



Course Syllabus: Legal and Ethical Environment of Business

Dillard College of Business Administration
LSBA 3233 Sections 101,102, and Y10
Fall Semester 2026, August 24 to December 11

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher R. Tilker
Office: Dillard Building, Room 294
Office hours:
7:30 AM to 8 AM Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
9:30 AM to 11 AM Monday
9:30 AM to 10 AM Wednesday
11 AM to 11:30 AM Tuesday and Thursday
Office phone: (940) 397-4712
E-mail: kris.tilker@msutexas.edu

Course Description and Prerequisites

The prerequisites for the class are POLS 1333 and POLS 1433. The knowledge obtained in these two university core-required American Government classes is essential for success in this class. The catalog description for this class is: 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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Business Law by Clarkson, Miller, and Cross, 15th edition, Cengage Learning, ISBN 978-0-357-12963-0. Fall 2026 handouts are provided by the professor. Do not use other editions of the textbook or handouts.

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:

1. To have acquired an understanding of the unique vocabulary terms in the law.
2. To understand the relationship between ethics and law.
3. To understand the parallel nature of ethical and moral decision-making and the steps necessary to make objective decisions.
4. To understand the processes of business dispute resolution in the American judicial system and in the international arena.
5. 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.
6. To have improved skills in analyzing problems and arriving at well-reasoned explanations.

Student Handbook

Questions not specifically addressed by this syllabus are governed by the most current student handbook. Refer to: [Student Handbook](#).

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. Refer to: [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely.

The Nexis Uni database will be helpful looking up law cases in this class. Get started with this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Total points earned may vary, based on unforeseen circumstances.

Points Earned	Points
Test 1	110
Test 2	90
Test 3	100
Test 4	100
Test 5	100
Law-Case Presentation	70
Total Points	570

Table 2: Total points for final grade

Grade	Points
A	485
B	456 to 484
C	399 to 455
D	285 to 398
F	Less than 285

Exams

A student must take each and every test on the date and at the 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 to and understood by the student that the policy for all tests in this class is as follows: (1) the student will comply with all test procedures listed in this syllabus and on the coversheet of each exam, 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.

Final Exam

The final exam for all sections of Legal Environment is Tuesday, December 8, from 8 AM to 10:00 AM in Dillard Building Room 336. Most students will not be taking the final exam. See Exams immediately above.

Law-Case Presentation Assignment

Students will be assigned one law case to brief and present during the semester. This includes students permitted to register in the hybrid-online section. The student is required to be physically present in the classroom to present the assigned law case. For students permitted to register in the hybrid online class who reside more than 150 miles from campus, an alternative assignment is available.

A total of seventy (70) points may be earned for this assignment. If a student is unprepared, absent, or does a poor presentation, the student will not receive any points. If the student does not want to make this presentation, they may choose to turn in a written brief two (2) class periods before the date of the assigned law-case presentation, and earn a maximum of 25 (twenty-five) points on this 70-point assignment. If the student makes an excellent presentation, they will earn up to seventy (70) points.

This presentation of the assigned law-case presentation must follow exactly the format in the handout titled "How To Do A Written Law Case Brief." To receive all 70 points, the law-case presentation must be an excellent delivery that communicates the required information clearly. This involves doing more than reading the 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. Students are required to bring a printed copy of their assigned law case on the date assigned for presentation. Writing, analytical, and critical-thinking skills are an essential part of presenting the assigned law case. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare the student for a competitive workforce. While students are graded based on their presentation, the professor reserves the right to collect the written brief prepared for the presentation to investigate the possible use of AI-generated material. AI-generated presentations are not permitted, and students using AI-generated presentations for their assigned law-case presentation will receive a 60-point deduction from their earned grade.

No Extra Credit

Extra credit is not available to correct poor performance on tests and the law-case presentation.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: August 26. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: September 21. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": November 23. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#).

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. The student can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If a student experiences difficulties, they should contact the technicians listed on the D2L website.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings for this course, following the university attendance policy. Attendance is deemed essential for this class. Each student is allowed eight (8) absences for the entire semester. Please be aware that 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 ten (10) minutes of class. If a student has been counted absent and notifies the instructor at the end of class about coming to class late, the 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 will not be 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 November 23, 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.

A student should always contact a classmate following an absence because 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 or 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 the student. A written warning will be deemed completed when emailed to the student's email as listed in the MSU self-service Banner program. 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 eight (8) weeks. After this period, the grade will be an F.

This attendance policy does not apply to the students permitted to take this course as a hybrid online class.

Hybrid Online Computer Requirements and Exams

A few students were granted permission to take this class as a hybrid online class. Taking a hybrid online class requires the student to have access to a computer (with internet access) to complete coursework. It is the student's responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. The hybrid online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. If a student has technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however they should be able to help the student get connected to the online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Students granted permission to take this class as a hybrid online class are required to take scheduled exams on Monday at 9:30 AM to 10:50 AM unless they choose to take the exam in the classroom when the exam is being administered in the face-to-face setting. Students in the hybrid online class whose permanent residence is more than 150 miles from campus, with written permission from the instructor, may make arrangements to take exams with a CLEP testing center. See <https://clep.collegeboard.org/clep-test-center-search>. The student is responsible for scheduling the exam and for all costs associated with administering the exam. The testing-center information must be submitted one week before the date of the scheduled exam. Students are required to show

a current driver's license with their picture before the test will be administered. If the student does not have a current driver's license, they should notify the instructor in order that an alternative picture identification may be considered. 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 the room or continue the exam.

