

# **CIVIL JUSTICE CLINIC**

**FALL 2023**

**Professor Ryan Marquez**

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**Professor Fred Krasny**

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**Professor Nour Acosta**

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**Class: Tuesdays 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

## **Course Description**

This course is a practical course involving representing actual clients with their legal issues. You will be working on cases filed in Justice, County, and District courts. Most of your cases will primarily relate to landlord and tenant law, real estate issues, deceptive trade practices, debt collection, bankruptcy, negotiation strategies, simple wills and probate matter, guardianship, real property disputes, and family and domestic relations cases. Other cases of interest will be taken occasionally as well. After completing this course, students will have the necessary legal and practical knowledge to represent clients effectively upon starting to practice law mostly as a first-year associate in a small firm.

In this course, you will be responsible for cases as the primary attorney. Some of the course is for the students to determine what actions they would take as an advocate.

Regular participation in the clinic is required. You must work 50 hours per course credit hour for a total of 200 hours. There is a weekly staff meeting class that last approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours. In the event that our class needs to be rescheduled, I will give you advance warning by email. This will not happen often, but may happen from time to time. All postponed/cancelled classes will be rescheduled.

This is a clinical University of Houston Law Center course. Accordingly, Law Center policy requires the applicable curved scale. Work performance, attendance, and participation, including turning in all assignments, will count toward your final grade.

I am available to discuss your cases any time I am here at UHLC. My office is 343G and my phone number is (713) 743 -2169 (UHLC). If you do not find me in my office, you should feel free to call me at any time or email me regarding questions. My cell phone will be available for you to contact me at any time as well. You may call me at any time if you have a problem that cannot wait until regular school hours.

## **Attendance**

Regular course attendance is expected. The Law Center expects students to attend at least 80% of the scheduled classes

## **Assessment**

The final grade for the course is determined by assessing your work in the following areas as you represent your assigned clients and participate portion the course:

- Professionalism
- Lawyering Skills
- Classroom participation and assignments

The best equivalent to be to consider how you would be evaluated for a job.

## **Learning Outcomes**

- Development of interviewing and counseling skills
- Development of fact investigation, trial, and public speaking skills
- Improvement in legal research and writing skills
- Introduction to the substantive areas of the law
- Enhanced knowledge in law practice management
- Recognition of cultural competence in the field

## **Grading**

This is an ordinary University of Houston Law Center course. Accordingly, Law Center policy requires the final grade average for the course be 3.20 – 3.40 on a 4.0 scale or whatever scale in effect at the time of enrollment. Your grade will also be based on class participation. I will call on students each day to discuss the assigned material if any or your cases.

## **Contact Information/Office Hours**

My office phone is (713) 743 - 2169  
My email is: [rmmarqu2@central.uh.edu](mailto:rmmarqu2@central.uh.edu)  
My office is 343G (in the 3rd floor faculty suites)  
Office Hours: 3:00p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Senior Legal Clinic Supervisor Nour Acosta will be available Tuesdays from 10:00a.m. until 4:00p.m.

Feel free to stop by my office anytime, e-mail me, or to set an appointment in order to discuss the class material or anything else of interest to you. If you need something reviewed, then you should schedule an appointment with myself, Nour Acosta, or Fred Krasny (if Prof. Krasny is assigned to the case).

## **Required Text**

There is no required text for the Course.

## **Assignments**

### 1. Initial Meeting

Bring completed Third Year Bar Card application, \$15 check made out to “State Bar of Texas”, a listing and times of your other classes (and time you are otherwise unavailable to meet), as well as your proposed clinic work hour schedule.

### 2. Three Clinic Reflection Journals

### 3. Final De-briefing (Last Week of Classes)

### 4. Court Observation (optional up to 16 hours)

### 5. Others as determined throughout the semester

## **Accommodation of Disabilities**

The University of Houston Law Center strives to assure equal access and full participation by people with disabilities. If you require services because of a disability, you may notify Academic Records Coordinator in the Office of Student Services, in person in room Suite 240. This voluntary self-identification allows the University to prepare any necessary and appropriate support services to facilitate your learning.

Any requests for exam accommodations should be directed to Samantha Ary at [sary@central.uh.edu](mailto:sary@central.uh.edu) or 713-743-7466 and should be made as soon as possible to allow adequate time to document and process the request.

## **Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids**

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).

## **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. Please 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.

## **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.

## **Classes**

Subjects to be covered in the classroom component (However, the topic may differ than the schedule below depending on case rounds):

Class 1: Introduction

Class 2; Interviewing, and Communicating, and Dealing with Clients

Class 3: Courthouse Area Visit

Class 4: Public Record Research and Court Requirements

Class 5: Negotiation

Class 6: Civil Litigation

Class 7: Motions

Class 8: Evidence

Class 9: Trial Advocacy

Class 10: Fact Investigation and Discovery

TBD

## **Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellness**

This is an inclusive learning space.

At UHLC, we are committed to ensuring inclusive online and classroom learning spaces, where you'll be treated with respect and dignity, and where everyone is provided the equitable opportunity to participate, to contribute, and to succeed.

In this course, all students are welcome regardless of socio-economic status, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, national origin, veteran's status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, marital status and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Our class is richer for this diversity.

Inclusive learning spaces facilitate the innovation and creative thought that enhance

student success. This success arises from the participation, support, and understanding of you and your colleagues. I encourage you to speak up and to share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we're all expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others.

If you feel like your class performance is impacted in any way by your experiences inside or outside of class, please reach out to me. I want to be a resource for you. If you feel more comfortable speaking with someone besides me, Student Services is an excellent resource: 713-743-2182. Finally, I encourage you to bring any issues negatively impacting UHLC's openness to diversity and inclusion to the Law Center's Diversity and Inclusion committee. The D&I committee's charge includes "[building] on the Law Center's strengths as a diverse and inclusive environment." You can contact the committee directly at [UHLCD&I@uh.edu](mailto:UHLCD&I@uh.edu).

Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of this course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

### **Counseling Services Available to Students**

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](http://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. [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html)

### **University Sexual Misconduct Policy**

The University is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you have experienced an incident of discrimination or sexual misconduct, there is a confidential reporting process available to you. For more information, please refer to the University System's Anti-Discrimination Policy SAM 01.D.07 and Sexual Misconduct Policy SAM 01.D.08, available here: <http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/uhs-policies/sams/01-general-information/index.php>  
<http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/docs/sam/01/1d7.pdf>(antidiscrimination)  
<http://www.uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/docs/sam/01/1d8.pdf>(sexual misconduct)

Please be aware that under the sexual misconduct policy, SAM 01.D.08, faculty are required to report to the University any information received regarding sexual misconduct as defined in the policy. Please note that the reporting obligations under the sexual misconduct policy reach to employees and students. Also, as a required reporting party, Law Center employees and faculty members are not a confidential resource.

## **COVID-19 Information**

Students are encouraged to visit the University's COVID-19 website for important information including diagnosis and symptom protocols, testing, vaccine information, and post-exposure guidance. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates. <https://www.uh.edu/covid-19/information-for/students/>.

### Syllabus Change

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 your UH email account.

### Security Escorts and Cougar Ride

UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. Our 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](tel: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/>.