deviation from this policy because of illness or emergency must be approved in advance and be properly documented. Additionally, if a student misses a test and serious emergency circumstances are documented, instead of a grade of zero (0), the student will take the final exam to replace the point value of the missed test(s). Additionally, it is agreed and understood by you that the policy for all tests in this class is as follows: (1) you will comply with the MSU Student Honor Creed, and (2) the questions and answers on tests are deemed confidential and will NOT be copied, disseminated, spread, circulated, shared, or publicized. Test-policy violations are grounds for

being dropped from this class with an F and referral to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action, which may result in expulsion from Midwestern State University.

## **Lower Grade:**

**Starkly contrasting perspectives are excellent examples for learning. During class there should be no disrespect shown to anyone. Never exchange insults in class.**

In addition to the disciplinary consequences stated in this syllabus, I reserve the right to do an instructor drop or to lower any student's final grade two letter grades (i.e., A to C, C to F) for:

- A. Unpreparedness in class, or,
- B. A negative, rude, unreasonably argumentative, or inattentive attitude in class, or,
- C. Repeatedly disrupting the class for any reason, or,
- D. When you have permission to Zoom, failure to use Zoom during classroom lecture with a continual livestream picture of your face with you dressed the same as if you were attending class on campus, or,
- E. Repeatedly leaving and returning to your seat during class, or,
- F. Not showing respect for fellow classmates' questions, opinions, or,
- G. Violation of use of electronic devices or food and drink policies listed above, or,
- H. Repeated tardiness to class or,
- I. Violation of test rules and procedures, or,
- J. Violation of the Zoom attendance policy in this syllabus.

**Grading Scale:** Letter grades will be given according to the following scale:

| LETTER GRADE | PERCENT RANGE |
|--------------|---------------|
| A            | 85 and above  |
| B            | 80-84         |
| C            | 70-79         |
| D            | 50-69         |
| F            | 49 and below  |

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

With regard to academic honesty, students are referred to the Student Honor Creed of the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog 2025-2026. This catalog is electronic only. It may be found on the MSU website using the MENU button, then the Registrar button, then the University Catalogs button, then Student Life button. Violation of any of the guidelines in the MSU Student Honor Creed is an academic integrity violation. In short, academic dishonesty, cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The term academic dishonesty generally means representing someone else's work as your own and includes, but is not limited to:

1. Failing to report to your professor any suspicion of cheating on tests.



2. Acting with intent to promote or assist cheating, including soliciting, encouraging, directing, or aiding attempts of fellow students to cheat before, during, or after a test.
3. Soliciting information about test questions from students who have taken a test.
4. Intentionally or negligently aiding someone taking a test.
5. Looking or glancing at another student's test while the test is being taken.
6. Soliciting answers from a fellow student during a test.
7. Using a cellphone, any electronic device, or tool as an aid to find answers while taking a test.
8. Using any device to record a test, including eyeglasses, cellphones, watches, and calculators.
9. Acquiring a test or other academic testing material without the express permission of the professor who authored the test.
10. Submitting or presenting work containing any content generated by artificial intelligence.
11. Submitting or presenting work taking content from an internet search, another person/entity, or artificial intelligence (AI) technology such as Chat GPT (either directly or with modification) and representing it as your own work.
12. Copying, disseminating, spreading, circulating, sharing, or publicizing any questions on a test given for credit.
13. Violation of exam rules and procedures in this syllabus and as stated on the exams.

Academic integrity violations are grounds for being dropped from this class with an F and referral to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action, which may result in expulsion from the university.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES:**

This syllabus is posted under my name in the MSU directory. Posting automatically supplements this syllabus with the following MSU policies: Submission Format Policy, Plagiarism, Students with Disabilities, Safe Zone Statement, Contacting your Instructor, Title IX and Campus Carry. The supplemental policies are expressly made part of this syllabus.

### **Syllabus Change Policy:**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and may be subject to change.

## **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT:**

### **Law-Case Presentation:**

Each student will be assigned one law case to brief and present during the semester. A total of seventy (70) points may be earned for this assignment. If you are unprepared, absent, or do a poor presentation, you will not receive any points. If you do not want to make this presentation, you may choose to turn in a written brief, two (2) class periods before the date of your assigned law case presentation, and earn a maximum of 25 (twenty-five) points on this 70-point assignment. If you make an excellent presentation, you will earn up to seventy (70) points. This presentation of your brief must follow exactly the format in the handouts titled "How To Do A Written Law Case Brief." To receive all 70 points, your law-case presentation must be an excellent delivery that communicates the required information clearly. This involves doing more than reading your brief to the class. It should be obvious that there was a significant amount of time spent on practice and preparation. This will be evidenced

by very limited use of notes while making the presentation. A grading rubric for this presentation will be provided when cases are assigned to individual students.

## **COURSE OUTLINE:**

This is a general outline of material expected to be covered. Material covered, dates of tests, and percent of total grade will vary as necessitated by the pace at which material is covered and the total points for each test. Additionally, lesson plans for this class are provided with this syllabus.

### **THE FOUNDATIONS – Test 1**

- Chapter 1 Law and Legal Reasoning
- Chapter 2 Business and the Constitution
- Chapter 3 Ethics in Business

### **COURT PROCESSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW – Test 2**

- Chapter 4 Courts and ADR
- Chapter 5 Court Procedures
- Chapter 24 International and Space Law

### **INSURANCE AND TORTS - Test 3**

- Chapter 50 Insurance
- Chapter 6 Tort Law
- Chapter 7 Strict Liability and Products Liability

### **ELEMENTS OF CONTRACTS – Test 4**

- Chapter 11 Nature and Terminology
- Chapter 12 Agreement
- Chapter 13 Consideration

### **CONTRACTS CONTINUED - Test 5**

- Chapter 14 Capacity and Legality
- Chapter 15 Mistakes, Fraud, and Voluntary Consent
- Chapter 16 The Writing Requirement and Electronic Records

The final exam period is for students with an excused absence for regularly scheduled test(s).

**The final exam for this class is at 8am Tuesday December 9.**