

**Course Syllabus: Legal and Ethical Environment of Business**  
**Dillard College of Business**  
**LSBA 3233 X20 (online)**  
**Spring 2025: January 17 to May 13**

---

**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 – 10:30 am Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Otherwise: Email and we will schedule a mutually agreeable time

Office phone: (940) 397-4712

E-mail: [kris.tilker@msutexas.edu](mailto:kris.tilker@msutexas.edu) (preferred method of contact)

**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 in D2L.

Do NOT use previous 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:

Legal Environment of Business is being taught face to face at 8am Tuesday and Thursday. The 8am class will be recorded and placed into D2L content for LSBA 3233 X20 as the lecture for this class. In most cases there will be two classes each week for you to watch. Additionally, in D2L, lesson plans are provided for this class. There are 15 weeks in the regular semester. Finals week is the 16<sup>th</sup> week. Lesson plans are listed by the week and the class period. For example, class 5.1 is the fifth week and the first class.

An instructor may drop a student at any time during the semester for an indifferent attitude, disruptive behavior, failure to take tests when scheduled 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. An instructor's drop takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop at a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of WF or W through the first 8 weeks. After this period the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar is the official drop date.

Other Related Policies

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: Will be made at the end of every 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 view recorded lectures after reading the assigned material. 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 help your communication skills. My use of the Socratic Method enhances 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. Also, any information in this syllabus is considered as part of classroom notes and may be tested.

Exams will be on D2L and will mostly be objective questions. Test instructions will be provided prior to the exam. Each exam will have specific instructions you should read several days before the exam because not all exams have the same instructions. Generally speaking you will be allowed to use both the front and the back of one 3-inch by 5-inch note card. All other sources of information are prohibited, including the textbook, notes, and cell phones. When taking exams, you cannot move backwards once you leave a page. Ensure you completely answer the question(s) before leaving a page. Once the allocated time period expires, you are required to submit your test responses. Any responses after the time limit expires will not be submitted.

Exams are given starting at 8:00 am Central Standard Time on the scheduled date of the exam. The lesson plans have the targeted dates for exams clearly indicated. Students who have documented conflicts may request a time and date BEFORE the scheduled time but NOT a later time or date. Requests for taking the exam other than the scheduled time will not be granted for your convenience. They are for emergency situations and unavoidable conflicts. The projected dates of the exams are in the lesson plans. It is your responsibility to adjust your schedule and plan to take the exams at the scheduled time and date.

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](#).

**Safety and Security:** The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. This includes online classes. 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](#).

**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.

**Test Policy:** You must take each and every test on the date provided in the lesson plans. 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.

#### Grading Scale:

Letter grades will be given according to the following scale:

- A = 510 – 600
- B = 480 – 509
- C = 390 – 479
- D = 360 – 389
- F = below 360

**Academic Integrity:** With regard to academic honesty, students are referred to the Student Honor Creed of the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog 2024-2025. This catalog is electronic only. It may be found on the MSU website using 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. Sharing or colluding with anyone while taking an exam.
6. Soliciting answers from a fellow student during a test.
7. Using a cellphone or any electronic device 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 (AI) when not explicitly allowed by the instructor.
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. Additionally, I reserve the right to file a lawsuit against you if I have definitive evidence you have copied, disseminated, spread, circulated, shared, or publicized any questions on a test given for credit. Test questions are my work product and sometimes the work product of the authors of the text and you DO NOT have the right to steal and share our work product. Consider yourself warned.

#### Computer Requirements:

This course requires you to have access to a computer (with internet access). It is your responsibility to have (or to have access) to a working computer for this class.

#### 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 one-hundred (100) points may be earned for this assignment. If you are unprepared 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 50% of the points available for the assignment. If you make an excellent presentation, you will earn up to one-hundred (100) 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 100 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 me looking into the computer. 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. The format and details for submission of your video presentation will be provided when the law case presentations are assigned.

### 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. Lesson plans for this class indicate the dates the material will be covered and tested.

#### 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

Final Exam for students with an excused absence for a regularly scheduled test(s).

**The final exam for this class is at 8am Thursday May 13, 2025**