

CURRENT ISSUES IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

WRITING SEMINAR

Syllabus - Spring 2026

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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00 – 1:00 PM or by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

- Course Number/Section Number: 7346/20590
- Meeting times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 – 5:30 PM
- Classroom: TBD
- Required textbook: Eugene Volokh, Academic Legal Writing: Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar Papers, and Getting on Law Review, 5th Edition (2016) (ISBN-13 9781634598880)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced-level seminar will take a deep dive into some of the latest trends, challenges, and innovation in the dynamic intellectual property (IP) law field. Topics such as artificial intelligence, social media, the metaverse, international IP protection, cultural property, and open access frameworks will be explored within the context of IP law. Drawing from contemporary writings, case law, legislation, and news reports, students will critically analyze the evolving legal frameworks and their implications for creators, businesses, consumers, and the public. Prior training in one or more areas of intellectual property law is recommended but not required. Optional reading will be available to students who have not taken any intellectual property courses.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand current issues in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and IP law
- Select topics for academic legal exploration
- Develop a thesis, examine its strengths and weaknesses by providing persuasive support
- Carefully read scholarship by others and provide commentary to improve the work product
- Present scholarly work to and receive feedback from a generalist and specialized audience

ATTENDANCE

The Law Center Student Handbook reads in part: “The Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. Any student who attends fewer than the minimum percentage of classes may be dropped automatically from the class. Faculty members are free to impose stricter attendance standards. Faculty members may consider those who come in late or leave early as absent, or may

decline to let a late student attend that day.” Absences in violation of law center policy may be sanctioned by a reduction in the final grade or, in egregious cases, by involuntary withdrawal from the class. You must come to class unless you have a legitimate reason for not doing so. Illness and family emergencies are legitimate reasons. Out of consideration for your colleagues, do not come to class if you are ill.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION, DECORUM AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Meaningful class participation is what makes small-group seminars enjoyable. Therefore, I expect students to have read and done their best to understand the materials for each class. The course is designed for critical reading and discussion. While critical assessment is encouraged you should do so in a respectful manner by focusing on the idea and not the person behind it. Class discussion is most productive when students feel free to try out positions with which they (or others) may not agree and to test the assumptions underlying their own (or others’) views. In fact, I will often ask students to argue positions with which they may disagree. Proficiently deploying such arguments for clients’ benefit is a key part of a lawyer’s job. For these reasons, class discussion is strictly “off the record.” Outside of the classroom, you may not attribute any statements made in class to any of your classmates. And any audio or visual recording of class is prohibited.

ASSESSMENT

The grades in this course will be based primarily on a final paper which should be between 10,000 – 12,000 words long. The paper should follow the relevant sections of the required textbook. Furthermore, the last few classes will be dedicated to student presentations of their draft papers. Quality class participation is essential for the success of the course. Repeated failure to make meaningful contributions to class discussion may adversely impact your grade. I reserve a right to raise or lower grades one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from a B to a B+; or A- to B+) on the basis of class participation throughout the semester and during the student presentations.

WEEKLY TOPICS

A detailed list of reading materials for each class will be shared on our Learning Management System at the start of the semester. The reading assignments may be updated based on current events or evolving needs of the group throughout the semester. Below is a preliminary list of topics.

1. Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)
2. AI and Copyright Law
3. AI and Trademark Law
4. AI and the Right of Publicity
5. AI and Patent Law
6. AI and Trade Secret Law
7. New Frontiers in Intellectual Property law

A. *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.

B. *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/other 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 of 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 unless specified as an exception below.

The following activities are exceptions to the immediately preceding paragraph; the intent of these exceptions is to allow use of AI Generated Text for specifically and narrowly defined activities in relation to this course:

- Creating content for an outline that you use to summarize the course content.
- “Conversing” with the AI Generated Text software system to create hypotheticals to better understand course content, alone or with others.
- Checking text drafted by you for misspellings, grammar and punctuation errors.

C. *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.

D. *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/>. *Reasonable Academic Adjustments/ Auxiliary Aids*

E. *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.

F. *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.

G. *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.

H. *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.

I. *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.

J. *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.)

K. *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/af-university-services/parking/cougar-ride/>.

L. *Syllabus Changes*

Please note that I may need to make modifications to the course syllabus. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through our Learning Management System.

M. *Helpful Information*

For various types of support, visit Coogs Care <https://uh.edu/dsa/coogscare/> and the Student Health Center: <https://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/>