

**Mock Trial Independent Study**

(2026_SPRG_22191_CJ 2321

001_Mock Trial Independent Study

Type: Classroom**Start Date:** 01/14/2026 **End Date:** 05/05/2026**Building:** Morelock Academic Room: 00107**Class Hours:** Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM**Assistant Professor Ercan BALCIOGLU****Lecturer of Criminal Justice Benjamin Barrientes, J.D.**

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*****Syllabus is subject to updates and changes by announcement, always look to the course announcements and reminders for updates. The faculty member reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed*****

Contacting Me: The best way to reach me is via email. Do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. I will respond to email inquiries as soon as possible.

COURSE MATERIALS*The following course materials are required:*

- 1) **Lubet, Steven and Koster, Jill R. (2024). Mock Trials: Preparing, Presenting, and Winning Your Case (NITA), 3rd Edition, Aspen Publishing, Louisville, CO. ISBN-13 979-8886690576.**
- 2) **Logan Emerson Case Materials (People of the State of Illinois v. Logan Emerson).**

Recommended (Optional):

- 1) Book: The Tools of Argument: How the Best Lawyers Think, Argue, and Win (Author: Joel P. Trachtman)
- 2) Book: The Five Types of Legal Argument (Author: Wilson R. Huhn)
- 3) Book: Legal Argument: The Structure and Language of Effective Advocacy (Author: James A. Gardner)

American Psychological Association (October 2019), Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition, <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publicationmanual-7th-edition-spiral> .
Additional material (e.g. extra readings, videos, etc.) will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the principles of legal reasoning and argument within the framework of trial advocacy. Students will develop essential skills in constructing, presenting, and evaluating legal arguments through the preparation and performance of a mock trial exercise. *Practice provides methods to demonstrate to the judge your thorough understanding of the case, the rules of evidence, and courtroom procedure.*

Designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the criminal justice system operates, the course offers a step-by-step examination of courtroom processes—from case preparation and research to the application of evidentiary and procedural rules. Students will gain practical experience in examining witnesses, raising and responding to evidentiary objections, introducing exhibits, and conducting both direct and cross-examinations.

Throughout the semester, emphasis is placed on professionalism, critical reasoning, and effective oral

communication. Practice sessions will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate to the judge their understanding of the case, the rules of evidence, and courtroom procedure.

The course begins with an examination of the **sources of law, the adversarial system, and the procedural and evidentiary rules** that guide the pursuit of justice in courtroom practice. Students will also explore how logic and reasoning inform the application of law to factual situations.

Throughout the semester, these concepts will be applied in the context of preparing and conducting a **mock trial of a fictional criminal case**. Students will assume the roles of attorneys and witnesses for both the plaintiff/prosecution and the defense. To prepare, they will learn the techniques of trial advocacy, including opening statements, direct and cross-examinations, objections, and closing arguments.

The class will be divided into teams, each responsible for preparing either the plaintiff's or the defense's case. The semester will culminate in a mock trial scrimmage where teams present their cases before a simulated court.

You should take this course if:

- You are interested in joining Sul Ross State University's Mock Trial Team, where you can apply the skills developed in this class to intercollegiate competition.
- You are planning to attend law school, as you will gain foundational knowledge of courtroom procedures, evidentiary rules, and argumentation strategies used in legal education.
- You wish to enhance your oral communication and presentation skills, gaining confidence in persuasive speaking and structured reasoning.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students gain a comprehensive understanding of the criminal justice process through the structure and practice of **mock trials**. The course offers a detailed, step-by-step exploration of how trials operate within the judicial system—from the organization of the courtroom and the preparation of a case for the application of evidentiary and procedural rules. Students will develop essential advocacy and communication skills as they learn how to conduct direct and cross-examinations, raise and respond to objections, introduce exhibits, and effectively question both law and expert witnesses.

In the **Mock Trial** course, students will follow a structured, step-by-step plan for mastering each phase of a trial at a professional level. The course emphasizes practical application rather than abstract theory, ensuring that all materials are clear, engaging, and directly relevant to real courtroom performance.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Explain** the fundamental principles of the American legal and adversarial systems, including the distinct roles of attorneys, witnesses, and the court.
2. **Identify and apply** key procedural and evidentiary rules that govern trial practice and courtroom advocacy.
3. **Construct persuasive legal arguments** grounded in sound reasoning, factual analysis, and applicable law.
4. **Demonstrate advanced communication skills** by delivering clear, organized, and convincing courtroom presentations.
5. **Perform essential trial components**, including opening statements, direct and cross-examinations, objections, and closing arguments.
6. **Develop and portray credible witness characters** that enhance the narrative and integrity of the case.

