

Syllabus for Employment Law-Course #5343

Section 18145

Professor John A. Taylor

Fall 2026 Tuesday/Thursday

2:30 pm-4:00 pm

Room TBA

I. Required Course Materials

The required text for this course is ***Contemporary Employment Law***, (5th Edition) (C. Kerry Field & Henry R. Cheesman, (Aspen Publishing Co.) (ISBN: 9798889068907)

II. Instructor Information

- *Email*: jatayl30@cougarnet.uh.edu
- *Office*: O'Quinn Law Building Room TBA
- *Office hours*: Contact me via email and I will arrange to meet with you, up through the last day of class, at a mutually convenient time, either face-to-face or via Zoom.

III. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Articulate the law of employment covered in class.
- Know the sources of employment law.
- Analyze factual situations to determine the nature of employment law.
- Apply employment Law principles and concepts.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the substantive areas of employment law, such as the differences between employee and independent contractor status, retirement benefit plans, occupational safety and health, etc.

IV. Mode of instruction/Classroom Participation

The primary mode of instruction for this course is a hybrid combination of face-to-face and Zoom instruction, as shown on pages 7-9 of this syllabus. The primary method of instruction and review of assigned reading materials will be a discussion by and between the professor and class participants, and students will be called upon and asked questions concerning the readings. In addition, this class will be conducted in part in a student-led seminar mode, as discussed in Section V, below. Each student must be prepared for each and every class, and student participation is expected. Students are responsible for all of the assigned readings, including parts of assignments that are not specifically discussed in class. A student's final grade may be raised or lowered by one notch (e.g. from a B to a B+ or B-) on the basis of classroom participation (with emphasis on quality and not quantity).

V. Student-Led Presentations

After the professor's coverage of initial topics, the students will lead a seminar-style discussion of the subsequent class sessions. The presenting students (who will work as a team), will meet with the professor in advance to discuss their planned presentation, and will become "subject matter experts" for that particular class. They will be assisted by the professor during their class presentation, although they are expected to take the lead. The professor will assign teams and topics that the students will present. If you fail to present your student-led presentation on your assigned date, time will not permit you to do a make-up session. Instead, you will automatically lose the number of points associated with this assignment shown in Section XV, below. For more information on Student-Led Presentations, see the Addendum attached to the end of this syllabus.

VI. Syllabus Changes

This document is a syllabus, not a contract. Therefore, it is subject to change. Any changes will be announced by me in class, posted on Canvas, or distributed via email to the entire class.

VII. Reading Assignments

The reading assignments for the semester are listed on pages 7-9 of this syllabus. Students are to prepare for each class by reading the entire assignment for the day *before* attending class. I plan for us to cover one assignment per class period. However, there will be days when it may take us more or less than one class period to cover an assignment. You are responsible for keeping track of what assignment number we are on throughout the semester. I will do my best to tell the class if I think we will not reach or complete the next day's assignment. If you miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to check with a classmate to determine whether the class finished the entire assignment on the day you missed. Assignments are subject to change at the professor's discretion.

VIII. Class Preparation and Participation

I typically call on students randomly (except for student-led presentations in which case you will know well in advance the date of your presentation). If I call on you and you are unprepared, you will be marked absent for that day. The second time, your final grade for the course may be reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ grade (*e.g.*, an A becomes a B+). The third time you are unprepared, you may be dropped from this course.

IX. Attendance Requirements

Any student missing more than eight (8) classes will be dropped from the course. There are no excused absences, so use your absences wisely.

As an attorney, you will be expected to be in court on time and prepared to proceed. Few judges will wait for an attorney who is late. Start getting in the habit now by being on time for each class. Those who come to class late detract from the learning process, and show a lack of courtesy to their classmates and the professor. Consider your obligation to be punctual and prepared for class as you would if you were representing a client in court. Class begins promptly at 2:30 pm, and I will begin taking attendance at that time. Anyone arriving after 2:30 pm will be considered tardy. Attendance is reported by the half-hour, rounded off to the next nearest half hour. For example, a student who arrives five (5) minutes late will be marked absent for a half-hour. A student who is thirty-five (35) minutes late will be marked absent for one (1) hour.

