



## MRTS 2335 – Mortuary Jurisprudence

Course Syllabus: Spring 2021

---

*"Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed."*

---

**Savannah M. Calhoun, BAAS, FD/EMB**

**Office:** IA 111B

**Phone:** 903.434.8315

**Email:** [scalhoun@ntcc.edu](mailto:scalhoun@ntcc.edu)

**Zoom:** <https://ntcc.zoom.us/my/mscalhounsclassroom>



Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	10:00 AM			10:00 AM		*Link to my virtual office can be found in the
	-			-		
	2:00 PM (CST)			2:00 PM (CST)		
	(On campus & Virtual*)			(On campus & Virtual*)		left-hand navigation of blackboard course
				5:00-7:00 PM (CST) (Virtual*)		

**This syllabus serves as the documentation for all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.**

**\*\*\* Zoom tutoring and office hours available upon request.**

*The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.*

### **Catalog Course Description (include prerequisites):**

Three credit hours. A survey of general principles of mortuary and business law. Emphasis is on ethical practice. Compliance with pre-need and at-need regulatory agencies included.

3 lecture hours.

**Prerequisite(s):** Program Director permission MRTS 1301, MRTS 1330, MRTS 1342, ENGL 2311

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon the completion of this course, the student shall be able to demonstrate the following competencies with a minimum grade of 80%:

1. determine the legal parameters of operating as a funeral service practitioner;
2. employ appropriate principles of business law applicable to funeral home operations;
3. recognize the responsibilities to client-families, the decedent, the public, governmental agencies, and employees;
4. define terminology used in various legal aspects of operating and working in a funeral home;
5. recall duties and responsibilities of funeral service practitioners as prescribed by the State;
6. identify the rights and responsibilities of client-families;
7. explain the rules and requirements of the Federal Trade Commission as they relate to funeral service.

**Evaluation/Grading Policy:** There will be five exams, including the final. Per Funeral Service Program guidelines, you must make an 80% or better on final exams to successfully complete the course.

**Tests/Exams:**

There will be five exams, including the final. Per Funeral Service Program guidelines, you must make an 80% or better on final exams to successfully complete the course.

Exam #1 @ 100 points

Exam #2 @ 100 points

Exam #3 @ 100 points

Exam #4 @ 100 points

Final Exam @ 200 points

Total Exam Points = 600

**Assignments:**

Projects 5 @ 30 = 150 points

Discussion Boards 2 @ 25 = 50 points

Quizlet Assignment 2 @ 25 = 50 points

Quizzes 6 @ 25 = 150 points

Total Assignment Points = 400

Total Course Points = 1000 Points

**Percent**

A 92 – 100

B 85 – 91

C 80 – 84

D 75 -- 79

F 74 & below

**Points**

A 920-1000

B 850-919

C 800-849

D 750-799

F < 749

\*A grade of C or better constitutes a passing grade in the Funeral Service Education program.

**Required Instructional Materials:**

*Funeral Service Law in the United States; A Guide for Funeral Service Students*

Publisher: Hudson Valley Professional Services

ISBN Number: 9780998257167

**Optional Instructional Materials:**

Appropriate readings will be supplied in Blackboard and through independent research.

Need library resources but don't know where to start? Ask a librarian! Research help is available in person

at the Charlie and Helen Hampton Library Reference Desk, by phone at 903-434-8151, or by emailing the

Director of Library Services, Ron Bowden at [rbowden@ntcc.edu](mailto:rbowden@ntcc.edu). The library's website, [www.ntcc.edu/library](http://www.ntcc.edu/library), offers access to over 80 databases (including an eBook collection and a streaming video collection), a citation style guide, tutorials, and a link to their online catalog. The Funeral Service Education's library guide can be accessed by going to <https://libguides.ntcc.edu/c.php?q=634483>.

**Minimum Technology Requirements:**

- Regular (daily) access to high speed internet via computer access
- Respondus Web Monitor (\$15), you will register for this in the "Start Course Here" folder
- Wired Webcam with microphone (for monitored test taking and recording projects)
- Word processing software (Word) and presentation software (Power Point)
- Document scanning capability

**Required Computer Literacy Skills:** Computer access is required in this course. Students must be comfortable using Word, opening and reading Excel documents, Power Point viewing, attaching documents in .DOC and .DOCX format, access and use online programs, use an internet browser, performing database searches for articles, Blackboard, and textbook support websites. Where and when available, automated classroom recording technology will be used to record virtual (Synchronous) activities. Such recordings will only be used to supplement the course(es) in which the recording took place. Please be sure to express concerns regarding synchronous activity recordings to the program director, prior to a virtual activity.

