

Advanced Legal Research: Appellate Advocacy

Spring Intersession 2023
Prof. Rob Brownell (he/him)
Jan. 9-13, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes to this syllabus will be announced in class, on TWEN, or via email to the entire class.

1. Required Texts

None. All necessary materials will be posted on the course's TWEN page ("Advanced Legal Research: Appellate Advocacy").

2. Instructor Information

- Office phone number: 713.743.5801
- Email: rbbrownell@uh.edu or rbbrowne@central.uh.edu
- Office Hours: TBD first day of class or by appointment
- Law Center Office: 421K (in the librarian suite on the 4th floor)

3. Course Description

This is a specialized course on legal research methods as they pertain to appellate advocacy. It will cover fundamental legal research topics and resources (issue analysis, secondary sources, statutes, cases, etc.) within the context of appellate work. It will also cover topics and resources that are especially useful to the practice of appellate advocacy, such as finding and using

- court rules, filings, and resources;
- practice books, forms, and checklists;
- dockets; and
- legislative history.

4. Course Objective & Learning Outcomes

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

- Design a successful research strategy, including selecting appropriate sources, creating effective searches, and refining your strategy when needed
- Critically select and efficiently locate the most appropriate sources for a research problem, considering time, cost, and availability of resources
- Evaluate the reliability of information, including its authority, credibility, currency, and authenticity
- Confirm and validate your research results
- Organize your research findings in preparation for writing appellate briefs and planning oral arguments

5. Course Format

This class will meet in person unless health and safety issues require us to meet virtually via Zoom.

6. Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory and will be recorded for each class meeting. Excused absences should be arranged before class – if possible. Failure to arrange for an excused absence may result in an unexcused absence and a deduction in the participation portion of your grade.

7. Grading

Course grades are determined by performance on the following:

- Homework 40%
- Final Assignment 30%
- Participation* 20%
- Reflections 10%

* This is an experiential course, intended to help you become practice ready. As such, participation and practice are critical elements of success in this course. Examples of class participation include asking/answering questions, meeting with the instructor during office hours or by appointment, participating fully during in-class exercises, and completing any pre- or post-class exercises on time.

8. Computer Policy

In-class exercises will require each student to have their own computer that can connect to the law school's wireless network. Please activate and memorize/save all Westlaw, Lexis, and Bloomberg passwords. If you do not have a computer, please let me know so I can help make arrangements for you.

9. Late Work

You are expected to turn in graded assignments by the date and time designated on the course schedule. This course simulates a work environment, so deadlines are strictly enforced. It is your responsibility to communicate any emergencies that may affect your ability to submit assignments on time.

10. Group Work/Collaboration

Unless specifically designated as collaborative work, all graded assignments must be only your work. No collaboration is allowed. Copying answers or providing answers to copy will be reported to the Honor Board and will result in a zero on the

assignment in question for all involved. All quoted material must be in quotations and properly cited.

11. 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 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.

[The Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program \(“TLAP”\)](#) also supports law students dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health problems. You can reach TLAP at any time at 1.800.343.8527. TLAP’s website links to sources about mental health that may be of interest to law students.

12. Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellness

My classroom is an inclusive learning space where each student will be 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 other identities that one may bring to class. Our class is richer for this diversity.

Inclusive learning spaces facilitate innovation and creative thought, enhancing student success. I encourage you to speak up and share your views in a manner befitting a learning environment in which we all respectfully regard the dignity of others.

13. Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policies

UHLC and the University of Houston are committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. A confidential reporting process is available to you if you have experienced discrimination or sexual misconduct. For more information, please refer to the University System’s [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#). Under the Sexual Misconduct Policy, *faculty and other University employees must report any information received regarding sexual misconduct as defined in the policy to the University*. In other words, *I am not a confidential resource*. The reporting obligations under the Sexual Misconduct Policy also extend to alleged conduct by University employees and students.

14. Honor Code

The [UHLC Honor Code](#) applies to all aspects of this course. You are responsible for knowing all Honor Code provisions and complying with them. Feel free to ask me if you have any questions regarding how the Honor Code's provisions apply to specific activities or situations related to this course.