

Mock Trial

(PSCI 4v66)

Course Syllabus

The University of Texas at Dallas – Spring 2015

Class Time: Wednesday, 7:00 – 10:00 pm,

Team meeting: additional 2 hr individual team meeting TBA

Classroom: FO2.702 & FO2.608 (Champagne Courtroom)

Prerequisites: Mock Trial (previous-fall semester)

Credit: (1-6 semester hours) Course audit is available per university policy and upon request and by discretion of the professor

Professor Contact Information

Tony A. Seagroves, J.D.

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Office location: FO 2.202D

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

Mock Trial examines a hypothetical case. Students will learn the Rules of Evidence and will simulate an actual trial with attorneys and witnesses. Students compete with Mock Trial teams from other universities at regional and national tournaments. Instructor consent required. May be repeated for credit (6 hours maximum). (3-0) Y

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students should expect to be able to:

- a. use raw case materials (affidavits, statutory and case law, reports and other evidence) to develop case theories and arguments for both the plaintiff and defendant
 - b. employ the rules of evidence in arguing a hypothetical case
 - c. develop testimony for a witness(s) and elicit/deliver that testimony in a trial setting
 - d. explain basic elements of American law regarding the subject matter of the hypothetical case at hand
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Required Textbooks and Materials

AMTA case for 2014-2015 and all official AMTA rules.

- Prepare a rules binder for yourself by going to www.collegemocktrial.org.
 - Click on AMTA Rules and Policies
 - print out the Midlands Rules of Evidence.
 - keep a copy of these rules in a three-ring binder to read and study.
 - The case packet will be provided by on E-learning.
 - You will also need to print this out and keep it in your binder.
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Assignments & Academic Calendar

Students will develop their legal arguments during class sessions and hone their skills at appellate argument by scrimmaging against one another and receiving feedback on their arguments' content and style. Students must be prepared to present arguments for every class period. Students will be expected to be off-book (no notes except for an outline) for their arguments by the October 20, 2014 class period. Instructor reserves the right to include pop quizzes on the case record and precedents over the course of the semester, as well as a short writing assignment, if students are not demonstrating sufficient engagement with the material.

We will use class periods after the regional tournament to prepare teams that qualified for the national tournament, and to explore current issues before the Supreme Court and review the briefs and oral arguments used to persuade the Court.

Evaluation and Grading:

Grades in this course is based on participation, preparation and performance. Specifically:

- a. Class participation – 25%
- b. Performance in tournament – 25%
- c. Peer evaluations - Members of your class team will evaluate your contribution at the end of the semester - 20%
- d. Opening statement exercise– content and delivery – 15%
- e. Written direct/response with trial partner – 15%
- f. SPECIAL PARTICIPATION – 5% - recruit a qualified judge for UTD Regional Tournament
- g. Bonus: Visit court/observe actual trial – 10%

Grading is subjective. You must come prepared to participate in class, individual team meetings, and at tournament.

- Attendance is **mandatory**. You will lose ½ of a letter grade with every unexcused absence from any class or team meeting. This applies to the entire semester.
- Travel is mandatory (absent an extreme justifiable circumstance). Failing to attend a scheduled tournament will result in a **failing grade** for the **entire class**. It is your responsibility to ensure tournament travel does not conflict with your obligations outside of this class.
- The attire for tournament is **Professional**.

Course & Instructor Policies

- No electronics use allowed in class without prior permission (laptop, cell phone, etc.)
- The University will pay your travel expenses and reasonable meal costs to attend tournaments.
- The Buddy system is in effect in class and at all tournaments.
- All students are expected to answer instructor emails in a timely fashion. Failure to check and respond to instructor emails will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
- I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.

Additional Rules and Policies

Please see <http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/> for information on field trip policies, student conduct and discipline and email use.