

University of Houston Law Center
Syllabus and Course Information
Summer IV 2026

FAMILY LAW: 5383/14047
Professor Maleaha Brown

Course Meeting Place

This is an in-person course. Our usual classroom is LAW210. Class will meet **Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.** unless otherwise indicated.

Professor Contact Information and Office Hours

Professor Maleaha Brown

Pronouns: she/her

Office Telephone: (713) 743-3323

Email: mbrown38@central.uh.edu

Office location: 341S

Office Hours

I will establish my office hours based on class needs at the beginning of the semester. I am also available immediately after class on most days and by appointment.

Course Description

Family law is at the intersection of law, social policy, and the most intimate of human relations, marriage and parentage. This course will explore the laws and public policies governing marriage and other non-marital relationships; separation, dissolution, and annulment; parenting time, rights, and responsibilities; child and partner support; and domestic violence. This course will also discuss the ethical responsibilities of lawyers who practice family law and alternative dispute resolution in family law cases.

Course Learning Objectives

By the time you finish Family Law, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain fundamental family law statutes, cases, structures, and policy.
- Understand how family law evolves and apply a critical lens to the law and how it could or should be changed.
- Apply knowledge to solve real family law problems.
- Engage in effective and professional oral advocacy on family law issues.

Course Materials

Required course materials

This course requires the following texts and materials:

- D. Kelly Weisberg, *Modern Family Law: Cases and Materials*, Eighth Edition (ISBN 9798889062875)

Attendance

The Law Center has a minimum 80% attendance policy for students. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. The Office of Student Affairs will be notified if a student misses 3 or more classes. Please contact me as soon as possible to alert me to any issues you are facing that affect your attendance.

Grading Criteria and Evaluation

Grading Components and Method

The final grade for this course will be based on scaling each grading component. The four grading components in this course are:

- Participation and Professionalism (10% of final grade);
- Practice Problems (10% of final grade);
- Negotiation Exercise (10% of final grade); and
- Final Exam (70% of final grade).

Participation and Professionalism

Ten percent of your grade will be based on your participation and professionalism. I expect students to be prepared, engaged, professional, and to contribute positively to our learning community. Additionally, the subject matter for this course can be sensitive and personal. The facts and language from some of the cases are distressing. Students are expected to demonstrate civility and respect to one another during class discussions and in their interactions with their classmates. I will deduct from your participation and professionalism grade if you are unprepared for class or act unprofessionally in any way.

Practice Problems

Ten percent of your grade will be based on Practice Problems. Practice Problems will be open-book and are intended to help assess your understanding of the material in the course. For each Practice Problem, students will write a response to a hypothetical problem and submit the response on Canvas. If you timely and fully complete each Practice Problem, then you will receive full credit for this component of the grade. Failure to timely and fully complete any of the Practice Problems will result in a deduction from this component of the grade.

Negotiation Exercise

Ten percent of your grade will be based on a Negotiation Exercise. For the Negotiation Exercise, students will work with a partner to resolve a family law dispute during class. Students will then evaluate their performance and submit a reflection on Canvas. If you timely and fully complete the Negotiation Exercise, then you will receive full credit for this component of the grade. Failure to timely and fully complete the Negotiation Exercise will result in a deduction from this component of the grade.

Final Exam

Seventy percent of your grade will be based on the Final Examination. The Final Exam will be a closed-book exam likely comprised of essay and short answer questions.

Class Preparedness, Engagement, and Professionalism Policy

I may raise or lower your final grade by one-third of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B+, or from a B- to a C+) based on your preparation for class, engagement with the class, and willingness to contribute to the class. I may lower a student's grade for poor attendance, for repeatedly arriving late to class, or for repeatedly leaving class early. Grades may also be lowered for students who play video games; use personal email, social media, or surf the internet during class; or engage in other disruptive behavior.

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.

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 and Work Product

General

Generative artificial intelligence is a form of machine learning that creates new and original output based on the data it has been trained on or has access to, employing algorithms to generate content in response to prompts. Examples of the technology include what are known as generative “large language models” (LLMs). Two well-known LLM implementations are ChatGPT and Claude. LLM output can include text, images, music, code, and more. This syllabus policy covers the textual output of generative LLMs (AI-Generated Text)—which can include computer code or programs and human-language content. Because AI-Generated Text can often mimic human intelligence, it could potentially be used as a substitute for a student’s own work product. Such use is potentially problematic to the extent that it becomes a substitute for internalized student understanding of the material or creates a dependency on AI-Generated Text, which may be strictly prohibited in settings that include the bar examination.

Prohibition

Subject to the exceptions immediately below, your continuing enrollment in this course constitutes your pledge not to generate or to use any AI-Generated Text—whether from yourself or others—in relation to any assessment in this course. The term “assessment” means any graded or ungraded work product for this course that is submitted to the instructor, presented in a class session, or used in an oral or written graded assessment for this course.

Exceptions

The following AI-Generated Text uses are exceptions to the preceding prohibition. The exceptions’ intent is to allow the generation and use of AI-Generated Text for specific, narrowly defined activities related to this course.

- You may generate and use AI-Generated Text for study supplements to aid with general understanding of course content. This could take different forms that include creating an outline that summarizes the course content, generation of diagrams and flow charts, “gamification” of course content, or flash cards for study.
- You may use AI-Generated Text for the purpose of language translation.

- You may use AI-Generated Text when given explicit written permission on specific assignments.

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.

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

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.

Women and Gender Resource Center (WGRC)

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 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Assignments and Course Outline

On or before the first day of class, I will post a course outline with a calendar of assignments and due dates. To better address changing student needs throughout the semester, the course outline may change.