

University of Houston-Law Center
LAW 5209-1 Legal Spanish for Spanish Speakers CRN 15453
Syllabus Spring 2026
Asynchronous through Canvas

Instructor: Rey Romero, PhD, MPH
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Office Hours: Over zoom by appointment
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1. Course description: An advanced-language course for students already fluent in Spanish. Students will strengthen their communicative language skills such as speaking, writing, interpreting, and vocabulary building within the context of several areas of legal practice, including but not limited to criminal law, civil law, and immigration law.

2. Textbooks:

Required: Valeria Luiselli, *Los niños perdidos* (ISBN: 978-84-16358-83-0)

Optional: McGraw Hill's Spanish and English Legal Dictionary (ISBN: 9780071415293)

3. Learning objectives:

- Students will evaluate, explain, compose, and translate legal documents in Spanish, with Spanish legal terminology.
- Students will implement linguistic tools to research legal terminology in Spanish.
- Students will deliver clear comprehensible oral presentations in academic Spanish, using PowerPoint, on a legal case or other topic.
- Students will identify and research differences in legal proceedings in Latin America and Spain.

4. Course evaluation: For your convenience, assignment types have been color-coded.

Discussion board (4)	12%	Written exercises (4)	24%
Homework (8 assignments)	24%	Vocabulary Quizzes (5)	20%
PowerPoint Presentation	10%	Final Project	10%

Semanas	Módulo	Lección	Tarea
Semana 1: 20-23 de enero	Módulo 1A: ¿Cómo escribir en español?	• Las herramientas de Word • El uso de herramientas en línea	• Foro 1 (mini biografía)
Semana 2: 26-30 de enero	Módulo 1B: ¿Cómo escribir en español?	• Diferencias de formatos • Cómo escribir una carta	• Pruebita 1 (diferencias de formato) • Carta al Cliente
Semana 3: 2-6 de febrero	Módulo 2A: Términos y tecnicismos	• Términos y tecnicismos • Términos y tecnicismos jurídicos	• Pruebita 2 (tecnicismos jurídicos)

Semana 4: 9-13 de febrero	Módulo 2B: Términos y tecnicismos jurídicos	• Traducción (equivalencia jurídica y tipos de derecho) • Lexicografía para profesionistas jurídicos	• Actividad de traducción • Actividad de diccionarios
Semana 5: 16-20 de febrero	Módulo 3A: El derecho penal	• Introducción al derecho penal • Comparecencia inicial • Lectura de cargos	• Pruebita 3 (vocabulario penal) • Foro 2 (estadísticas de delitos)
Semana 6: 23-27 de febrero	Módulo 3B: El derecho penal	• Listas de vocabulario • ABC Market • La traducción de títulos	• ¿Qué sé yo? – Derecho penal • Ensayo 1 (The Confessions)
Semana 7: 2-6 de marzo	Módulo 4: El derecho contractual	• Elementos básicos de un contrato • Lista de vocabulario	• Ejercicio de lectura de un contrato
Semana 8: 9-13 de marzo	Módulo 5: El derecho ambiental	• Principios básicos del derecho ambiental • Lista de vocabulario	• Ejercicio de traducción
<i>16-20 de marzo</i>	<i>Vacaciones de Primavera</i>		
Semana 9: 23-27 de marzo	Módulo 6A: El derecho civil	• Introducción al derecho civil • Listas de vocabulario	• Pruebita 4 (vocabulario civil) • Actividad de Caso Cerrado
Semana 10: 30 de marzo al 3 de abril	Módulo 6B: El derecho civil	• Explicación del proyecto final • La traducción de actas • La traducción oral	• Actividad de traducción oral • ¿Qué sé yo? – Derecho civil
Semana 11: 6-10 de abril	Módulo 7A: El derecho migratorio	• Introducción al derecho migratorio • Listas de vocabulario • La traducción de un caso migratorio	• Foro 3 (noticias de inmigración) • Pruebita 5 (derecho migratorio)
Semana 12: 13-17 de abril	Módulo 7B: El derecho migratorio	• La trata de personas • Los textos paralelos	• Ensayo 2 (Los niños perdidos) • ¿Qué sé yo? – Derecho migratorio
Semana 13: 20-24 de abril	Módulo 8: El derecho lingüístico	• Introducción al derecho lingüístico en Estados Unidos	• Foro 4 (discriminación lingüística)

		• Introducción a la interpretación jurídica	
Semana 14: 27 de abril al 1 de mayo	Presentación del proyecto final	• Presentaciones • Colorín, colorado, este cuento no ha acabado...	• Colgar el proyecto final (presentación) • Comentar sobre el proyecto final de dos compañeros
2-4 de mayo	Días de estudio (Reading Days)		
6 de mayo	Entregar la traducción del proyecto final	• Entregar la traducción del proyecto final	• Entregar el proyecto final (traducción)

Required notices:

Attendance

As noted in the student handbook, the Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. The ABA standards say that the Law Center must have a policy. The 80% threshold is that policy. ***For online asynchronous courses, you must complete all assigned work before the mandatory weekly deadlines*** in order to be considered “present” that week. The student’s nonadherence will be notified to the Office of Student Affairs” (OSA).

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 the course 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 what is well known in the general public is ChatGPT. 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

includes that your assessment work product in the 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 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 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 aid are specifically prohibited from any use of AI Generated Text in this course.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

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. a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (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 around campus. www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html .

Sexual Misconduct Policy

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/>.

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.

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, Blackboard, 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.

Syllabus Changes

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Canvas announcements and email.

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. 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, and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Our class is richer for this diversity. Inclusive learning spaces facilitate the innovation and creative thought that enhance student success. This success arises from the participation, support, and understanding of you and your colleagues. I encourage you to speak up and to share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we're all expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others. If you feel like your class performance is impacted in any way by your experiences inside or outside of class, please reach out to me. I want to be a resource for you. If you feel more comfortable speaking with someone besides me, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is an excellent resource.

Other classroom policies:

a. Names and Pronouns. 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 me at any time if you want to make me aware of your chosen name or preferred pronoun, or if you have concerns about how I or your classmates address you.

b. Grading Curve. Please note that this course is subject to mandatory average and their curve. This may or may not affect your calculations of the total grade. If you have any questions regarding your current grade, do not hesitate to contact your professor or look at your current grade on Canvas.

c. Writing Assignments. All written homework assignments must be typed in a Word document. Include your name, date, class, and assignment name. Document must be double-spaced, Times New Roman font, and size 12, unless otherwise specified.

d. Final Exam. There is no final exam. Instead, your final project translation is due during the designated final exam time period.

e. Additional classroom and UHLC policies are found in the student handbook. Please visit <http://www.law.uh.edu/student/> in the section "student life" and click on student handbook pdf.

A friendly note from the professor:

Language learning takes a lot of practice, time, and effort. Although our class is asynchronous and you may be tempted to log in only once a week, I hope you make strive to practice your Spanish, especially the new vocabulary, outside the classroom. Use your time wisely: Do your homework, go over the new vocabulary lists, make flashcards, do the additional exercises, practice with Spanish-speaking friends, review the previous week's material. *Recuerde: ¡La práctica hace al maestro!*