

University of Houston Law Center  
**Voir Dire – The Art of Juror Deselection**  
Section #24797/Course #5297  
Wednesdays 5:30PM – 7:30PM

---

**Professor:** Judge Christine Weems

**Required Text:** None.

**Recommended Text:** Dodge, Angela M., *Winning at Jury Selection: A Handbook of Practical Jury-Focused Techniques and Strategies*, Dodge Consulting & Publications, 2010.

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Email:** Email is the best way to contact Professor Weems.

**Christine Weems**     [cweems@weemstriallaw.com](mailto:cweems@weemstriallaw.com)

**Phone:** Christine Weems     (713)489-1977

**Course Description & Goals:**

The most important part of any trial is picking your jury - the audience that will hear your presentation and ultimately decide your case. In this class, the students will learn about the psychology as well as the law behind choosing a jury for any kind of case. Through practical exercises as well as a study of the applicable legal principles and case law, the class will learn techniques to try to get the panel talking so you can get the information you need from jurors to determine whether they will be a good fit for your case, how to properly strike for cause and preserve error as well as the best way to use peremptory strikes to ultimately try to get the best panel possible. The class will end with the students doing a full voir dire as well as closing arguments with the opportunity to watch jury deliberations to see how the panel they ended up with impacted the decision that was made.

**Attendance:**

You should attend all class sessions and arrive on time. The UHLC attendance policy requires attendance at 80% of all scheduled (or makeup) classes or a student risks being dropped from the course. Attendance may be taken at each class.

Please note that you are responsible for managing your absences from class and ensuring that your total number of absences does not exceed 20%. If you have to miss a class, please inform your professors beforehand so that they can adjust the counseling pairings accordingly.

### **Grading:**

Assignments may be emailed by the assigned due date or they may be turned into the Blakely Advocacy office or emailed to your professors. Additional specific instructions regarding how to turn in each assignment will also be provided in class.

Your grade will be based on the following components:

- 25% Class Participation – This component is based on (1) showing up and (2) participating in class discussion in a productive and involved way.
- 20% Skill Evaluation
- 15% Class Exercise
- 40% Final Exam – voir dire and closing

### **Counseling and Psychological Services:**

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

### **Tentative Schedule:**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Class 1 (01/19) | Course Introduction<br>Voir Dire Style – what is your goal in jury selection? |
| Class 2 (01/26) | Bring your friends to class day!<br>Simulated voir dire                       |
| Class 3 (02/02) | Identifying the Jurors you Want (and Don’t Want)                              |
| Class 4 (02/09) | Different Ways to Get the Same Information from the Venire                    |

Class 5 (02/16)      Implicit v. Explicit Bias  
Strikes for Cause  
Preservation of Error

Class 6 (02/23)      Figuring Out Your Style

Class 7 (03/02)      Peremptory Strikes

NO CLASS ON MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020  
SPRING BREAK

Class 8 (03/16)      Your Notebook and Note Taking

Class 9 (03/23)      Class Exercise

Class 10 (03/30)      Jury Questionnaire

Class 11 (04/06)      Jury Selection-Related Motions  
(Jury Shuffle/Re-apportion Strikes/*Batson* Challenges)

Class 12 (04/13)      The Intangibles – The Psychology of Jurors

Class 13 (04/20)      Preparing for the Final Voir Dire