Students may choose their seats, but should stay in the same seat for the remainder of the term.

For each class I will distribute a roster for everyone in attendance to sign. Please sign your name in the appropriate space; do not sign anyone else's name. If you arrive after I've announced that class has officially begun, or if you depart prior to class being officially dismissed by me, it is your responsibility to indicate on the roster the precise time of your late arrival, or early departure. Unless you indicate this on the roster, do not assume that I'm aware of the time of your late arrival or early departure. Failure to follow this procedure will be considered an honor code violation.

- X. Excused Absence Policy Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy and Graduate Excused Absence Policy for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

- XI. Academic Honesty Policy: High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The [UH Academic Honesty Policy](#) is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

XII. Professionalism

A. My Classroom

My classroom is a learning space where each student is treated with respect and dignity and where everyone is provided the opportunity to participate, contribute, and 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, or identity. I encourage you to speak up and share your views appropriately throughout the semester. I also expect every class member to remember that in this learning environment, we will engage respectfully and with professionalism toward each other. In the words of the [Texas Lawyer's Creed](#), "[a] lawyer should always adhere to the highest principles of professionalism." Professionalism comprises attributes like civility, courtesy, respect, candor, fairness, and ethical behavior. As a lawyer-in-training, I expect this professionalism from you. I hold myself to the same standard.

B. Tardiness

I respect your time and education by doing my best to start and end our class meetings on time. Please be on time, seated, and ready to go before I begin class. If you are habitually late, I reserve the right to restrict your entry into the class on days you are late.

C. Chosen Names and Preferred Pronouns

I plan to refer to students as "Mr." or "Ms." during our class meetings. I will gladly address you by an alternate name or your preferred gender pronoun. Please advise me of your preference early in the semester so I can make a notation to my records.

XIII. The Use of Artificial Intelligence Is Prohibited in the Course

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is prohibited in this course. Thus, using AI or AI-generated text for formal assessments (such as your midterm or final exams), informal assessments (such as drafting essay answers to hypothetical problems), or student-led presentations is not permitted. This prohibition applies whether the material is to be graded or ungraded. This prohibition applies whether the assessment, assignment, exercise, or activity is prepared in or outside of class. Your writings for this course are to be your own work composed without the aid of AI.

XIV. 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 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 this course syllabus.

Please note the Honor Code's plagiarism policy and its prohibition against receiving unauthorized aid or using unauthorized materials. Your continuing enrollment in this course is deemed to be your pledge under the Honor Code that, among other things, your work product in this course is without any contribution from AI or AI-generated text. Accordingly, pursuant to the Honor Code, you may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. The use of AI-generated text will be treated as engaging in plagiarism in violation of the Honor Code.

XV. Final Grade Calculation

Your final grade will be calculated based on a 200-point scale as follows:

- Midterm Grade (in class; closed book) 40 points
- Student-Led Presentation (in-class) 20 points
- Final Exam (in-class; closed book) 140 points

XVI. Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Pursuant to the UHS 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/>.

XVII. Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible to 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 at <https://uh.edu/accessibility/>, by calling (713) 743-5400, or by emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

XVIII. Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has several 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.
- 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 for the [National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#), you call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org](#).

XIX. Other Helpful UH Resources:

[UH Non-Discrimination Statement](#)

[LGBTQ Resource Center](#)

[Cougars in Recovery](#)

[UH Veteran Services](#)

[Cougar Cupboard](#)

[DACA: What You Need to Know](#)

[Student Health Center & Campus Pharmacy](#)

[UH Wellness](#)

XX. Use of Computers and Electronics

The use of laptop computers during class sessions is permitted and may be used for note-taking purposes only. I reserve the right to disallow the use of laptops in the classroom at any time throughout the semester in the event the rule is violated.

