



Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Franco Torres, Esq.
- **Email:** ftorres@wsulaw.edu
- **Office Hours:** Thursdays (1-3P) in person – Virtual by appointment
 - Schedule an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/franco-torres-esq/office-hours>
 - If the available slots are full or you have a conflict with the available times, please contact me by email

Course Information

- **Course:** Torts I
- **Section A:** Thu 10:30AM – 12:20 PM
- **Section C:** Mon 6:30 – 9:20 PM
- **Textbook:** Vetri, Levine, Vogel, Gassama and Suzuki, Tort Law and Practice (6th ed. 2020)

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the principles of tort law. Students will learn about intentional torts, negligence, strict liability, and related defenses. The course emphasizes case analysis, legal reasoning, and the application of tort law principles to real-world scenarios. Students will also hone their legal writing skills.

Course Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for Torts I include both mastery of skills and doctrinal knowledge. Below you will find a list of key skills that will be practiced and developed, and an outline of the areas of doctrinal

coverage. Basic mastery of these skills and a complete understanding of these doctrinal areas is necessary to earn a grade consistent with good standing.

Skills:

- **Issue Spotting:** You will be able to identify the appropriate legal question arising out of a fact pattern.
- **Rule Statement:** You will be able to state an accurate paraphrase of applicable rules, including appropriate legal terms of art.
- **Holdings:** You will be able to develop broad and narrow holdings for all cases.
- **Rule Interpretation and Application:** You will be able to interpret and apply a rule to a hypothetical set of facts, recognizing the different approaches required by different types of rules.
- **Case Synthesis and Application:** You will be able to apply and distinguish cases in relation to a hypothetical set of facts, with appropriate explanation of significance—i.e., the relevance of the similarities and differences to the outcome of the dispute.
- **Making Policy-Based Arguments:** You will be able to identify the public policies of a precedent case or rule, to explain the policy implications of a legal controversy, and to use those policies in support of arguments for particular outcomes of the legal controversies.

Grading Breakdown

- Final Exam: 45%
- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Writing Assignments: 20%
- Class Participation: 5%

Course Policies

- Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. More than three unexcused absences may negatively impact your grade.
- Participation: Active participation in class discussions is encouraged and will be factored into your final grade.
- Academic Integrity: All work submitted must be your own. Any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in serious consequences.
- Accommodations: Students with disabilities who need accommodations should contact the Disability Services office at [Insert Contact Information Here].
- Use of AI Tools: The use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) is permitted for research purposes only. Any direct use of AI-generated content in submitted assignments is prohibited and will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. All work must be your own original thought and writing.

Learning and Reading Assignments

For each class, you will be required to prepare the assigned reading before class. Preparation consists of reading the cases and other materials in the textbook and thinking about the material.

Preparation is essential for you to be able to understand class lectures and participate in class discussion. I encourage you to brief all cases assigned, to highlight key language in the cases, and to make notes to yourself in the margins of the book so that you are better able to follow along with the lectures and discussion.

Quizzes. Quizzes will be administered **online via UWorld** and will consist of **MBE-style multiple-choice questions** based on the topics covered in class. These quizzes are designed to reinforce your understanding of the material and build familiarity with bar exam-style questions.

- **Due Date:** Each quiz is due **by 11:59 PM on Sunday** of the corresponding week.
- **Access:** Quizzes may be completed **anytime before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted** without advance approval.
- **Format:** **Open-book** (textbook and class notes allowed).
- **Attempts:** Each quiz may be taken **only once**.

Quiz scores will count toward your final course grade.

Supplemental Videos. Throughout the syllabus, you will find curated video links—primarily from YouTube—that align with the topics we are covering each week. These videos are not a replacement for the assigned readings, nor are they required for credit. Instead, they are included as supplemental learning tools to support your understanding of core torts concepts and to accommodate different learning styles, especially for students who benefit from visual and auditory reinforcement.