**Course Structure and Overview:** This is a sixteen-week online course where students are required to access graded activities on the Blackboard Learning Management System. A typical class involves general participation by all members in discussions regarding funeral service and procedures being studied. Students are required to check email frequently, complete online homework, discussion forums, projects, and exams as assigned by the instructor. It is very important students keep up with course materials and assignments when issued by the instructor, as this is not a self-paced class. Students are expected to watch instructional videos, read course textbook, and complete online assignments located in the Learning Management System, Blackboard by the due dates.

**SCANS Skills:**

- Basic Skills: reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematical operations, listening, speaking.
- Thinking Skills: creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, visualize, knowing how to learn, reasoning.
- Personal Qualities: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty. Resources: time, money, materials and facilities, human resources.
- Information: acquires, evaluates, organizes, maintains, interprets, and uses computers. Interpersonal: participates in teams, teaches others, serves clients, exercises leadership, negotiates, works with diversity.
- Systems: understands systems, monitors and corrects performance, improves or designs systems.

Technology: works with a variety of technologies.

- Lectures & Discussions: Didactic: Lecture, Power Point Presentations, Discussion, Case Studies, Videos/DVDs, Worksheets, Presentations, Written Assignments, Computer-based Assignments, Tutorials, and Assessments.

**Communications:** \*\*\*This course uses NTCC Student and Faculty email as the official form of communication. BlackBoard Learning System on the NTCC website may also be used in this course. Student emails and phone calls will be answered within 48 hours. Messages sent on Saturday or Sunday may not be answered until Monday. It is recommended that you post course related questions in the discussion area. If you need information related to a test or assignment, plan ahead and submit your questions well ahead of the due date. Your instructor is not online 24 hours per day, so please allow time for response. Emails must be sent from a NTCC student email account or Blackboard, or they will not be answered. Assignments will not be accepted via email. All assignments should be submitted through Blackboard. Blackboard collaborate, virtual sessions, and the discussion boards are areas that should be used for open questions and conversation. Use private email for information you do not wish to share with everyone. Check in frequently and respond to general conversations. Private e-mail should be used only when you want to converse with someone privately. Group e-mail is seen by all and you will be asked to post information, ideas, opinions, and questions publicly. You may also use Blackboard Collaborate (found on the left-hand navigation bar) for study groups. Just post in the discussion board that you want to have a study group with your classmates. Arrange a day and time for you to all meet there and discuss the material.

As part of an effort to help you develop your professional communication skills, I am instituting a (somewhat) formal email etiquette policy. While in the past I have had a certain amount of patience for email messages that are written in an informal style—that is, without much attention to structure, grammar, spelling, and style—I am quite concerned that your future employer(s) and other professional colleagues will be less tolerant. They may think that if you are that inattentive in your writing, you might be just as careless when you are interacting with families as well. (For example, please read [this article](#))

Therefore, when you send me an email, please make every attempt to follow my recommended guidelines for acceptable email etiquette:

- Use a properly descriptive subject line that consists of the course number (“MRTS 2447”) followed by a very brief phrase that summarizes the subject of your message, such as “Homework 1, Problem 2” or “Appointment request.” Please refrain from using short, nonspecific subject lines that have little to do with the actual message (like “hi,” “class,” “Comp Bio,” “python,” “question,” “help,” or just leaving the subject line blank.)
- Start the body of your email off with a proper greeting, such as “Hello Mrs. Calhoun,” or something similar. (As a side benefit, this prevents you from accidentally addressing me by my first name)
- Please make sure you know the difference between they’re, their, and there. Similarly, make sure you know when to use it’s versus its, your versus you’re, and to, two, and too. (There are people who write entire books to convey the wrath and fury they feel when they see examples of such abominations of punctuation and spelling.)
- Please capitalize the first letter in each sentence, not the entire sentence. To encourage you to get in the habit of better email etiquette, my plan is as follows: If I receive an email message from you that does not make a sincere attempt to follow the recommendations outlined above, I may respond with a “canned” (pre-written) message that will politely ask you to rewrite your email and send again. It doesn’t have to be perfect (even I screw up sometimes), but assuming you made a decent

attempt to do the right thing, then I will much more likely to provide an actual, personal, and timely response.

**Institutional/Course Policy:** Strong attendance is imperative to successful learning. Being that this is an online course, attendance is counted through exams, assignments, discussion boards and quizzes. Make sure to log in at least three times a week to check for new materials and announcements. Late work will not be accepted in any Funeral Service course, unless discussed with the instructor of record, prior to submission. If an assignment is turned in late, with the permission of the instructor, 10% of the total possible points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Students will have five days to submit late work, on the fifth day the paper will be docked 50% of the grade, following the 10% per day policy. After the fifth day, late work will no longer be accepted. It is the goal of the funeral service faculty to have all grades and feedback returned to students within one week of the assignment due date. On occasion certain types of assignments (i.e. projects and essays) may take longer to grade and return. Your instructor will inform you when to expect a delay in returned grades. The CURRENT AVERAGE posted in the Blackboard course site is a calculated grade that represents your current course grade average based on the work you have turned in. It will not calculate correctly if you have missed assignments that have not been filled in with a zero.

