

COLLOQUIUM (5376/20696) SPRING 2026

PROFESSOR LONNY HOFFMAN

Course satisfies UHLC's experiential course requirement. If you do not need the experiential credit, the course can be taken pass-fail

Mode of instruction: face-to-face

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Colloquium is an attempt to create a cooperative scholarly enterprise in which students and faculty from other schools work collaboratively. Each week, the invited faculty speaker presents a work in progress to the class. Prior to class, students read the paper and come prepared to discuss and critique it. We meet on Mondays from 12:00-2:00 pm and serve a catered lunch to all participants. (I will ask you at the start of the semester for any dietary restrictions/preferences.) Along with the students enrolled in the class, the audience will also include UHLC faculty who attend the weekly talks.

For Spring 2026, we have a very special lineup of speakers: all are Deans at other law schools. The topics each week will cover a wide range of different subject matter. See the chart at the bottom of this course description for more details about the speakers and their topics.

As for learning outcomes, the course teaches skills in legal analysis, reasoning, and legal communication by deepening our ability to understand, identify, and engage with the kind of policy arguments that many lawyers are asked to take on. In doing so, students can more fully develop themselves professionally through the practice of forming and offering well-informed opinions, both descriptively and prescriptively.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING

Weekly submissions. Each week, students will submit two or three questions or issues that the paper for the week raises. The questions/issues are things that you might ask or bring up when the speaker is here. These short submissions are meant to show me that (1) you've read the paper carefully and (2) are ready to engage in the discussion when the speaker is here (though you aren't required to read your question/comment during class). These weekly submissions are due prior to the start of class each week. They are worth, collectively, 30% of the final class grade.

Class Engagement. In addition, 20% of your final grade will be based on class engagement. Although this is more commonly referred to as class participation, I believe engagement is a better term because it is meant to be broader than rewarding students for speaking in class. Examples of what qualifies as constructive class engagement include constructive contributions to the class discussion on Mondays and/or participating in office hours/meetings with me to discuss the course material. My expectation is that for all or nearly all students, class engagement can only enhance a grade, but it is possible that I could assess your class engagement poorly if, for instance, you

missed more than the max 20% of classes that UHLC (and this syllabus) permit you to miss.

Final Exam. The remaining 50% of the grade will be based on an in-class, open book final exam. The exam will consist of between eight to ten questions that I will craft based on the weekly discussions. Students will choose to write on three of the questions. The final exam will be graded anonymously. Although I do not have prior final exams for this class to show you, in the first few weeks of the semester I will offer a few examples of the types of questions I expect to include on the final and will do my best to communicate my expectations about student answers.

MORE ABOUT CLASS ENGAGEMENT ON MONDAYS

One of my favorite things about this class is the dialogue among the presenter, enrolled students, my faculty colleagues, and others who attend the talk. The dynamic is very positive and quite unlike what happens in most law school classrooms. Very often in law school, it seems to me, we say something to this effect: *We really want you to think and act and talk like a lawyer, but to do so you must think this specific way and talk that exact way.* I'm sure there are benefits to this kind of indoctrination training, but there are also costs. In teaching this class, I try to emphasize the value of independent thinking, however quirky or creative it may be.

There is not any exact prescription for what kind of questions you should ask (or comments you should offer). Obviously, be respectful, but that does not mean you can't disagree with or challenge the speaker. In terms of my expectations, I like to see people engaged in the discussion. That's the main thing; and it should go without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that quality is what matters, not quantity. Try not to ask a bunch of anodyne questions (*What was your argument in Part I? I really can't recall*). It is far better to ask one very good question that shows you have thought about the work and have something to say or ask that furthers the discussion along.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

For Spring 2026, we will have ten Monday speakers. You should, of course, try to attend for all these talks in person but at a minimum you are expected to attend at least eight of them. With sufficient advance notice and appropriate justification (with both "sufficient" and "appropriate" being determined by me), a student can attend one or two classes virtually and have that count as being present. Beyond that, if a student needs additional absences due to an emergency or a religious holiday (not already recognized by the university), they should contact Student Affairs, which will work with the student and professor to provide accommodations.

I may lower a final grade or take other appropriate disciplinary action (up to entering a failing grade) if it is determined that a student is absent from more than two of the Monday talks. I count a student as absent if they are not in class for at least 75% of the scheduled class session.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

My office (340A) is in the faculty suites on the third floor. My office hours are Mondays from 1-4 pm. With advance notice, I'm available to meet in person but meetings can also be by Zoom. You are also welcome to meet outside of office hours. Just call or email in advance to schedule an appointment. My office phone is (713) 743-5206; email is lhoffman@uh.edu. My assistant is Jeremy Tidell. His phone is (713) 743-1579; email is jltidwe3@central.uh.edu.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS USING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

I'm sure you are aware that there have been significant recent advances in generative artificial intelligence programs, such as ChatGPT, that create new and original output based on the data it has been trained on or to which it has been given access. You are also surely aware that this is a developing technology and that there are already plenty of sobering stories of people who got burned when they relied on AI. *See, e.g., Sara Merken, New York Lawyers Sanctioned for Using Fake ChatGPT Cases in Legal Brief*, June 26, 2023, available [here](#). My view is that GenAI may be helpful for you, but it also might be a bad idea, especially while you are still a student learning to become an effective and capable lawyer. But that's just my opinion and I certainly don't presume to know what's best for you.

