

Mock Trial
([PSCI 4V66.501](#) 84220)
Course Syllabus

The University of Texas at Dallas – **Fall 2020**

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

Team meeting: additional 2 hr. individual team meeting TBA (Virtual--via E-Learning's Blackboard Collaborate)

Classroom: Virtual--via Blackboard Collaborate

Prerequisites: Interview with Coach Tony Seagroves. Must have a combined GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Credit: (2 semester hours) Course audit is available per university policy, upon request, and by discretion of the instructor.

Instructor Contact Information

Tony A. Seagroves, Esq. tony.seagroves@utdallas.edu

Office: 972.883.6799

Cell: 972-897-0391

Office location: **FO2.202C**

Office hours: by appointment (virtual)

Course Description

Mock Trial examines a hypothetical case. Students will learn the Rules of Evidence and will simulate an actual trial as attorneys and/or 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

Course Modality and Expectations

| | |
|---|--|
| Instructional Mode | REMOTE: Please see this link for a full description: https://www.utdallas.edu/fall-2020/fall-2020-registration-information/ |
| Course Platform | Blackboard Collaborate via the course link in E-learning |
| Expectations | Students are expected to keep pace with the course and work with their teams, captains, and partners in order to compete in tournaments. |
| Asynchronous Learning Guidelines | Students are expected to notify the Coach if the students opt to choose asynchronous learning. Students are still required to meet with their teams, captains, and partners in order to qualify to compete at each tournament. Students will be quizzed weekly on the materials covered in class and/or team meetings at the discretion of the Coach. Class work, practice, and participation are still a factor in each student's grade for the semester. Please review this link to better understand the asynchronous option. https://www.utdallas.edu/fall-2020/asynchronous-access-for-fall-2020/ |

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students should expect to be able to:

- 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
- Employ the rules of evidence in arguing a hypothetical court case
- Develop testimony for a witness(s) and elicit/deliver that testimony in a trial setting
- Explain basic elements of American law regarding the subject matter of the hypothetical case at hand

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Text: “A Student’s Guide to Trial Objections” by Charles B. Gibbons ISBN: 9781642422863 (any previous edition acceptable)

AMTA case for 2020-2021 and all official AMTA rules. Print all and keep organized in a Microsoft OneNote virtual binder

- AMTA rules www.collegemocktrial.org. (Click on AMTA Rules and Policies)
 - Midlands Rules of Evidence.
 - The case packet--on E-learning (when released by AMTA)
 - This syllabus (printed copy in the front of the Trial Binder)
 - UT Dallas Mock Trial manual (provided by UT Dallas) (electronic copy)
-

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—(TBA). 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. Students must be prepared to be called on during each class. Team members are expected to meet outside of class to practice at least one hour per week—on their own.

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% (via--Microsoft OneNote)
- f. Bonus: Visit court/observe actual trial – 10% (proof must be in a “bonus” section of your trial binder)

Grading is based on professional opinion. You must come prepared to participate in class, individual team meetings, and at tournament.

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

Students who choose to attend under the asynchronous provision will still need to attend classes and/or group meetings within the week of the classes original time in order to stay on pace with the course.

You will lose ½ of a letter grade with every unexcused absence (or failure to review material asynchronously) 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) or to opt for the asynchronous study provision as outlined by the university.

- 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
- Tournament attendance is mandatory (absent an **extreme** justifiable circumstance). You failing to attend a scheduled tournament will result in you **receiving a failing grade** for the **course**. It is your

responsibility to ensure the tournament schedule 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**.

Class Participation

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The instructor may record meetings of this course. Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage.

Course Access and Navigation

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the [eLearning](#) website.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The [eLearning Support Center](#) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Course & Instructor Policies

- No electronics (other than your computer) are allowed in class without prior permission (cell phone, etc.)
- All travel forms must be submitted within 48 hrs of initial request (when actually traveling)
- 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. (when actually traveling)
- The University will pay your travel expenses and **reasonable** meal costs to attend tournaments. (when actually traveling)
- The Buddy system is in effect in class and at all tournaments. (when actually traveling)
- 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 and team dynamics 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, as well as email use.

COVID-19 Guidelines and Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's COVID-19 resources for students and instructors of record.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student Accessibility, and many others. Please see the [eLearning Current Students](#) webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online [eLearning Help Desk](#). The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please go to [Academic Support Resources](#) webpage for these policies.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to [UT Dallas Syllabus Policies](#) webpage for these policies.

*Instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester, as necessary, for the betterment of the program.