

**PLSC 3325**  
**Introduction to Law**  
**Fall 2023**

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This course is designed to provide the student with a background of the American legal system, covering such substantive areas of law as torts, contracts, property, and criminal law.

**Required Texts**

*Introduction to Law and the Legal System*, by Frank A. Schubert, 12th ed. Cengage (2023). You should bring your book to every class.

*One L* by Scott Turow.

**Requirements**

- 1. Exams (40%).** Exams 1 and 2 are worth 20% each. The exams will consist of multiple choice/true-false questions and hypothetical essay questions.
- 2. Book Review (10%).** Students are required to write a book review on the memoir *One L* by Scott Turow. The paper should be approximately 7-8 pages in length (include page numbers in paper), double-spaced, typed with no more than one-inch margins, and in Times New Roman, 12 point font. Do not just summarize the content of the book. Write about how the book portrays law school and legal education (have a thesis), **using extensive examples from the book (citing the specific page number). Even if you are paraphrasing, you should cite the specific page number.** Also include your reaction to the book as a separate section at the end of the paper. **The book review is due on 10/3, at noon**, and must be uploaded to Canvas (pdf only) by that time. If you upload the assignment at 12:01 PM, it is late. All late assignments are penalized at the rate of one grade per 24 hours, including weekends. For example, if you would have earned an A on the assignment and you turn it in one day late, you will receive a A-. I will not accept the assignment more than five (5) days late.

**Note: No variation on the computer/hard drive catastrophe excuse will be accepted. You should keep adequate backups of all written work to prevent such a problem. Google Drive, Dropbox, and SMU Box are free and you can use any of them to store your work.**

3. **Final Exam (20%).** The final exam will consist of multiple choice/true-false questions and hypothetical essay questions. It is not cumulative.
4. **Legal Memo (20%).** Students are required to write a legal memo. Additional instructions will be given via Canvas and in class. **The legal memo is due 11/21, at noon,** and must be uploaded to Canvas (pdf only) by that time. If you upload the assignment at 12:01 PM, it is late. All late assignments are penalized at the rate of one grade per 24 hours, including weekends. For example, if you would have earned an A on the assignment and you turn it in one day late, you will receive a A-. I will not accept the assignment more than five (5) days late.

**Note: No variation on the computer/hard drive catastrophe excuse will be accepted. You should keep adequate backups of all written work to prevent such a problem. Google Drive, Dropbox, and SMU Box are free and you can use any of them to store your work.**

5. **Attendance/Participation (10%).** In light of the nature of the course material and the case-method approach to conducting this class, regular attendance and thoughtful participation are expected of each student throughout the semester. I use a modified Socratic teaching method, which means I randomly call on students to answer questions along with asking students to volunteer. Each student is expected to have read assigned materials **prior** to class.

*Note:* All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned to silent and stowed away for the duration of each class session. Any use of these devices is distracting.

**Make up exams will be given only when the student has notified me prior to the scheduled exam, and upon my acceptance of the reason for the absence.** A student who misses an exam without prior notification and without a satisfactory reason will receive a grade of **zero** for that exam. I will only make exceptions under the most unusual of circumstances. If a make up exam is given, I retain the right to modify substantially both the content and the format of the exam.

### Grading

Exams 1 & 2	40%
<i>One L</i> Book Review	10%
Legal memo	20%
Participation/attendance	10%
Final Exam	20%

Final grades will be computed on the following basis:

93-100% = A	90-92% = A-	87-89% = B+	83-86% = B
80-82% = B-	77-79% = C+	73-76% = C	70-72% = C-
67-69% = D+	63-66% = D	60-62% = D-	<60% = F

In determining your final letter grade for the course, your final numerical grade will be rounded up to the next highest whole number if it is greater than or equal to 0.5. Individual assignments will not be rounded.

### **Course Schedule**

- 8/22 Introduction: “All About Law School.”
- 8/24 Introduction, pp. 1-8; 12-25.
- 8/29 Institutional Sources of American Law, pp. 99-118.
- 8/31 No class: Professor at American Political Science Association meeting**
- 9/5 Institutional Sources of American Law, pp. 118-138.
- 9/7 The Judicial System, pp. 139-157.
- 9/12 The Judicial System, pp. 157-171.
- 9/14 Civil Procedure, pp. 172-189.
- 9/19 Civil Procedure, pp. 190-205.
- 9/21 Exam 1**
- 9/26 Limitations in Obtaining Relief, pp. 206-226.  
Do not read *Chafin v. Chafin*, instead read *DeFunis v. Odegaard* (posted on Canvas).
- 9/28 Limitations in Obtaining Relief, pp. 226-242.
- 10/3 Book Review Due**  
“All About Law School”
- 10/5 Judicial Remedies, pp. 243-257.
- 10/10 No class: Fall Break**
- 10/12 Judicial Remedies, pp. 257-277.
- 10/17 Criminal Law and Procedure, pp. 278-295.
- 10/19 Criminal Law and Procedure, pp. 295-308.

