



Syllabus: Legal Environment of Business

LSBA 3233 Section X20

Spring Semester 2026

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Office: Dillard Building, Room 294

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

9:30 am to 10:00 Monday and Wednesday

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

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COURSE MATERIALS

Business Law by Clarkson, Miller, and Cross, 15th 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

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Class Preparation:

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. Use of the Socratic Method elevates your critical-thinking skills.

Test Material:

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 going to the MSU starting web page, then the Menu button, then Academics, then the Registrar button. The Student Handbook and the Student Honor Creed are found by going to the MSU starting web page then the Menu button, then Student Life button. 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 participation and meeting assignment deadlines.

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.

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:

The lesson plans posted in D2L show the planned testing dates. Students must take each and every test when scheduled. 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. Students requesting to take an exam different from the scheduled date will be required to submit documentation requisitioned by your instructor. 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.

Exam Testing Location:

All students are required to take tests that are proctored. The course lesson plans have the scheduled exam dates. The preferred location of all exams is in the Dillard College of Business in DB 178 at 8am. The second option is to take your exam the same day as scheduled, or the day before, at the Dillard College Testing Center. You should contact the Dillard College Testing Center to find out available times and dates. The contact person for the Dillard Testing Center is Ann Dugan. Her email is anne.dugan@msutexas.edu and her phone number is (940) 397-4379.

Your third option is to make arrangements with a certified testing to administer the exam. You can find some approved public testing centers at <https://clep.collegeboard.org/clep-test-center-search>. You are responsible for making the arrangement with the approved testing center of your choice. Students are responsible for arranging a testing center to oversee the exam process. The proctor information must be submitted one week before the date of the scheduled exam. Students are not allowed to have access to the exam before the test starts or after the exam ends. Proctored exams are not to be removed from the testing center at any time. No late exams will be accepted.

For exam integrity purposes, any student who leaves the testing room for any reason must submit their exam at that time and will not be permitted to re-enter or continue the exam.

Lower Grade:

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. Use of prohibited electronic devices to take exams, or,
- B. Violation of exam rules and procedures in this syllabus and as stated on the exams.
- C. Failure to comply with the MSU Student Honor Creed, or,
- D. Copying, disseminating, spreading, circulating, sharing, or publicizing any questions on a test given for credit.
- E. 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.

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:

Court Room Observation:

All students are required to earn seventy (70) points for seventy (70) minutes of courtroom observation. This observation requires you to be physically present in the courtroom. You should take paper and a pen to make notes about what you are observing. Each student must turn in a typed one-page report. The first sentence must state the exact total amount of time observed. The second sentence must state the actual time(s), date(s) and courtroom(s) you observed. The remainder of the report must briefly narrate what was observed. Students must include if the case(s) were public or private, civil or criminal, federal or state, and jury or non-jury. Students should include, when possible, name of the judge(s), the names of the attorney(s), and if the attorney(s) represented the plaintiff(s) or the defendant(s).

This requirement is a practical one to broaden your knowledge of the judicial system by personal experience. If any official courtroom process is taking place, this counts as time spent observing. Your name and date must be in the upper-right hand corner.

Students who turn in an acceptable report will receive all 70 points. Any student who turns in a report and does not actually observe will receive an F for the final semester grade, regardless of test scores. Your courtroom observation report must be emailed to the instructor using the email on page 1 of this syllabus. The report is due by noon on or before 11am on April 17, 2026. Reports turned in after this

time will lose one (1) point for every hour it is late. This is a strict deadline. Students who comply with this requirement in substance but who fail to comply in procedure will lose ten (10) points for each procedural violation.

To plan your courtroom observation, you should use official court websites. You are not required to observe court proceedings with a jury, however targeting planned jury weeks will significantly enhance your chances the courtrooms will have activity. Additional sources of information can be obtained by calling court administrators and specific court offices.

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.