- XXI.** 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.

XXII. Security Escorts and Cougar Ride UHPD continually works with the University community to make the campus a safe place to learn, work, and live. The 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. 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/afuniversity-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

XXIII. Webcams Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on (state when webcams are required to be on and the academic basis for requiring them to be on). (Example: Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.)

ASSIGNMENTS			
The reading assignments and subjects to be covered during each week of the term are set forth below:			
Class	Date	Assignment	Page Numbers
1	08/25	Employment Law Overview (in person)	pp. 3-37
2	08/27	Managing Risk: Recruitment Through Termination (via Zoom)	pp. 39-74
3	09/01	Contract And Tort Claims in Employment (in person)	pp. 75-115
4	09/03	Equal Employment Opportunity Laws and Affirmative Action (via Zoom)	pp. 117-143
5	09/08	Employment Litigation and Dispute Resolution (in person)	pp. 145-197
6	09/10	Race, Color and National Origin (via Zoom)	pp. 201-223
7	09/15	Review of classes 1-6 (via Zoom)	N/A

ASSIGNMENTS

The reading assignments and subjects to be covered during each week of the term are set forth below:

Class	Date	Assignment	Page Numbers
8	09/17	Discrimination And Harassment Based on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (in person) -STUDENT-LED PRESENTATIONS BEGIN THIS CLASS-	pp. 225-248 (Stop before Liability because of Supervisor's Actions)
9	09/22	Discrimination And Harassment Based on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (Continued) (via Zoom)	pp. 248-266
10	09/24	Religious Discrimination (in person)	pp. 267-282
11	09/29	Religious Discrimination (Continued) (via Zoom)	pp. 283-294
12	10/01	Disability Discrimination (in person)	pp. 295-310 (Stop before section on Reasonable Accommodations)
13	10/06	Disability Discrimination (Continued) (via Zoom)	pp. 310-331)
14	10/08	Age Discrimination (in person)	pp. 333-349 (Stop before section on Employer Defenses)
15	10/13	Age Discrimination (Continued) (via Zoom)	pp. 349-364
16	10/15	Review of all materials covered to date (via Zoom)	
17	10/20	Midterm Exam—In class; closed book	pp. 365-378
18	10/22	Employee Leave and Other EEO Protections (Continued) (via Zoom)	pp. 379-398
19	10/27	Privacy In the Workplace (in-person)	pp. 401-417 (Stop before Employee Polygraphs)
20	10/29	Privacy In the Workplace (Cont.) (via Zoom)	pp. 417-433
21	11/03	Wage and Hour Laws (in person)	pp. 469-488
22	11/05	Wage and Hour Laws (Cont.) (via Zoom)	pp. 489-511

ASSIGNMENTS

The reading assignments and subjects to be covered during each week of the term are set forth below:

Class	Date	Assignment	Page Numbers
23	11/10	Occupational Safety and Workers Compensation (in person)	pp. 513-531 (Stop before section on Employer Defenses)
24	11/12	Occupational Safety and Workers Compensation (Cont.) (via Zoom)	pp. 531-545
25	11/17	Retirement And Employee Benefits (in person)	pp. 547-581
26	11/19	Immigration Law in the Workplace (via Zoom)	pp.585-613
27	11/25	Review of weeks 8-26 material (via Zoom)	N/A
28		Final Exam; Details to be announced	N/A

-SEE ATTACHED ADDENDUM ON STUDENT-LED PRESENTATIONS-

ADDENDUM ON STUDENT-LED PRESENTATIONS

A. Procedure for Student-Led Presentations

As stated in the course syllabus, one of the requirements for this course is for all students to conduct a classroom (i.e. student-led presentation). Here's how student-led presentations will work:

- Student-led presentations will occur from September 17 (class # 8) through November 25 (class # 27) in accord with the dates, subject matter and textbook page numbers set forth in Part B, below.
- Depending on the size of the class, you will be a part of a 3 or 4 person team. More information on this will be forthcoming.
- The team will present a seminar-style discussion of the subject, and will become the subject matter experts for that particular class.
- The team will recite all of the assigned cases, answer questions, prepare Power Point slides and handouts (if applicable) for that particular class. In addition, feel free to discuss any other material relevant to your topic.
- The team's presentation should last approximately 1:15 minutes. If you see where your presentation will be significantly shorter than 1:15, you must let me know in advance, and I will make suggestions for what additional material you should cover in your presentation.
- The team will submit your PowerPoint slides to me two days prior to the class in which you teach. The team should select a point person who will timely submit the slide deck to me on behalf of the team. Please copy my Faculty Assistant, Amber Parker, when you submit your PP slides. Her email address is amandaparker@centraluh.edu.
- Each team member will be graded individually based on the overall content of his/her presentation, taking into consideration knowledge of the subject matter, preparedness, ability to answer questions, etc. More information will be forthcoming on this.
- Student-led presentations are intended to be a collaborative effort. Each team will apportion the workload among members as it deems fit, and each member of the team is expected to participate orally for that class.
- Your score on your student-led presentation will be worth a maximum of twenty (20) points toward your final grade for the course. More information on this will be forthcoming.
- If you fail to present on your assigned date, unfortunately time will not permit you to do a makeup session. In that case, you will lose the opportunity to earn the twenty (20) points referenced above.

B. Subjects and Dates for Student-led Presentations

Student-led presentations will cover all the major areas of Employment Law which are not covered by me during classes 1-7, in accord with the following schedule:

- 09/17 Discrimination and Harassment Based on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Identity (pp. 225-248 (Stop before Liability on Supervisors) **(in person)**)
- 09/22 Discrimination and Harassment Based on Gender, Sexual Orientation and Identity (Continued) (pp. 248-266) **(via Zoom)**
- 09/24 Religious Discrimination (pp.267-282) **(in person)**
- 09/29 Religious Discrimination (Continued) (pp.283-294) **(via Zoom)**
- 10/01 Disability Discrimination (pp. 295-310—Stop before section on Reasonable Accommodations) **(in person)**
- 10/06 Disability Discrimination (Continued) (pp. 310-331) **(via Zoom)**
- 10/08 Age Discrimination (pp. 333-349—Stop before section on Employer Defenses) **(in person)**
- 10/13 Age Discrimination (Continued) (pp. 349-364) **(via Zoom)**
- 10/15 [Review of all material covered to date; no student-led presentations today]
- 10/20 Midterm Exam; no student-led presentations
- 10/22 Employee Leaves and other EEO Protections (Continued) (pp. 379-398) **(via Zoom)**
- 10/27 Privacy in the Workplace (pp. 401-417—Stop before Employee Polygraphs) **(in person)**
- 10/29 Privacy in the Workplace (Cont.) (pp. 417-433) **(via Zoom)**
- 11/03 Wage and Hour Laws (pp. 469-488) **(in person)**
- 11/05 Wage and Hour Laws (Cont.) (pp. 489-511) **(via Zoom)**
- 11/10 Occupational Safety and Worker's Compensation (pp. 513-543) **(in person)**
- 11/17 Retirement and Employee Benefits (pp. 547-581) **(via Zoom)**
- 11/19 Immigration Law in the Workplace (pp. 585-613) **(in person)**

C. How to Sign Up for Student-led Presentations

After reviewing Part B, above, please email me your top two choices for the classes in which you would like to lead the classroom discussion. Operating on a “first-come-first-served” basis, I will endeavor to assign you your top choice (s). However, I may not be able to accommodate everyone, as all of the subject matters shown in Part B must be covered, even if not enough students sign up to teach that particular class. In order to maximize your chances of receiving your top choice (s), it’s imperative that you email me your preferences as soon as possible; but, in any event by no later than August 27.