7. **Conduct effective examinations** by employing strategic questioning, storytelling, and witness control techniques.
8. **Impeach witnesses** confidently using a clear, systematic, and ethical approach.
9. **Formulate and argue objections** persuasively, demonstrating an understanding of evidentiary and procedural foundations.
10. **Collaborate within a trial team** to design and present a coherent, persuasive, and ethically responsible case theory.
11. **Critically evaluate trial performances**—both peers and opposing counsel—through professional advocacy standards and constructive feedback.
12. **Exhibit professionalism and ethical integrity** consistent with the values and expectations of the legal profession.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library at Sul Ross State University provides free resources and services for the entire SRSU community, including books, articles, and online databases accessible at www.library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. A photo ID is required to check out physical materials. Librarians are available for assistance via email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), phone (432-837-8123), or in person.

For RGC students: You also have access to the Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries located in Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. These libraries provide additional space and resources, as well as access to online materials via library.swtjc.edu. Moreover, they serve as pickup locations for InterLibrary Loan (ILL) services from the Alpine campus. Logging into your Sul Ross Blackboard account connects you directly to the library webpage, where you can explore online databases and access articles on the reading list. Please note, the syllabus is subject to updates. Regularly check course announcements for changes. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of *CJ 5331 – Mock Trial*, students will be able to:

1. Describe the structure and function of the American legal and adversarial systems, including the roles of attorneys, witnesses, judges, and juries. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 1 – Understand*)
2. Apply procedural and evidentiary rules to simulated courtroom activities, demonstrating knowledge of trial advocacy principles. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 1 & 2 – Apply*)
3. Analyze factual scenarios to develop persuasive and legally sound arguments grounded in law and reasoning. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 1 & 3 – Analyze*)
4. Demonstrate effective courtroom communication through clear, organized, and professional oral advocacy. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 2 – Apply*)
5. Perform essential trial components—opening statements, examinations, objections, and closing arguments—with competence and confidence. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 1 – Apply*)
6. Create and portray credible witness characters that enhance narrative coherence and case integrity. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 2 – Create*)
7. Evaluate trial performances using professional standards of advocacy, ethics, and civility. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 3 – Evaluate*)
8. Collaborate within a trial team to design and present a coherent and ethical case strategy. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 3 – Create/Evaluate*)
9. Exhibit professionalism, civility, and ethical integrity consistent with the expectations of the legal and judicial professions. (*Supports CJ-GRAD-SLO 3 – Apply/Evaluate*)

Course Policies and Guidelines

Technology Requirements

This course uses **Blackboard** extensively. Students should check it regularly for:

-  Announcements
-  Assignments
-  Grades
-  Course materials

Key Blackboard tools: email, discussion boards, Grade Center, SafeAssign, and external links.

You will need:

-  Basic computer skills (email with attachments, internet browsing, Word or similar software)
-  A reliable computer with stable internet access
-  A current web browser capable of streaming and downloading materials
-  Blackboard access using your LoboID and password

Help: Tutorials and support are available on the Blackboard support page.

Participation Policy

Even though this is a fully online course, **active participation is required**. Begin by completing the non-graded **“Introduction” discussion post**.

Students are expected to:

- ✓ Log into Blackboard regularly
- ✓ Complete all assignments and exams by their posted due dates
- ✓ Contact the instructor via email with any questions

Tip: Consistent engagement is key to success in this course.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and engagement are mandatory. Students may be dropped with an “F” for **excessive non-participation**, defined as:

-  More than **6 classes of inactivity** in a long semester.

Inactivity includes:

-  Not logging into Blackboard
-  Failing to submit assignments
-  Not participating in required activities
-  Not communicating with the instructor
-  Not following participation guidelines in the syllabus

Students must follow academic integrity rules and treat all campus resources professionally. **Check your SRSU email regularly**, as official communications are sent there.

Late Assignment Policy

All coursework must be submitted by the stated deadlines. Late work is generally **not accepted**, as due dates are provided at the beginning of the term.

Exceptions are allowed only for documented, university-recognized reasons (e.g., illness, family emergency, military assignment). Documentation must be submitted promptly.

Reminder: Review the syllabus regularly and stay informed of all deadlines.

Academic Integrity

Students must uphold the highest standards of honesty, as outlined in the Sul Ross Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, or falsification of records, will not be tolerated.

Definitions:

- Cheating: Using unauthorized materials or assistance during exams, altering records, or obtaining answers dishonestly
- Plagiarism: Submitting someone else's work, ideas, or words as your own without proper citation
- Collusion: Assisting or being complicit in another student's academic dishonesty

 **Note:** Using AI tools like ChatGPT is prohibited unless explicitly allowed for a specific assignment. Violations may result in penalties from a failing grade on the assignment to failure of the course and may lead to further disciplinary action.

Maintaining academic integrity protects both the value of your education and the credibility of the university.

