

Trusts and Estates Course 5339/Section 15447 – Spring 2026
Professor Hilary Stirman Reed

Professor Reed's Contact Information

Office 342E	Office Number:	713.743.6778
	Cell Number:	310.869.7959
	Email:	hsreed@central.uh.edu

Office Hours:	TBD
	And by appointment

Class Home Page

There will be a Canvas page where you can access handouts, any asynchronous videos, and assignments.

Course Delivery

This is a Face-to-Face class. Students are expected to attend class in-person and comply with Law Center attendance policies.

Required Texts and Readings and Materials

Sitkoff and Dukeminier, *Wills, Trusts, and Estates* (11th Edition).
ISBN-13: 978-1543824469
ISBN-10: 1543824463

Readings from the course are from Sitkoff and Dukeminier 11th edition. I expect you to be prepared for every class by completing the assigned readings.

The exam will be in-person and open book and open note. You will only be able to access a hard-copy book. Thus, I strongly recommend purchasing or renting a print book, rather than an online textbook so that you will have access to it during the exam. You will not be able to access any online materials during the exam.

Course Description

This course covers the law and policy of the two main legal vehicles for controlling the posthumous distribution of one's property: wills and trusts. Specific coverage includes introductory matters (freedom of disposition and the mechanics of succession); intestate succession (basic structure, transfers to children, and bars to succession); the law of wills (formalities, contests, and construction); the law of trusts (creation, administration, alienation, appointment powers, and duration); and related issues (other will substitutes, planning for incapacity, and limits on freedom of disposition).

This course's learning outcomes are to gain a strong understanding of common law

principles governing wills and trusts, corollary aspects of both the Uniform Probate Code and relevant Texas state law, and theoretical and policy issues relating to the posthumous disposition of property. This class will also emphasize some of the skills necessary for success in the estate planning field and on Bar Exam Multistate Performance Tests.

Assessments

Ungraded

- Trusts and Estates Multistate Performance Test
- Midterm Essay Exam
- Practice questions

Graded

- 3 Hour Final Exam (90%)
The exam will be an in-person open book, timed assessment. The exam will be all multiple choice, short answer, and essay. While I allow you to have hard copy materials with you for the test, I write the exam similar to how I would write a closed book exam. Over-reliance on reference material will be detrimental to your ability to complete the exam well.
- Class Participation (10%)
I expect you to attend class, complete all ungraded assignments, do the reading and be prepared to discuss the materials every session. If you are on time, prepared, participate in class, and complete required ungraded assessments, you will receive full credit for your participation.

Please Note

1. **Honor Code Statement** Students may be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including but not limited to projects, quizzes, and exams: "I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the Law Center Honor Code. I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston."
2. **Attendance Policy** You may not miss more than 4 class sessions. Attendance will be taken every session.

3. Prohibition on use of AI –

The software technology known as artificial intelligence has recently expanded its capability to generate text and other work product (AI Generated Work Product). Examples of the technology include what are known as “generative” large language models (LLMs), and a specific implementation what is well known in the general public is ChatGPT. These systems can generate text and other work product in response to prompts and/or input of other text/documents/code/images. The output, the AI Generated Work Product, appears to have human-mimicking “intelligence” and is thus potentially usable as a substitute for material one might generate themselves. AI Generated Work Product can include computer code or programs as well as human language content and materials.

Your continuing enrollment in this course obligates you to not knowingly prompt, generate, or use any AI Generated Work Product in relation to any activity or assessment in this course unless specifically permitted by the professor. This applies to AI Generated Work Product from yourself or others. This obligation includes that your assessment materials in the course be without any contribution from AI Generated Work Product. This obligation specifically extends to not plagiarize any writing required of you for assessment in the course: AI Generated Work Product will be treated as from another/others in applying the plagiarism policy to this course. The term “assessment” means any material generated for this course that is submitted to the instructor or presented in a class session, regardless whether it is graded content or not. Assessments include mid-terms and final exams. AI Generated Work Product may not be used in the development or drafting of any assessments created by you in a non-proctored environment.

4. Syllabus Changes

Notice of any changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email or Canvas.

UH Required Syllabus Elements

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.

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.

A. *Title IX/Sexual Misconduct*

Per 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/>.

B. *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.

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.

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community (CSAC) is where you can go if you need help but don't know where to start. CSAC is a “home away from home” and serves as a resource hub to help you get the resources needed to support academic and personal success. Through our Cougar Cupboard, all students can get up to 30 lbs of FREE groceries a week. Additionally, we provide 1:1

appointments to get you connected to on- and off-campus resources related to essential needs, safety and advocacy, and more. The Cougar Closet is a registered student organization advised by our office and offers free clothes to students so that all Coogs can feel good in their fit. We also host a series of cultural and community-based events that fosters social connection and helps the cougar community come closer together. Visit the CSAC homepage or follow us on Instagram: @uh_CSAC and @uhcupbrd. YOU belong here.

C. *Women and Gender Resource Center*

The mission of the WGRC is to advance the University of Houston and promote the success of all students, faculty, and staff through educating, empowering, and supporting the UH community. The WGRC suite is open to you. Stop by the office for a study space, to take a break, grab a snack, or check out one of the WGRC programs or resources. Stop by Student Center South room B12 (Basement floor near Starbucks and down the hall from Creation Station) from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday.

D. *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.