

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

1. Overview and Course Objectives

This course aims to provide you with a working knowledge of the Federal Rules of Evidence. The Rules of Evidence govern the introduction of all types of evidence (e.g., testimonial, tangible, documentary, photographic, demonstrative, or scientific) at trial. To fully comprehend the Rules as applied during a trial, it is essential to study them in the context of litigation. We will therefore study the Rules and their application through case law and practice multiple-choice and short answer questions. The practice questions are generally formatted like the multi-state and uniform bar exams and are also good practice for the final exam in this class.

Because the UH system has mandated that all courses be taught remotely during the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this course will be online only and will be graded on a pass/fail basis (“Satisfactory” or “No Credit Reported”). We will utilize a blend of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (on your own) learning techniques. This is a condensed course – meeting thirteen times in three weeks – which means that you must keep up with all of the assignments in order to earn a “Satisfactory” grade in this class. More details are set forth below in Sections 3 and 4.

2. Course Materials

There is one required textbook for this class:

- Merritt and Simmons’s Learning Evidence: From the Federal Rules to the Courtroom, 4th, (West Academic Publishing 2018), CaseBook Plus Format, ISBN-13: 9781634606462.

Our classroom will be managed via [TWEN](#). You will need your Westlaw password to access the class page. Sign on to TWEN and add course webpage Evidence Summer 2020 with me named as the professor.

You must also enroll in the [online Learning Library](#) for this course. The Learning Library contains multiple-choice and short answer practice question sets that you must complete (in accordance with the timing set forth in the syllabus) to earn a grade of Satisfactory in this course. To enroll in our class’s Learning Library:

1. Go to <https://eproducts.westacademic.com>
2. Sign in or create an account.
3. Click the picture that looks like the front cover of our textbook *Learning Evidence: From the Federal Rules to the Courtroom* (it should be on your virtual bookshelf).

4. Then click “Enroll in a Course” and enter this code: **CRSE-G114-X4RY-5S9G-NFF5**
5. If you do not see a picture of the front cover of our textbook on your virtual bookshelf when you log on to eproducts.westacademic.com, you need to either:
 - a. Click “Redeem Code” on the My Bookshelf page, enter the code that came with your hard copy textbook, and then go back to Steps 3 and 4, above, and enroll in the e-course.
 - **OR** -
 - b. If you did not purchase a new textbook that came with a code, go to store.westacademic.com and purchase the Learning Library option for the casebook. **Purchasing the Learning Library only is \$35 (see picture below).** There are other options, but the Learning Library (plus the textbook itself, either in e-format or hard copy) will suffice for this class.



Learning Library to Accompany Merritt and Simmons's Learning
Evidence: From the Federal Rules to the Courtroom, 4th

Format: Learning Library ISBN-13: 9781640202658 Publication Date: 12/21/2017

Price: \$35.00

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If you need help with the West Academic Learning Library, you can call West at 1-877-888-1330 (option 4) or e-mail them at support@westacademic.com.

There are many other helpful additional materials available on the subject of Evidence. None of these other materials is required, but you might find them helpful for explaining difficult concepts or for practice on multiple choice questions. These include the Q&A series on Evidence (available on the LexisNexis store online), the Examples & Explanations series on Evidence, as well as Goode's Sum and Substance Audio on Evidence (5th Downloadable Audio Format). In addition, the library has a subscription to exercises available on CALI.

3. Grading

To earn a Satisfactory grade in this class, you must:

- (a) Attend at least 11 of the 13 class meetings in person (via Zoom);
- (b) Complete all assigned quizzes and short answer practice questions in the Learning Library on time, repeating each one until you get a score of 80% or above (I can see individual student completion rates and scores on the faculty page); and
- (c) Earn a score of at least 40/100 on the Final Exam (which will be given via the EBB Portal). The Final Exam will be given in accordance with the UHLC summer exam schedule (which currently lists the date as July 1). The Final Exam will be multiple-choice and/or short answer, and is a cumulative assessment of your knowledge of the course material.

UHLC uses an anonymous grading system to ensure fairness in grading. Your name should not appear anywhere on the final exam. You should not give me your exam number, and you should take care to avoid providing information on graded assignments that may identify you.

The UHLC Honor Code applies to this class. <http://www.law.uh.edu/student/HONOR-CODE-AND-PROCEDURES.pdf>. Students are responsible for knowing its provisions and complying with them. Please direct any questions regarding the Honor Code's applications to specific activities to me.

4. Class Times and How to Reach Me

Class meets three times each week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 8:45 pm. Class will be held live via Zoom beginning at 6:00 pm each evening. The live portion of the class typically will last 120 minutes, with one five-minute break. Every class will be recorded and the video posted to our TWEN page. However, you are required to attend at least 11 of the 13 live class meetings to earn a Satisfactory grade in this class. If unforeseen circumstances will prevent you from attending at least 11 live classes, please e-mail me as soon as practicable to let me know, so that we can talk about your options.

The remainder of the instructional minutes each week will be provided via asynchronous modules that you will complete on your own before the Monday class of the following week. Completion of the asynchronous assignments on time is required to earn a grade of Satisfactory in this course because falling behind will make it very difficult for you to learn the material in this condensed format and given the fact that Evidence is a cumulative subject.

Any changes to the regularly scheduled class time will be announced via email and/or in class.

I am working remotely this summer per UHLC mandates, so unfortunately, I do not have set office hours. I am typically very quick to respond to e-mails, however, so please do not hesitate to reach out anytime: argomez3@central.uh.edu. If talking over the phone is easier for you, simply send me an e-mail to set up a time. Our two young children are at home with us during this pandemic, so I ask for your patience during phone calls!

5. Preparing for Class

Evidence is a dense subject that is heavily tested on the Bar exam, for which you will not be able to use outside materials, including the Rules. I therefore recommend that you prepare well for class to maximize your ability to internalize the materials.

You are expected to be prepared to discuss the material that I assign for each day of class. I will call on you at random. You should carefully read the evidence rules, as well as the assigned materials in the book. In class, we will discuss the application of the rules to various situations. I will assign and provide you with the Texas rules when they vary significantly from the federal rules.

If you will not be prepared for class, I ask that you let me know by email before class.

6. Accessibility and Accommodations

UHLC is committed to ensuring that all students enjoy equal access and full participation. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on a disability (including any chronic or temporary medical or mental health condition), feel free to reach out to me so that we can discuss options. If you require any support services, you may contact Samantha Ary, Academic Records Coordinator. Ms. Ary can be reached at sary@central.uh.edu. 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 process the request.

7. Chosen Names and Preferred Pronouns

I want to address each of you in a manner that corresponds to your identity. Although mistakes happen, chosen names and preferred pronouns—including non-binary ones such as they / them / their—must be respected in my classroom. Feel free to reach out to me at any time if you want to make me aware of your chosen name or preferred pronoun, or if you have concerns about how your classmates or I address you.

8. Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling and psychological services (CAPS) is available to help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. www.uh.edu/caps. You can reach 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 needed for the “Let’s Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service held at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

The Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program (TLAP) also supports law students who are 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 includes a page with links to sources about mental health that are of interest to law students: <https://www.tlaphelps.org/law-students>.