While watching these videos alone will not make you a successful law student, bar exam taker, or attorney, using them in conjunction with the assigned readings and class discussions can help you:

- Reinforce and visualize key doctrinal principles
- See how issues are framed in bar exam prep settings
- Experience concepts through animated explanations, examples, and case illustrations

You are not required to view them, and I will not be tracking whether you do. It's up to you to decide how and when to use these resources as part of your individual study plan. However, I encourage you to experiment with incorporating them into your weekly review to identify what methods work best for you.

Ultimately, your success in this course and beyond will depend on developing consistent, structured study habits that include reading, case analysis, outlining, practice, and feedback. The videos are simply one of many tools available to support that journey.

Class Format. The class will consist of a combination of lecture, Socratic questioning, problem-solving, and small group exercises. I will call on students at random to answer questions about the assigned reading. I expect students to be prepared to answer questions about the cases, including the facts, the issue(s) presented to the court, the rule of law announced by the court, the holding of the case, and the reasoning employed by the court. I also expect students to be prepared to discuss the policy implications of the cases.

Workload Expectation

It is estimated that, on average, the assigned reading and other classroom preparation should require six or more hours outside of class for each class session. This includes reading and briefing assigned cases, reviewing notes, outlining, completing assignments, and preparing for assessments. Consistent preparation is essential for your success in this course and in law school generally.

Western State College of Law Programmatic Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

At the end of their course of study, every student in this class should be able to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

1. Doctrinal Knowledge

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in Torts.

1. Practice Skills

- Students will be able to demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student's chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on individual interests, coursework, and work experiences.

1. Legal Analysis

- Students will be able to apply legal reasoning and analysis to solve problems. This includes:
 - Identifying relevant facts
 - Identifying and stating legal rules
 - Applying rules to facts
 - Reasoning to a conclusion

1. Legal Research

- Students will be able to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to those authorities.

1. Communication

- Students will be able to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a variety of legal audiences and settings.

1. Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency

- Students will be able to demonstrate sensitivity to clients' backgrounds and goals, and to cultural differences, which is particularly important given the diverse population of Southern California.

1. Professionalism

- Students will be able to demonstrate the development of professional skills, including the ability to work collaboratively, to exercise proper professional judgment, and to conduct themselves with civility in all professional contexts.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (1/12 - 1/16): Review & Intro to Negligence Defenses

- Readings
 - Read entire Syllabus
 - Vetri et al., pp. 1-15, 34-49, 56-69, 585-593, 602-612
- Cases
 - *Rudolph v. Arizona B.A.S.S. Fed'n.* (57)
 - *MacPherson v. Buick Motor Co.* (194)
 - *Rowland v. Christian* (217)
 - *Corey v. Havener* (359)
 - *Summers v. Tice* (419)
 - *Palsgraf v. Long Island R.R. Co.* (444)
 - *Hoffman v. Jones* (588)
 - *Bowen v. Cochran* (607)
 - *Li v. Yellow Cab* (*Handout*)
- Assignments
 - None

Week 2 (1/19 – 1/23): Contributory Negligence, Comparative Negligence & Assumption of Risk

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 612-620 (through note C)
- Cases
 - *Murray v. Ramada Inns* (612)
 - *Knight v. Jewett* (*handout*)
 - *Shin v. Ahn* (*handout*)
 - *Walt Disney World Co. v. Goode* (*handout*)
- Assignments

- None
- Section Splits
 - **Section A:**
 - Normal weekly schedule and assignments
 - **Section C:**
 - No class due to holiday. You are still responsible for readings and assignments for this week. We will review assignments and questions about the material to begin class the following week.

