



About this Course

Torts
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Konomark
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Slides

- I don't always use slides, but when I do ...
- My practice is to read every word on every slide.
- And I will post all slides with text content to the class website after the class in which they are used.
- Therefore, I strongly urge you not to try to read the slides in class. Just listen. Then, look at the slides later to review things.

Class Website

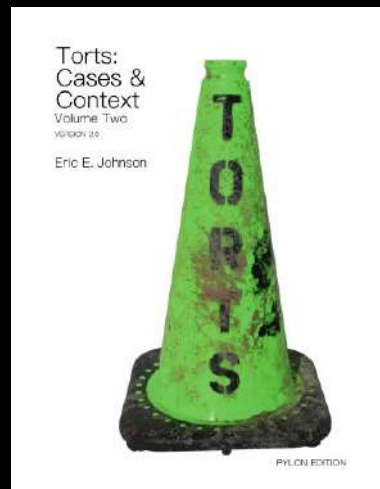
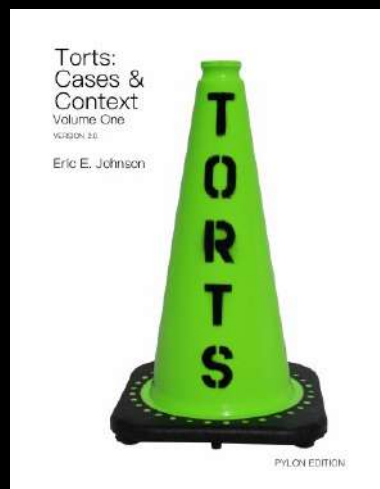
- The home for information about the course is the course website.
 - It is in the open and not password-protected.
http://www.ericejohnson.com/courses/torts_23/
- It has the chart of assignments and will have the syllabus. It's where I'll post slideshows, handouts, info about the exam, links to supplemental reading, etc.
- I have no plans to use Canvas. If that changes, I'll let you know by e-mail or by instruction on the chart of assignments.

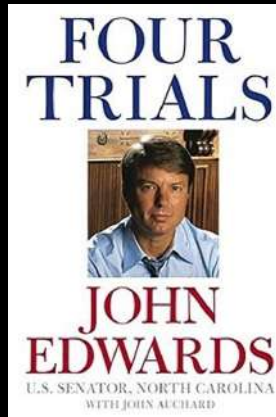
Old slides and other stuff on the web

- The following information is not secret ...
- This is my 15th year teaching Torts!
- I adjust things every year, but most of the slides, handouts, exercises, etc. that I'll be using is stuff I've used in years past.
- Those prior-year materials are findable, because I keep all my old course pages up on the web as an archive.
- So if you really want, for instance, to see slides before I post them – or if you want to see what could be ahead, you can look through my old course webpages.
- That's why I leave that stuff up – so that everyone has access to it if they want it.
- But I try really hard to be transparent and clear and straightforward and organized with information you need for this semester, putting that on this semester's webpage. So I don't recommend digging around through the archives. But you can if you want; it's not doing anything sneaky.

Books

- Torts: Cases & Context, Volume One (Pylon Edition 2.0)
- Torts: Cases & Context, Volume Two (Pylon Edition 2.0)
- Four Trials, John Edwards





Syllabus

- Read the syllabus!
- It will be posted on the class website.
- It is my guide to what I've committed to, how I grade, and how I handle any problems.
- You will be assumed to be on notice for everything in it.
- It is your guide to how to do well in class.
- It is long, but reading it is worth it.

Some key classroom rules

- No eating.
- No distracting content on screens (incl. video and animated gifs).
- No electronic communications with others in class.
- No audio or video recording.
- Read the syllabus for all classroom rules.