My class policy is that you can use any GenAI program for any reason (except, of course, for the in-class final examination, for which you will be required to use the school's exam software that does not allow you access to the internet during the exam). Of course, any assignment you submit will be graded exactly as if you had written it yourself and any errors in your submission will be treated as your errors.

SUPPORT

At the Law Center, in the broader university, and through the State Bar, there are a number of different sources of support if you need it.

1. Of course, you are always welcome to come see me. But, if you'd rather talk to someone else, Dean Monica Mensah in Student Services is another resource. She's been helping students for many years. Her office is in the Office of Student Services. Email is mebuckne@central.uh.edu; her phone is (713) 743-6247.
2. The university's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling (713) 743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. Their webpage can be accessed here: http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

1. The State Bar runs Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (web address is <https://www.tlaphelps.org/>). TLAP "provides confidential help for lawyers, law students and judges who have problems with substance abuse and/or mental health issues." Students can call (24/7) to get help with mental health and substance abuse issues. The number is (800) 343-8527.

In addition, there are four other resources that I know less about. The university asks that we share this information with you (the language below is required by the university):

2. 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.
3. The A.D. Bruce Religion Center offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.
4. 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 1:1 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.
5. 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.

CHOSEN NAMES AND PREFERRED PRONOUNS

In our classroom, you certainly have the right to be addressed by your preferred name and pronoun, and that includes any non-binary pronouns. Rosters do not list gender or pronouns so if you have specific preferences, please just let us know.

INCLUSION

This is an inclusive learning space: all are welcome. If you ever feel that the classroom experience is not comfortable, please reach out to me and I'll try to address your concerns. If you feel more comfortable speaking with someone else, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Student Services Monica Mensah is an excellent resource (contact info above). Finally, you can also bring any issues relating to the Law Center's openness to inclusion to the Law Center's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. You can contact the committee directly at UHLCD&I@uh.edu.

RECORDING OF CLASS

[THE PARAGRAPH BELOW IS UNIVERSITY-REQUIRED LANGUAGE]

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.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

[THE FIRST PARAGRAPH BELOW IS UNIVERSITY-REQUIRED LANGUAGE]

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. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

If you require any support services, you may contact Ms. Samantha Ary, Academic Records Coordinator. Ms. Ary is located in in the Office of Student Services suite, and she can be reached at sary@central.uh.edu or (713) 743-7466. Requests for accommodation that involve graded assignments must be directed to Ms. Ary and should be made as soon as possible to allow adequate time to document and to process the request. If you observe religious or cultural holidays that will coincide with synchronous class sessions or conferences, please let either instructor know as soon as possible, so that we may make arrangements.

HONOR CODE

[THE PARAGRAPH BELOW IS UNIVERSITY-REQUIRED LANGUAGE]

UHLC and the University of Houston are committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment in which students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you have experienced an incident of discrimination or sexual misconduct, a confidential reporting process is available to you. For more information, please refer to the University system's Anti-Discrimination Policy webpage, Anti-Discrimination Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy webpage, and Sexual Misconduct Policy. Under the University 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 at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES

[THE PARAGRAPH BELOW IS UHLC-REQUIRED LANGUAGE]

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.

Finally, on the next page is the lineup of speakers for Spring 2026

SPRING 2026 UHLC COLLOQUIUM/EXTERNAL SPEAKERS SERIES

Date	Presenter	Title (or subject area) of paper presentation
January 26	Dean Marc Roark (University of Tulsa)	TBA
February 2	Dean Angela Onwuachi-Willig (Boston University)	<i>The Trauma of Resiliency</i>
February 9	Dean Danielle Conway (Penn State Dickinson Law) and 2025 AALS President-Elect	<i>A Look Back on the Foundations of Government Procurement of Intellectual Property in the New Era of “America First IP Ideology, Policy, and Legislation”</i>
February 16	Dean Stefanie Lindquist (WashU)	<i>The Vanishing Appeal</i>
February 23	Dean Sophia Lee (University of Pennsylvania) <i>(via Zoom)</i>	TBA
March 9	Dean Rachel Rebouche (previously Dean, Temple University; now on faculty at UT Austin)	<i>Fragile Networks: The Movement of Patients, Pills, and Physicians Post-Dobbs</i>
March 23	Dean Leah Grinvald (University of Nevada Las Vegas)	TBA
March 30	Dean Lolita Buckner Inniss (University of Colorado)	<i>Law Schools: Why Regulate, and How?</i>
April 6	Dean Julie Hill (University of Wyoming)	<i>Governmental Debanking</i>
April 13	Dean Neel Sukhatme (University of Michigan)	<i>Judges for Sale: Campaign Contributions and Corruption in Criminal Courts</i>