Recording Classes and Taking Pictures

****Recording classes and taking pictures is prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Recordings and pictures, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior written consent. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

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. A student should expect the professor to spur their achievement rather than inflate their self-esteem. A professor does not give grades; students earn grades. Grades are based on performance on scheduled assessments, not on how deserving a student may feel because of external hardships. Priorities are 100% a student's responsibility. There is ample time to be a serious student, enjoy extracurricular activities, and work part-time. However, organizing study time should be a student's highest priority. Cal Newport has written two superior books about this topic: 1. How to Become a Straight A Student and 2. Deep Work. It is strongly recommended that students read both of these books before asking the professor any questions about how to study and learn material for this class.

Class Participation

It is important for students 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 they cannot be applied to solving problems.

Class Preparation

Lesson plans provided with this syllabus clearly indicate the material covered for each class. There will be a significant amount of reading. The professor optimistically expects that all assignments will be read on time by all students. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to come to class well-prepared. It is strongly recommended that this rule of thumb be applied: 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 self-reliance. Preparing case briefs and explaining cases strengthen communication skills. The professor's use of the Socratic Method elevates critical-thinking skills.

Communication with Students

Students are deemed to be notified of issues regarding attendance, academic dishonesty, lowering of grades, and other matters covered in this syllabus when sent to the student's email as listed in the MSU self-service Banner program.

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.

Grade Postings

Test grades will be posted on D2L. Students are expected to keep a separate record of their earned grades and provide them to the instructor in the event of a D2L technology failure.

Email Policy

When emailing the professor, all the information needed to respond should be included in the original email. The class title and class start time should be noted. Email etiquette includes using polite tone, representing oneself professionally,

and writing clearly. Avoid ambiguity by using full sentences and excellent grammar, and by being specific about the question(s) needing to be answered. Multiple back-and-forth asynchronous emails are rarely necessary.

Food and Drink Policy

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

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is strictly prohibited in this class. For this course, AI tools may not be used at any stage of work, including drafting, outlining, revising, or editing. The central learning goals for this course are for students to develop their own thinking, writing, and analytical skills. These capacities are built through the cognitive work of grappling with ideas, drafting and revising one's own prose, and developing one's own analytical voice. Using AI tools to generate text, arguments, or solutions bypasses this essential work and prevents the building of these skills. For this course, "AI" refers to tools such as ChatGPT and other chatbots, as well as AI features embedded in software that generate, rewrite, summarize, or synthesize text. If a student is unsure whether a tool or software is considered generative AI, it should not be used.

Zoom Attendance

If a student has COVID, flu, or another infectious illness, or the possibility exists that they may have COVID, flu, or another infectious illness, they should NOT attend the physical classroom session. Instead, the student should attend class via the Zoom, assuming they 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 the instructor. Students requesting to attend more than one session by Zoom will be required to submit documentation requisitioned by the instructor. All students attending via Zoom should be dressed as if attending class in person. Also, the camera must be on and the student's face visible at all times. If called upon, the student should be prepared to unmute the microphone and speak promptly. The student will not be considered "present and participating" in the class if these instructions are not followed. Students may not attend via Zoom when presenting their assigned law case.

Use of Electronic Devices

Use of cellphones is strictly prohibited with two exceptions. A student may review cellphone texts in class if required by an employer or if they are responsible for a minor who is in childcare or elementary school. The student must notify the

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. If a student needs to send an email or text or make a cellphone call, they may leave the class to do so. They are also expected not to return to the class for the remainder of the period.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The term “academic dishonesty” generally means representing someone else’s work as one’s own and also includes the following prohibitions.

1. Failing to report to the professor any suspicion of cheating on tests.
2. Looking or glancing at another student’s test, quiz, or exam while the test is being administered.
3. Soliciting answers from a student during a test, quiz or exam.
4. Soliciting information about test, quiz, or exam questions from students who have already taken the same test, quiz, or exam.
5. Acting with intent to promote or assist in cheating, including soliciting, encouraging, directing, or aiding attempts of students to cheat before, after, or during a test, quiz, or exam.
6. Copying, disseminating, spreading, circulating, sharing, or publicizing any questions on a test, quiz, or exam.
7. Violation of test, exam, or quiz rules and procedures in this syllabus and as included in tests, exams, or quizzes.
8. Soliciting answers from students during a test, quiz or exam.
9. Using a cellphone, electronic devices, or tools of communication as an aid to find answers while taking a test, quiz, or exam.
10. Submitting or presenting work containing any content generated by artificial intelligence (AI).
11. Submitting or presenting work that takes content from an internet search, another person or entity, or representing content as one’s own work.
12. Acquiring a test, quiz, or exam or other testing material without the express written permission of the professor who authored the test, quiz, or exam.
13. Using any device to record a test, quiz, or exam, including but not limited to, eyeglasses, cellphone, watches, and calculators.
14. Violations of the rules prescribed in the Student Handbook. See Code of Student Conduct: The Rules. [Student Handbook](#).

