

TRIAL ADVOCACY FOR COMPETITORS

Law 329 (2 credits) (CR/NC Course)

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Spring 2026 – Wednesday 8:10 p.m. – 10:10 p.m. (Room TBD)

The purpose of this course is to (1) build on skills learned during core classes such as evidence and LRWA and apply them to real life trial practice (2) to focus intensively on the preparation and delivery of all parts of a jury trial in connection with participation in an extramural trial advocacy competition.

Taking this course should help you to:

- Understand the parts of a jury trial and the expectations of a trial level court
- Work as part of a team to break-down a complex legal case involving a criminal or civil issue
- Formulate a theme, draft opening statements, closing arguments, and direct and cross examinations
- Develop trial advocacy skills that can be applied to other competitions and trial level practice in the future

Suggested Texts:

Mauet, Trial Techniques

Federal Rules of Evidence (Taking evidence is a pre-req or co-req unless prior approved)

****Schedule:**

1/15 – INTRODUCTION TO COMPETITIONS – What is competition format and what to expect including expectations, coaches, practice schedules

1/22 - THEMES – What is a theme? Theory v. theme, labels, and storytelling in the context of a competition

1/29 – DIRECT EXAMINATIONS – Being a facilitator, courtroom positioning, best way to create questions, and looping

2/5 – NTC COMPETITION

2/12 - CROSS EXAMINATION AND EVIDENCE – Leading the witness, courtroom positioning, object of cross, demonstrations of entering evidence

2/19 – OBJECTIONS AND CLOSING – What is a proper objection? Content of closing

2/26 – EXPERTS – Why do we use experts? Order of questions and cross examination of experts

3/5 – AAJ COMPETITION

3/12 – SPRING BREAK

3/19- SKILLS PRACTICE***

3/26 - SKILLS PRACTICE***

4/2 – SEMESTER WRAP-UP

4/9– SEMESTER WRAP-UP

4/16 – SEMESTER WRAP-UP

****The subject matter and content of each class is subject to change and dependent on the competition schedule and the needs of the teams. The beginning of each class may start with a short period of instruction (depending on the competition schedule) and the other part of class is intended to be used to prepare for your competition. You are expected to come prepared for class and to be prepared for your competition. Your coaches will set expectations and timelines of goals that you should be meeting before your practices. There will be various check-ins to make sure you are meeting those goals and are prepared for practice. I will send out an email ahead of the next scheduled class to inform everyone what competition we will be working on in class and what you should be prepared to do. Each student may be expected to play the part of an attorney, a witness, or the Judge. You will be expected to learn different parts of the trial and competition problems to assist other teams with their competition preparation, particularly after your competition has finished.**

*****The classes devoted to skills practice will involve a trial exercise that each student is expected to participate in. You will be emailed ahead of time with further instructions for each class. Some exercises will require some preparation ahead of time and some others will not. Skills practice includes assisting other teams with preparation for their competitions and as noted above you may be required to learn other problems and/or draft parts of a different problem to help teams that are competing later on in the semester.**

I have office hours by appointment. I am always available to review your competition materials and answer any questions you may have.