

Mock Trial

([PSCI 4v66](#))

Course Syllabus

The University of Texas at Dallas – Spring 2016

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

Team meeting: additional 2 hr. individual team meeting TBA in the Pre-Law conference room: FO 2.202

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, upon request, and by discretion of the professor.

Professor Contact Information

Tony A. Seagroves, J.D.

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Office: 972.883.6799

Cell: 972-897-0391

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:

Text: “A Student’s Guide to Trial Objections” by Charles B. Gibbons (any Edition)

AMTA case for 2015-2016 and all official AMTA rules. Print all and keep organized in a three ring trial binder

- AMTA rules www.collegemocktrial.org. (Click on AMTA Rules and Policies)
 - Midlands Rules of Evidence.
 - The case packet--on E-learning.
 - This syllabus.
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Assignments & Academic Calendar

Students will develop their legal arguments during class sessions and hone their skills by scrimmaging against one another and receiving feedback on their content and style. Students must be prepared to present arguments for every class period

and be off-book (no notes except for an outline) for their arguments by the first competition—January 16, 2016. 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 tournaments to prepare teams that qualified for the national tournament. The semester ends when there are no tournaments remaining for any team.

Evaluation and Grading:

Grades in this course are 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. Written direct/response with trial partner – 15%
- e. Trial Binder- 15%
- f. SPECIAL PARTICIPATION – 5% - recruit a qualified judge for UTD Regional Tournament
- g. Bonus: Visit court/observe actual trial – 10% (proof must be in a section of your trial binder)

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

Attendance--is **mandatory** (regardless if you are auditing the course)

You will lose ½ of a letter grade with every unexcused absence from any class or team meeting. If auditing, two unexcused absences are grounds for removal from the course. This applies to the entire semester. Email tony.seagroves@utdallas.edu prior to any absence to request an excused absence (not guaranteed).

- Examples of an excused absence include--but are not limited to: (think **extreme** circumstances)
 - I am in the hospital
 - I am in jail
 - I am at a funeral (not my own)
 - I am on active duty in the military
- Proof of absence is required upon the beginning of our next scheduled meeting
- 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. If auditing—missing a tournament is grounds for removal from the course.
- The attire for tournament is **Professional**.

Course & Instructor Policies

- No electronics use allowed in class without prior permission (laptop, cell phone, etc.)
- All travel forms must be submitted within 48 hrs of initial request
- In order to travel to a tournament, you must email a commitment to travel to: tony.seagroves@utdallas.edu within 48 hrs of any request or notice of travel.
- 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.
- The UT Dallas Mock Trial Manual is a supplement to this syllabus

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.