



FALL 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 328-001
Course Title: Trial Advocacy
Credit Hours: 2
Grading Mode: CR/Non-CR
Meeting Time(s): MON 4:00-6:00P
Meeting Mode: ON CAMPUS
Exam Time(s): N/A
Exam Mode: N/A
Prerequisite(s): Law 222: Evidence
Corequisite(s): N/A
Instructor(s):
Judge Rossie D. Alston, Jr. | Judge William Jarvis

Contact Info:
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Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

- *Trial Advocacy in a Nutshell* – 6th Edition
- [*The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association*](#), Volume 22, Number 4, 2011, can be purchased directly from the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association (VTLA).
- [*The Art and Science of Mastering the Jury Trial*](#), also available to purchase from the VTLA.

Course Overview

The goal for this course is for students to learn the basic legal rules applicable to being a successful courtroom litigator. Students will also be exposed (where circumstances permit) to interactive exercises in all aspects of the trial of a criminal and civil case.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to conduct a successful voir dire, present an opening statement and closing argument, understand and conduct a thorough direct examination, cross-examination and be able to qualify an expert witness. Students will also gain an enhanced learning of the Rules of Evidence based on the text and intent behind the rules.

Classroom Policies

Attendance: Per AR 3-1.4, “maintenance of matriculation requires regular class preparation, participation and attendance, registration in the course of study required for the student’s program (full-time or part-time), successive registration for each fall and spring term of each academic year until study is completed, and compliance with all other relevant requirements.”

Absences: Per AR 4-1.1, “if a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session.”

Participation & Preparation:

Class attendance and participation (by virtue of either cold calling or volunteering) will also be taken into account in calculating a student’s ability to successfully pass this course. As this class is very interactive, students will be expected to have prepared for class exercises and the role-playing exercises necessary to become effective courtroom advocates.

Use of Technology & AI:

Moderate Use Policy: Generative AI tools may be used in this course for the following purposes, and with the following guidelines. Students may use AI in this course to brainstorm, outline, study, explore, etc, but may not use AI as the primary source for research, as the primary source for text of written assignments, during any quiz or exam, during Socratic dialogue. Students must use AI tools responsibly, verify facts presented by AI, disclose when AI tools are used to create course work product, properly cite any AI tools utilized, and should be prepared to produce the transcript of prompts and responses upon request. Misuse will be treated as a violation of academic standards.

Course Schedule & Assignments

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
08/17/26	Introduction, Trials - Overview Objections	<i>*Nutshell pages 344-447; Class Overview- Introduction to Course-Matthew Morrison, Esq.</i>
08/24/26	Use of Exhibits	<i>Class Exercises</i>
08/31/26	Jury Selection and Voir Dire	<i>*The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011</i>
09/09/26 (Wednesday)	Lecture: Direct and Cross Examination	<i>The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011</i>
09/14/26	Direct and Cross Examination II	<i>Nutshell pages 139- 197</i>
09/21/26	Direct and Cross Examination III	<i>Nutshell pages 240- 280</i>
09/28/26	Impeachment	<i>Nutshell pages 290-333</i>
10/05/26	Impeachment, Redirect	<i>Nutshell pages 335-343</i>
10/19/26	Experts, Arguing Legal Positions	<i>Nutshell pages 449-480</i>
10/26/26	Opening Statements (All Motions in Limine to be filed)	<i>The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011 Nutshell pages 92-135</i>
11/02/26	Closing Arguments (All Oppositions to Motions in Limine to be filed)	<i>Nutshell pages 485-511</i>
11/09/26	Motions in Limine	<i>The Journal of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, Volume 22 Number 4, 2011</i>
11/16/26	Trial Preparation	<i>*The Art and Science of Mastering the Jury Trial</i>
11/30/26	Trials – Format, Location and mode TBD	<i>Nutshell pages 1 -130</i>

[Student Resources](#)

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703 -380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703 -993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703 -993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-993-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Life](#)