Attendance is crucial due to the nature of this course. Success in this course is dependent on your active participation and engagement throughout the course. As such, students are required to complete all assignments by the due date, and to actively participate in class discussions.

Additionally, students are expected to:

- Log on at least three times a week – on different days in order to completely weekly assignments, assessments, discussions and/or other weekly deliverables as directed by the instructor and outlined in the syllabus;
- Participate in the weekly threaded discussions, this means that, in addition to posting a response to the thread topic presented, students are expected to respond to each other and comment and questions from the instructor and/or other students;
- Check NTCC's student email regularly, as this is the primary method of communication in the Funeral Service program.

\*\* Students enrolled in Funeral Service courses which include external learning experiences (Internships) are required to comply with the program dress code. A copy of this dress code can be found in the documents section in your Student Portfolio. It is suggested (and in some cases required) by the Funeral Service program that students purchase personal protective equipment for courses in which exposure to biohazards exist. Please refer to the Funeral Service Student Handbook for specific policies.

For students in this course who may have a criminal background, please be advised that the background could keep you from being licensed by the state in which you plan to practice. If you have a question about your background and licensure, please speak with your faculty member or the department chair. You also have the right to request a criminal history evaluation letter from the applicable licensing agency.

**Alternate Operations During Campus Closure and/or Alternate Course Delivery Requirements:**

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Northeast Texas Community College to move to altered operations. During this time, Northeast Texas Community College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to, online through the Blackboard Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor NTCC's website (<http://www.ntcc.edu/>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely,

Blackboard for each class for course-specific communication, and NTCC email for important general information. Additionally, there may be instances where a course may not be able to be continued in the same delivery format as it originates (face-to-face, fully online, live remote, or hybrid). Should this be the case, every effort will be made to continue instruction in an alternative delivery format. Students will be informed of any changes of this nature through email messaging and/or the Blackboard course site.

**NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement:**

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach using their intellect and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies stated in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

**ADA Statement:**

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special populations page on the NTCC website. <https://www.ntcc.edu/student-services/special-populations>

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

**SEE COURSE CALENDAR ON NEXT PAGE**

## Instructional Sequence

*This is a “flexible” guideline that is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion*

Class Week	Month	Date	Readings	Topic	Notes
1	January	19-25	Chapters 1-2	<b>Funeral Service Law</b>	<b>Discussion Board</b> 25 Points  <b>Respondus Quiz</b> 25 Points
2	Jan-Feb	26-1	Chapters 3-4	<b>Liability Exposures</b>	<b>Quiz #1</b> 25 Points
3	February	2-8	Chapters 5-6	<b>Funeral Establishments</b>	<b>Quizlet Assignment</b> 25 points  <b>Quiz #2</b> 25 points
4	February	9-15		<b>Business Law Exam I</b>	<b>Exam I</b> 100 Points <b>Start Contract Project</b> <b>Due Week 7</b>
5	February	16-22	Chapters 7-8	<b>Prefunded Preneeds</b>	<b>Quiz III</b> 25 points  <b>Preneed Planning Project</b> 30 points
6	Feb-Mar	23-1	Chapters 9-10	<b>Methods of Final Disposition</b>	<b>Discussion Board</b> 25 points  <b>Quiz #4</b> 25 points

7	March	2-8	Chapters 11-12	<b>Estates and Probate Proceedings</b>	<b>Contract Project Due</b> 30 points <b>Quizlet Assignment</b> 25 points
8	March	9-14	Chapters 13-14	<b>State Laws, Rules, and Regulations</b>	<b>Start State Law Project</b> Due week 9
<b>SPRING BREAK</b> <b>March 15-19th</b>					
9	March	23-29	Chapters 15-16	<b>Federal Trade Commission &amp; the Funeral Rule</b>	<b>State Law Project Due</b> 30 points <b>Start GPL Elements Project</b> Due week 10
10	Mar-Apr	30-5	Chapters 17-18	<b>Federal Trade Commission &amp; the Funeral Rule</b>	<b>GPL Elements Project Due</b> 30 points <b>Quiz #5</b> 25 points
11	April	6-12		<b>Exam II</b>	<b>Exam II</b> 100 Points
<b>April 8th – Last day to withdraw with a “W”</b>					
12	April	13-19			<b>Quiz #6</b> 25 points

13	April	20-26	Chapters 19-20	<b>Other Federal Laws</b>	<b>Glossary Exam</b> 100 points  <b><i>Start Mortuary Law Research Project</i></b> <i>Due week 15</i>
14	Apr-May	27-3			<b>Exam III</b> 100 points
15	May	4-10			<b>Mortuary Law Research Project Due</b> 30 points
16	May	11-13		<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam</b> 200 points

BB - BlackBoard

FSL-Funeral Service Law In the United States A Guide for Funeral Service Students