

Course Syllabus
Family Law Fall 2026
University of Houston Law Center
Professor Tasha Willis
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Course Description:

This course offers a survey of family law, including journal articles, case law and statutory laws. We will cover various topics such as the definition of family, constitutional limitations on the regulation of the family, marriage (formal and informal), limitations on marriage, divorce, the parent-child relationship, parenting time and custody issues, support, property distribution upon divorce, child support, dispute resolution systems, and domestic violence.

Course Materials: George on Texas Family Law–Precedent & Procedure (2024 ed.)

Class Mode: In Person

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend and be prepared for each class. The University of Houston Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. A student’s non-adherence will be notified to the Office of Student Affairs” (OSA). Students who attend fewer than the minimum percentage of required classes may be automatically dropped from the course.

Learning Outcomes for this Course:

- **Students should gain a working knowledge of family law**
- **Gain an understanding of the development of laws governing the family**
- **Gain an understanding of the current and the future direction of family law**

Assessment:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Final Exam: In Person - Exam Date: TBA

Note: For the final exam, 1 single-sided, double-spaced pages of notes will be allowed.

Expectations:

Be present in class and prepared

Be on-time to class

Maintain a schedule to get your class work done and keep up with all readings

Office Hours:

To meet with the professor regarding the class, students should email them with available dates and times. tlwillis@central.uh.edu (meetings can be in person, by phone, or via ZOOM or other virtual online program)

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 provision 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 courses syllabus.

AI Generated Text:

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 of what is well known in the general public as ChapGPT. 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 included that your assessment work product in this 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/others in applying the plagiarism policy to this course. The term “assessment” means any work product generated for this course this 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 aids are specifically prohibited from any use of AI Generated Text in this course unless specified as an exception below.

The following activities are exceptions to the immediately preceding paragraph; the intent of these exceptions is to allow use of AI Generated Text for specifically and narrowly defined activities in relation to this course:

- creating content for an outline that you use exclusively to summarize the course content; or
- “conversing” with the AI Generated Text software system to create hypotheticals to better understand course content, alone or with others;

Chosen Names and Preferred Pronouns:

We 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 us at any time if you want to make me aware of your chosen name or preferred pronoun or if you have concerns about how we or your classmates address you.

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.

If you feel like your class performance is impacted in any way by your experiences inside or outside of class, please reach out to your professors. We want to be a resource for you. If you feel more comfortable speaking with someone besides us, Student Services is an excellent resource: 713-743-2182.

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.

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 Go 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, 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Syllabus Changes

Please note there may be needed modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

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, and Canvas; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact 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.

Case Recitation and Other Materials: Will be assigned in panels from week to week.

Week 1

August 25 and 27: Course Overview – Introduction to Family Law and Pre-Marital Agreements / Post-Marital Agreements

Week 2

September 1 and 3: Marriage and Marriage Procedural Requirements

Week 3

September 8 and 10: Marital Rights and Marital Responsibilities

Week 4

September 15 and 17: Tortious Interference w/ Marriage and Common Law Marriage

Week 5

September 22 and 24: Termination of Marriage and Termination of Marriage - Jurisdiction

Week 6

September 29: Termination of Marriage – Ways to Terminate

October 1: Termination of Marriage - Temporary Orders

Week 7

October 6 and 8: Termination con'd and Spousal Maintenance

Week 8

October 13 and 15: Alternative Dispute Resolution and Child Support - Calculation

Week 9

October 20 and 22: Child Support – Responsibilities and Child Support - Consequences

Week 10

October 27 and 29: Domestic Violence - Texas Family Code: Protective Orders and Violence Against Women Act

Week 11

November 3 and 5: Child Custody – UCCJEA and Child Custody - SAPCR

Week 12

November 10 and 12: Child Custody – Rights and Obligations and Adoption

Week 13

November 17 and 19: Termination of Parental Rights and Unmarried Co-Habitants

November 24: Emancipation
