

Pro-Se Assistance Clinic
Course 5397 Section 25895
FALL 2025
Professor Nour Acosta
nishatle@central.uh.edu
Instruction Mode: Face-to-Face
Class: Tuesdays 6:00 p.m. to 7:30p.m.

Course Description

This clinic will focus on helping people help themselves with various legal issues they may encounter. Many people need help with drafting simple legal documents such as: (1) demand/notice letters; (2) repair requests; (3) simple wills and estate planning documents; (4) deeds; (5) simple petitions; motions, and orders; and (6) any other legal document potential clients may need. This clinic will also focus on providing people with much needed legal advice. You will learn how to interview clients and gather facts to discern legal issues and possible resolutions. You will learn how to communicate with clients through verbal and written means to help them decipher what legal concepts mean and how to proceed to resolve their legal issues. Most of your cases will primarily relate to landlord and tenant law, real estate issues, deceptive trade practices, debt collection, simple wills and probate matters, real property disputes, guardianship, 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 effectively interview and advise clients to resolve their legal issues as well as drafting simple to moderately complex legal documents.

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 150 hours. There is a weekly staff meeting class that last approximately 1 ½ 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 121B and my phone number is (713) 743-8430 (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. Failure to meet this guideline can result in being reported to Student Services.

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
- Drafting abilities and Communication Skiles
- 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
- 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) 743-8430
My email is nishatle@central.uh.edu
My office is 121B
Office Hours: by appointment

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.

Required Text

There is no required text for the Course.

Assignments

1. Three Clinic Reflection Journals
2. Final De-briefing (Last Week of Classes)
3. Court Observation (optional up to 10 hours)
4. Others as determined throughout the semester (case dependent)

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 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).

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: Client Counseling & Interview

Class 2: Demand Letter Drafting

Class 3: Court System Overview

Class 4: Discovery

Other topics TBD

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) 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

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.

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/>.