- 10/24 Criminal Law and Procedure, pp. 308-334.  
Do not read *Batchelor v. Cain*.
- 10/26 Exam 2**
- 10/31** Writing a legal memo  
**Legal Memo Assignment Posted**
- 11/2 Contracts, pp. 388-400.
- 11/7 Contracts, pp. 401-419.
- 11/9 Contracts, pp. 419-436.
- 11/14 Torts, pp. 437-455.
- 11/16 Torts, pp. 455-468.  
Do not read *Schmidt v. Gateway Community Fellowship*.
- 11/21 Legal Memo Due**  
Torts, pp. 468-485.
- 11/23 No class: Thanksgiving Holiday**
- 11/28 Property, pp. 486-488; 498-510.
- 11/30 Property, pp. 511-532.
- 12/11 Final Exam: Monday, December 11, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM.**

### **Additional Information**

**Email Etiquette:** First, insert the course title (Introduction to Law) or number (PLSC 3325) into the subject line of your message. Second, start with a greeting. For example: “Hi, Professor Corley...” (Never address a professor as Mr. or Mrs./Ms.) Third, plainly identify yourself and articulate the content of your message clearly. This means you should not use text message speak. Fourth, before emailing me, you should review the syllabus and Canvas. Finally, you should send a thank you email if you have asked a question and received an answer.

**Generative AI is not permitted in this course.** The use of any form of Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, DALL-E) is not permitted in this course. Any violation of these rules will be treated within the SMU Honor Code.

**Values Statement:** As an educator and a human being, I care about your growth and wellbeing. I pledge to foster faculty-student relationships of trust and collaborate with

you in creating a learning experience that upholds values representing the unique identities and basic human rights carried by all students. You can see an elaboration of these values here: [www.smu.edu/values](http://www.smu.edu/values).

## SMU Required Syllabus Statements

### Title IX and Disability Accommodations

Disability Accommodations	Students who need academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <a href="http://smu.edu/DASS">smu.edu/DASS</a> to begin the process. Once they are registered and approved, students then submit a DASS Accommodation Letter through the electronic portal, <i>DASS Link</i> , and then communicate directly with each of their instructors to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, but rather require advance notice in order to implement.
Sexual Harassment	All forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, are violations of SMU’s Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or to receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU’s Title IX Coordinator, at <a href="mailto:accessequity@smu.edu">accessequity@smu.edu</a> or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty or staff of sexual harassment, faculty must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment, including resources available to assist students, please visit <a href="http://smu.edu/sexualharassment">smu.edu/sexualharassment</a> .
Pregnant and Parenting Students	Under Title IX, students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting the Office of Student Advocacy and Support by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

### SMU Requirements

Religious Observance	Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. <a href="#">Click here for a list of holidays.</a>
Medical-Related Absences	To ensure academic continuity and avoid any course penalties, students should follow procedures described by their instructors in order to be provided with appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and exams.
Excused	Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university

Absences for University Extracurricular Activities	extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments that were missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for make-up work with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examinations or other missed assignments. (See <u>Catalog</u> under heading of “Academic Records/Excused Absences.”)
Academic Dishonest	Students are expected to embrace and uphold the <u>SMU Honor Code</u> . Violations of the Honor Code will be acted upon in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the <u>Mustang Student Handbook</u> .

### Student Support

Student Academic Success Programs	Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students who would like support for subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; <a href="https://www.smu.edu/sasp">https://www.smu.edu/sasp</a> . Tutor schedules are available at <a href="http://smu.edu/tutorschedule">smu.edu/tutorschedule</a> .
Caring Community Connections Program	CCC is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. The online referral form can be found at <a href="http://smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc">smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc</a> . After a referral form is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Anyone who is unclear about what steps to take if they have concerns about students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.
Mental Health Resources: Counseling Services & Teletherapy	Throughout the academic year, students may encounter different stressors or go through life experiences which impact their mental health and academic performance. Students who are in distress or have concerns about their mental health can schedule a same-day or next-day appointment to speak with a counselor by calling <a href="#">Counseling Services</a> . Counselors are available at any time, day or night for students in crisis at this number: 214.768.2277 (then select option 2). They will be connected with a counselor immediately. Students seeking on-going counseling should call the same number: 214.768.2277 (then select option 1) during normal business hours to schedule an initial appointment. <u>SMU Teletherapy</u> provides another free option for on-demand counseling and video appointments with a medical professional.

**Note: The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.**