APA Style

All written assignments must follow the American Psychological Association (APA) Seventh Edition formatting and style guide.

Students must:

- Properly cite all external sources
- Follow APA guidelines for in-text citations, references, and formatting

Failure to cite sources correctly constitutes plagiarism and violates course academic honesty standards.

Resources:

- Purdue OWL APA Guide:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Student Support Services

Sul Ross State University offers various programs to help students succeed, including advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of services, visit Student Support Services at <https://www.sulross.edu/section/311/student-support-services>. For more information, contact SSS at (432) 837-9118 or visit Ferguson Hall, Room 105.

Counseling Services: Sul Ross students have access to nine free counseling sessions through TimelyCare. For 24/7 support, visit TimelyCare/SRSU. In-person counseling is also available in Ferguson Hall, Room 112 (Alpine campus), and via telehealth for remote and RGC students.

Students with Special Needs - Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA)

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartze Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email mschwartze@sulross.edu. The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall # 112, and the mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, SRSU, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Departmental Undergraduate Program Marketable Skills

(Aligned with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board – 60x30TX Plan)

The 60x30TX initiative aims for 60% of Texans aged 25–34 to hold a degree or credential by 2030. One key component of this goal is that all graduates from public institutions in Texas will complete academic programs with clearly defined marketable skills—competencies valued by employers that support career readiness and lifelong employability.

Marketable skills include both technical and soft skills—often referred to as “employability” or “transferable” skills—developed through coursework, research, internships, and co-curricular activities. Graduates of the Homeland Security and Criminal Justice Undergraduate Programs at Sul Ross State University will demonstrate the following marketable skills:

1. Effective Verbal and Written Communication
2. Data Literacy and Quantitative Analysis Skills
3. Critical Thinking and Observational Abilities
4. Teamwork and Collaborative Work Practices
5. Cultural Competency and Multicultural Understanding
6. Analytical Skills in Crime Causation and Prevention
7. Knowledge of Legal Codes, Procedures, and Public Safety Protocols

These skills prepare students for diverse roles in law enforcement, homeland security, public service, and justice-related professions.

Course Evaluation

Reaction Papers (100 pts each)

- Weekly, based on readings.
- 1 page, 1.5 spacing, 12pt Times New Roman.
- Focus: perspective, analysis, connections; not summaries.
- Due: Sundays, 11:00 PM (CT).

Final Paper (150 pts)

- Topic: social deviance and crime.
- Length: 10–15 pages (body), plus title page, TOC, abstract, references, appendices.
- Double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, APA 7th Edition.
- At least 10 scholarly sources (5 new, not covered in class).
- Submission: **Final Paper_2026_SPRING_22191_CJ_2321_FirstName_LastName** via Blackboard Message.

Grading Criteria for Final Paper:

- Clear thesis and argument
- Depth of analysis and application of sociological concepts
- Proper use of APA formatting and citations
- Quality and relevance of sources

A **sample paper** will be posted on **Blackboard** to provide guidance on proper formatting and structure. You will write a final paper on one of the transnational crimes covered in chapters 4-13. The paper should.

- be 10 to 15 pages (this is the body of your paper excluding everything else)
- include these parts: Title page (1 page), Table of Contents (1 page), Abstract (1 page), Body of the paper - one of the transnational crimes covered in chapters 4-13 (10+ pages), References (1 page), Appendices (if any) (see APA Manual for formatting guidelines),

- be typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Calibri font,
- include **at least five scholarly citations** other than the ones we covered in the class (not website articles, Wikipedia, news agencies, magazines, etc.), and
- be written according to APA formatting and citation style. Save and attach your final paper using the following naming format exactly:

Final Paper_2025_SUMM_30282_CJ_5328_FirstName_LastName

Please attach your Final Paper and submit it to me using Blackboard Module, ensuring you put the same name of your Final Paper as explained above.

Grading

Grading Components

Assessment	Points
Attendance	250
Reaction Papers (2x 50 points)	100
Final Paper	150
Total Possible Points	500

Course Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Points Range
A	500 – 460
B	459 – 420
C	419 – 380
D	379 – 340
F	339 & below

Course Schedule

This course schedule is subject to change as needed to meet the needs of the course. Students will be notified of adjustments when they are made. Also, any additional reading materials, resources and other information will be posted on Blackboard. Students will be notified of how to access this information by the instructor.

