

## ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH: APPELLATE ADVOCACY LAW 5150 – 19029

### COURSE INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Rob Brownell, [rbbrowne@central.uh.edu](mailto:rbbrowne@central.uh.edu)

**Office Hours:** [By appointment](#)

**Semester:** Spring Intersession 2026

**Location:** Room 221

**Dates:** 1/12 - 1/16

**Time:** 9:30a - 12p

**Instructional Mode:** Face-to-Face

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a specialized course on legal research methods as they pertain to appellate advocacy. It will cover fundamental legal research topics and resources (issue analysis, secondary sources, statutes, cases, etc.) within the context of appellate work. It will also cover topics and resources that are especially useful to the practice of appellate advocacy, such as finding and using:

- court rules, filings, and resources;
- practice books, forms, and checklists;
- dockets; and
- legislative history.

### COURSE PREREQUISITES

None

### COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

No required texts. All necessary materials will be posted on Canvas.

**Note on electronic materials:** In-class exercises will require each student to have their own computer that can connect to the law school's wireless network. Please activate and memorize/save all Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg passwords. If you do not have a computer, please let me know so I can help.

### USE OF CANVAS

This course will use Canvas as the primary location for assignments, documents, and out-of-class communication.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Design a successful research strategy, including selecting appropriate sources, creating effective searches, and refining your strategy when needed
- Critically select and efficiently locate the most appropriate sources for a research problem, considering time, cost, and availability of resources
- Evaluate the reliability of information, including its authority, credibility, currency, and authenticity
- Confirm and validate your research results

## **GRADING**

Course grades are determined by performance on the following:

- Homework           40%
- Final Assignment   30%
- Participation\*       20%
- Reflections         10%

\* This is an experiential course intended to help you become practice ready. As such, participation and practice are critical elements of success in this course. Examples of class participation include asking/answering questions, meeting with the instructor during office hours or by appointment, participating fully during in-class exercises, and completing any pre- or post-class exercises on time.

## **FINAL ASSIGNMENT**

The format of the final assignment is a take-home, open note research assignment that will assess your mastery of the skills you've developed through the exercises and materials covered throughout the course. We will discuss this in greater detail, in class.

## **ATTENDANCE**

UHLC requires students to attend 80% of classes to take the final exam. However, given the pacing of the class and how the strategies we'll cover build on each other, missing even a single class will set you behind. I would not recommend missing any classes.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The software technology known as artificial intelligence has recently expanded its capability to generate text (AI Generated Text). Examples of the technology include what are known as "generative" large language models (LLMs), and a specific

implementation what is well known in the general public is ChatGPT. These systems can generate text in response to prompts and/or input of other text/documents/code/images. The output, the AI Generated Text, appears to have human mimicking “intelligence” and is thus potentially usable as a substitute for written work product one might generate themselves. AI Generated Text can include computer code or programs as well as human language content.

Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to not prompt, generate, obtain, read, or use any AI Generated Text in relation to any activity or assessment in this course. This applies to AI Generated Text from yourself or others. This pledge includes that your assessment work product in the course is without any contribution from AI Generated Text. This specifically extends to the plagiarism policy and unauthorized aid/materials parts of the Honor Code: AI Generated Text will be treated as from another/other in applying the plagiarism policy to this course. The term “assessment” means any work product generated for this course that is submitted to the instructor or presented in a class session, regardless of whether it is graded content or not. Assessments include mid-terms and final exams. AI Generated Text may not be used in the development or drafting of any assessments created by you in a non-proctored environment, such as a “take home” final examination unless specified as an exception below. The parts of the Honor Code that refer to unauthorized materials or aid are specifically prohibited from any use of AI Generated Text in this course unless specified as an exception below.

- You may generate and use AI-Generated Work Product for class preparation, although you must disclose the full extent of that use if your instructor asks. You may generate and use AI-Generated Work Product for study supplements to aid with general understanding of course content. This could take different forms that include creating examples or explanations of a concept, generation of diagrams and flow charts, “gamification” of course content, flash cards for study, or sample questions and answers.
- You may generate and use AI-Generated Work Product for an outline that summarizes the course content.
- You may use AI-Generated Work Product to check your originally drafted text for misspellings, grammar and punctuation errors, strength and clarity of prose, verbosity, effective transitional language and thesis sentences, word choice, excessive passive voice, and like things.
- You may use AI-Generated Work Product for the purpose of language translation.
- **You may use AI-Generated Work Product when expressly indicated by me, Prof. Rob Brownell.**

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON & UHLC REQUIRED LANGUAGE

### **Honor Code:**

The [UHLC Honor Code](#) applies to all aspects of this course. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and for complying with the Honor Code. Please inquire if you have any questions regarding how the Honor Code's provisions apply to specific activities or situations related to this course. Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be a pledge by you under the Honor Code to comply with the Honor Code in relation to this course and to comply with the instructions in the course syllabus.

### **Mental Health and Wellness Resources:**

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including CoogsCARE and the UH App. [UH Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit [uh.edu/caps](http://uh.edu/caps), call 713-743-5454, or visit a Let's Talk location in-person or virtually. [Let's Talk](#) are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

Need Support Now? - If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support, 24/7, at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

[The Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program \("TLAP"\)](#) also supports law students dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health problems. You can reach TLAP at any time at 1.800.343.8527. TLAP's website links to sources about mental health that may be of interest to law students.

### **Title IX/Sexual Misconduct:**

Per the [UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the [Title IX website](#).

**Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids:**

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center \(Dart Center\)](#) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations.

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

The [Center for Student Advocacy and Community \(CSAC\)](#) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a "home away from home" and serves as a resource hub to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our Cougar Cupboard, all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1-on-1 appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The Cougar Closet is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar community come closer together. [Visit the CSAC homepage](#) or follow us on Instagram: @uh\_CSAC and @uhcupbrd. YOU belong here.

**Women and Gender Resource Center:**

The mission of the [WGRC](#) is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

**Recording of Class:**

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center. If you have an accommodation to record class related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

**Resources for Online Learning:**

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our Power-On website (<https://uh.edu/power-on/learning/>). Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, Blackboard, and Canvas; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact [UHOnline@uh.edu](mailto:UHOnline@uh.edu).

**UH Email:**

Please check and use your Cougarnet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the Cougarnet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your Cougarnet email, login to your Microsoft 365 account with your Cougarnet credentials. Visit University Information Technology (UIT) for instructions on how to connect your Cougarnet e-mail on a mobile device.

**Webcams:**

Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on (state when webcams are required to be on and the academic basis for requiring them to be on). (Example: Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.)

**Security Escorts and Cougar Ride:**

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The security escort service is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety, please call 713-743-3333. Arrangements may be made for special needs.

Parking and Transportation Services also offers a late-night, on-demand shuttle service called “Cougar Ride” that provides rides to and from all on-campus shuttle stops, as well as the MD Anderson Library, Cougar Village/Moody Towers and the UH Technology Bridge. Rides can be requested through the UH Go app. Days and hours of operation can be found at <https://uh.edu/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

**Syllabus Changes:**

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Canvas, direct email, or during class.