Grading

- Read the syllabus, it will provide information about grading in detail! What follows are highlights.
- Regular letter grades will be given for this course (A+, A, A-, B+, etc.).
- Based mostly on a final exam
- Also can affect your course grade:
 - things set out in the syllabus, including:
 - attendance
 - classroom conduct (e.g., violating class rules)
 - academic misconduct

Attendance Policy

I have a very lengthy, detailed attendance policy. It's in the syllabus.

Here's why it's lengthy and detailed:

- I'm required to require attendance, and I'm required to have an attendance policy.
- If I'm going to have an attendance policy, then I believe in enforcing it. Otherwise, the policy is an unjust tax on people who obey it.
- If I'm going to meaningfully enforce the attendance policy, then that means grading penalties and, in a sufficiently serious case, an F.
- And that means it's very important to have a clear, detailed, unambiguous policy that anticipates contingencies.
- Plus, grade penalties means situations where students have a strong incentive to dispute the penalty, which makes specificity and prior notice very useful.

At any rate, it's the result of a lot of work (and experience) in trying to make it both enforceable and fair.

Attendance Policy

- **Read the whole thing in the syllabus!**
- **Especially if you are going to have some absences!**
- **What follows are only highlights ...**

Attendance Policy

- Arriving late is half an absence.
- 12 absences is a step-down in grade.
- 13 absences is another step-down.
- 14 absences is another step-down.
- 15 absences is an F for the course or administrative withdrawal.
- If you hit 15 absences, you must immediately give me written notice according to the syllabus.

Attendance Policy

- Never ask me how many absences you've accumulated. You need to keep track yourself.
- If you take at least some notes in class, and you date your notes, you'll always know.
- Look. I don't add up attendance on a day-by-day basis. The only time I do it is after the semester when I'm doing grades. Then I make sure no one has gone over the incredibly generous number of absences I allow before doing grading deductions.
- Bottom line, it's just not reasonable to ask me to calculate how many absences you have during the semester. So I won't do it. Sorry if that sounds harsh.
- I really want to spend time outside of class on my students! Discussing students' questions, talking about legal careers, looking over your résumé, chit chatting about your hometown ...
- But calculating your interim attendance record? That's just not quality time.

Attendance Policy

- If you claim special extenuating circumstances and/or excuse for religious observance, you must file an End-of-Semester Attendance Mitigation Statement. The syllabus explains.
- It must be filed not earlier than the last day of class, nor later than the day after the last scheduled day of final exams for OU Law.
- Take a moment now to calendar this.

**Law school
pep talk**

Law school pep talk (1/3)

- The beginning of law school is stressful for everyone, and it's difficult for everyone, because it's a whole new way of thinking, analyzing, reading, etc.
- It totally gets better!
- At some point you will “get it”—and then approaching new material will be much, much easier! But give it time.
- I will do my best to explain things and not “hide the ball.”
- But if you are focused laser-like on learning “the answer” and getting someone to tell you what “the law” is so you can memorize it, your aim is off.

Law school pep talk (2/3)

- The fact is, learning “the law” is only part of what you are expected to learn here. Much more important is learning how to ask questions, how to construct arguments, how to analyze other people's arguments, how to read, how to predict what a court or jury will do when confronted with something new, how to counsel a client when the law and the facts are uncertain, and so on.
- You have to give that time, and you have to be open to learning where things are, as someone else put it, “foggy, fluid, conflicted, and confused.”

Law school pep talk (3/3)

- Look around. These people are not your competition. They are your future support and referral network.
- You will never have another opportunity to make so many friendships with so many people who might be in a position to help you in the future.
- So be kind, be generous, don't be a %\$#€!£.

Some suggestions ...

- Think about coming by office hours at least once during the semester. You don't need to have a question about the material! You can just drop by to say hi, chit chat for a bit.
- One thing I like doing is looking at students' résumés. I don't know that my opinions are better than other people's, but I'm happy to be another set of eyes. Besides, it's a great way to get to know people.
- If you want me to look at your résumé, come by with two printed-out copies, one of which I can make marks on.