*****All times are in central time*****

Weekly Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments
1	January 14-18th 1st Day of class January 19th Monday Martin Luther King Jr. Day No Class	Course overview; sources of law and theory of adversarial process; syllogisms, necessary/sufficient conditions, analogies/distinctions, and their application to the law; introduction to mock trial and Logan Emerson Case Materials case; assign teams.	Syllabus & Semester Project Guidelines
2	January 19-25	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 1
3	January 26-Feb 1	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 2
4	February 2-8	Reaction Paper 1	Chapter 3

5	February 9-15	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 4
6	February 15-22	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 5
7	February 23- March 1	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 6
8	March 2-8 March 6, Final Day for Midterm Exam	Reaction Paper 2 (Midterm Exam)	Chapter 7
9	March 9-15	March 9-13 Spring Break No Classes	
10	March 16-22	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 8
11	March 23-29	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 9
12	March 30-April 5	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	Chapter 10
13	April 6-12	Practice-Tuesday/Wednesday 05:00 - 06:45 PM	
14	April 13-19	Mock Trail on Monday 13:30 pm	
15	April 20-26	Final Paper Submission by 26 April to Blackboard	
16	Dead Day 16-week term May 1 Friday, May 4-6 Monday-Wed,		

End of Course Evaluations

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.

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Week 1

Course overview; sources of law and theory of adversarial process; syllogisms, necessary/sufficient conditions, analogies/distinctions, and their application to the law; introduction to mock trial and Logan Emerson Case Materials case; assign teams.

Week 2

Theory put into practice—how the procedural and evidentiary rules attempt to achieve the goals of the adversarial system, Relevance and Personal Knowledge rules of evidence.

Assignment: Lubet, Ch. 1; read LOGAN EMERSON CASE MATERIALS pp. 14-17, 21-24; read Midlands Rules of Evidence 602, 401, 402, 104(b); prepare a 3-minute speech about a topic of your choice.

Wednesday, September 10, 2014:

Continuing Rules of Evidence (relevance, personal knowledge, unfairly prejudicial evidence, and improper character evidence, hearsay)

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 5; read Midlands Rules of Evidence 403, 404, 609, 801, 802.

Week 3

Rules of Evidence: Hearsay

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 12(IV)(B)(1); read Midlands Rules of Evidence 803, 804.

Continue Rules of Evidence (hearsay exceptions)

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 2; Start reading LOGAN EMERSON CASE MATERIALS

Week 4

Case theory/theme; how to break down a case

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 3, 6, 7.

Quiz (rules of evidence): 104(b), 401, 402, 403, 404, 602, 609, 801, 802, 803, 804

How to do direct examinations; nuances of direct examination / introducing exhibits into evidence

Assignment: read entire LOGAN EMERSON CASE MATERIALS materials applicable to the intentional shooting claim (affidavits/depositions, exhibits, jury instructions, etc.); e-mail breakdown of case to your TA by 5 p.m. on Sunday, 9/28/14

Week 5

Monday, September 29, 2014

How to deal with experts on direct exams

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 11(I, II, III); e-mail 1st draft of direct exam to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 10/3/14

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

How to do cross examinations

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 8, 9.

Week 6

Nuances of cross examination / impeachment / refreshing recollection

How to deal with experts on cross exams

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 11(IV); e-mail 1st draft of cross exam to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 10/10/14

Week 7

Objections

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 12.

Week 8

Monday, October 20, 2014

DX exercises with all-object; opening statements

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 13.

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Continue opening statements

Assignment: e-mail your opening statement to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 10/24/14

Week 9

Monday, October 27, 2014

CX exercises with all-object; closing statements

Assignment: Lubet Ch. 14.

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

Continue closing statements

Assignment: e-mail your closing statement to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 10/31/14

Week 10

Monday, November 3, 2014

Team meeting with your team's TA

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

Team meeting with your team's TA

Assignment: e-mail 2nd draft of direct and cross examinations to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 11/7/14

Week 11

Monday, November 10, 2014

Trial decorum / pre-trial procedure

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Evidence Introduction / Impeachment / Refreshing Recollection Drills

Assignment: e-mail 2nd draft of opening and closing statements to your TA by 5 p.m. on Friday, 11/14/14

Week 12

Monday, November 17, 2014

Team meeting and/or TBD guest speaker

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Team meeting and/or TBD guest speaker

Week 13

Monday, November 24, 2014

Team meeting and/or TBD guest speaker

Wednesday, November 26, 2014:

Thanksgiving break, no class

Week 14

Monday, December 1, 2014

Practice Scrimmage (graded as an assignment)

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Continue Practice Scrimmage

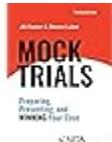
Week 15

Monday, December 8, 2014

Full Scrimmage (graded as final exam)

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Continue Full Scrimmage



Jill Koster & Steven Lubet, (2024). Mock Trials: Preparing, Presenting, and Winning Your Case (NITA), 3rd Edition, Aspen Publishing, Louisville, CO.

Mock Trials provides an updated, step-by-step guide to preparing, presenting, and winning trial competitions at every level. Practice tips provide methods to demonstrate to the judge your thorough understanding of the case, the rules of evidence, and courtroom procedure.