Week 3 (1/26 - 1/30): Nuisance & Vicarious Liability

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 782-784 (top), 786-795
- Cases
 - *Prah v. Marette* (787)
 - *Rankin v. FPL Energy* (792)
 - *Friendship Farms v. Parson* (handout)
 - *Kane Furniture Corp. v. Miranda* (handout)
 - *Riley v. Standard Oil* (handout)
- Assignments
 - Writing Assignment #1 – Due 2/7

Week 4 (2/3 – 2/7): Strict Liability

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 819-833
- Cases
 - *Klein v. Pyrodyne* (822)
 - *Toms v. Calvary Assembly of God* (handout)
 - *Siegler v. Kuhlman* (handout)
 - *Turner v. Big Lake Oil* (handout)
- Assignments
 - None

Week 5 (2/10 - 2/14): Products Liability – Foundations

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 194-200, 835-850
- Cases
 - *MacPherson v. Buick Motor Co.* (194)
 - *Escola v. Coca Cola Bottling* (839)

- *Henningsen v. Bloomfield Motors* (handout)
- *Vandermark v. Ford Motor Co.* (handout)
- Assignments

Week 6 (2/17 -2/21): Products Liability – Manufacturing Defects

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 860-890
- Cases
 - *Leichtamer v. AMC* (861)
 - *Valk Manufacturing Co. v. Rangaswamy* (874)
 - *Union Pump v. Allbritton* (handout)
 - *Murray v. Fairbanks Morse* (handout)
- Assignments
 - Writing Assignment #2 – Due 2/27

Week 7 (2/24 - 2/27): Exam Review

- Topics Covered:
 - Negligence
 - Nuisance
 - Vicarious Liability
 - Strict Liability

Week 8 (3/2 - 3/6): MIDTERM EXAM

- **Section A:** 3/5
- **Section C:** 3/2

Week 9 (3/16 - 3/20): Products Liability – Design Defects, Risk Utility & Reasonable Alternatives

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 860-890, 939-949
- Cases
 - *Floyd v. Bic* (870)
 - *Vautour v. Body Masters* (885)
 - *Whitehead v. Toyota* (944)
 - *Parish v. JumpKing* (handout)
- Assignments
 - None

Week 10 (3/23 - 3/27): Products Liability – Warnings

- Readings
 - Vetri et al., pp. 909-924
- Cases
 - *Nowak v. Faberge USA* (909)
 - *Ramirez v. Plough* (917)
 - *Barker v. Lull Engineering* (handout)
 - *Soule v. General Motors* (handout)
- Assignments
 - None

Week 11 (3/30 - 4/3): Defamation

- Cases
 - *New York Times v. Sullivan* (handout)
 - *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.* (handout)
 - *Dun & Bradstreet v. Greenmoss* (handout)
- Videos
- Assignments
 - Writing Assignment #3 – Due 4/10

Week 12 (4/6 - 4/10): Invasion of Privacy – Intrusion & Disclosure

- Cases
 - *Shulman v. Group W Products* (handout)
 - *Lunsford v. Sterlite of Ohio* (handout)
 - *Diaz v. Oakland Tribune* (handout)
- Assignments
 - None

Week 13 (4/13 - 4/17): Invasion of Privacy – False Light & Appropriation / Publicity

- Cases
 - *Godbehere v. Phoenix Newspapers* (handout)
 - *Welling v. Weinfield* (handout)
 - *ETW Corporation v. Jireh Publishing* (handout)
 - *In Re: NCAA Student-Athlete Name & Likeness Licensing Litigation* (handout)
- Assignments
 - Writing Assignment #4 – Due 4/24

Week 14 (4/20 - 4/27): Review

- Topics Covered:
 - Negligence
 - Nuisance
 - Vicarious Liability
 - Strict Liability
 - Products Liability
 - Defamation
 - Invasion of Privacy
- Section Splits
 - **Section A:**
 - Last class is on Thursday 4/23.
 - **Section C:**
 - Last class is on Monday 4/27. This will make up for class session missed in January.

Disability Services and Accommodations

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Library Building, Room 275-B. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Dean Marisa Cianciarulo at mcianciarulo@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."

Summary

This syllabus outlines the course structure, policies, and schedule for Torts I in Fall 2025. It includes important information about the instructor, course content, grading, and expectations for student participation and preparation. Students are encouraged to review this document carefully and refer to it throughout the semester.