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.

Lower Grade

Starkly contrasting perspectives are excellent examples for learning. During class, there should be no disrespect shown to anyone. Never give insults in class. In addition to the disciplinary consequences stated in this syllabus, the professor reserves 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:

1. Repeatedly attending class without having completed the assigned reading and written law-case briefs.
2. Using a cellphone during class without express permission from the professor. "During class" is defined as the official time designated by MSU for the class to start and end.
3. Not showing respect for fellow classmates' questions and opinions.
4. Conduct that causes a distraction and makes it difficult to maintain an educational learning environment. Distractions include, but are not limited to, drawing unnecessary attention to oneself and interfering with the attention other students are giving to the professor.
5. A negative, rude, unreasonably argumentative, or inattentive attitude in class.
6. Failure to use good manners. Good manners include, but are not limited to, not using profanity, listening rather than interrupting, and talking only when acknowledged by the professor.
7. Leaving and returning to one's assigned seat during class except in case of an extreme emergency.
8. Violation of use of electronic devices or food and drink policies listed above in this syllabus.
9. Repeated tardiness to class. Repeated means more than 4 times.
10. Violation of test, exam, and quiz rules and procedures, or, violation of the Zoom attendance policy in this syllabus.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the university) within the first twelve (12) class days of a regular semester is eligible for a refund of applicable tuition and fees. The formula to determine the amount of possible refund is 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. Students should contact the Registrar's Office for specific details about refunds.

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, MSU 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 Student Wellness Center, (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](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If a student is experiencing challenges meeting basic needs - such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks, or other life necessities - resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the university has prohibited. The Constitutional Carry Law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#).

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

MSU seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

MSU prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and illicit drugs by employees and students on university property or as a part of any officially sponsored university activity. Policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Regents and MSU relating to the standards of conduct expected of its students and employees in the area of illicit drugs and alcohol are provided in the Student Handbook and in the university's operating policies and procedures.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of the campus is the responsibility of everyone in the community. Everyone has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to the campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding options and strategies that can be used to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight.," which may be electronically accessed via the MSU Police Department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

***Notice:** This syllabus is a guideline for the course. Procedures, assignments, and schedules may change at the discretion of the instructor, based on the pace at which material is covered and on unforeseen class cancellations.

Course Schedule

This is a general plan of material to be covered. Dates for which materials are covered are subject to change based on the pace at which material is presented and unforeseen circumstances.

Class Period	Material Covered	Date
1	Chapter 1 - Introduction, class overview, syllabus review. Public Law v. Private Law and Law v. Equity.	August 25
2	Civil v. Criminal, and Common v. Statutory Law, and do a written brief for the Edwards, Flagiello, and Sun Case in the class handouts.	August 27
3	Chapter 2 - Federal v. State Law. Follow instructions on Page 29 of the class handouts.	September 1
4	Finish Federal v. State Law, begin Ethics in Business, Chapter 3. Brief the Soldano Case on Page 42 of the handouts.	September 3
5	Continue Morals, Ethics, and Decision-Making.	September 8
6	Continue Morals, Ethics, and Decision-Making.	September 10
7	Test 1 - Chapters 1, 2, and 3.	September 15
8	Chapter 4 – Alternative Dispute Resolution.	September 17
9	Chapter 4 – Courts and Jurisdiction.	September 22
10	Chapter 5 – Court Procedures.	September 24
11	Chapter 24 - International Law.	September 29
12	Test 2 - Chapters 4, 5, and 24.	October 1
13	Chapter 50 – Insurance.	October 6
14	Chapter 6 – Introduction to the History of Negligence.	October 8
15	Chapter 6 – Intentional Torts and Negligence. Do BMOC problem on Page 90 of the handouts.	October 13
16	Chapter 6 – Continue Negligence.	October 15
17	Chapter 7 – Strict Liability.	October 20

Class Period	Material Covered	Date
18	Negligence short-answer practice. See handouts on Page 94.	October 22
19	Test 3 – Chapters 6, 7, and 50.	October 27
20	Chapter 11 – Nature and Terminology of Contracts.	October 29
21	Chapter 12 - Offer and Acceptance.	November 3
22	Finish Chapter 12 and begin Chapter 13, Consideration.	November 5
23	Finish Chapter 13.	November 10
24	Test 4 – Chapters 11, 12, and 13.	November 12
25	Chapter 14 – Capacity and Legality.	November 17
26	Chapter 15 – Mistakes, Fraud, and Consent. Assign problems on Page 129 of the handouts.	November 19
27	Chapter 16 – Statute of Frauds.	November 24
28	Thanksgiving Holiday.	November 26
29	Test 5 – Chapters 14, 15, and 16.	December 1
30	Extra day if needed.	December 3
31	Final Exam – Makeup test(s) for students who had excused absence when missing a test.	December 8 8 AM to 10 AM in Dillard 336