



Syllabus: Comparative Trial Advocacy Skills Course 2025

St. Hugh's College
Oxford University
Oxford, England

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to Stetson's Comparative Advocacy Course 2025, taught in Oxford, England on the beautiful grounds of St. Hugh's College. Together we will develop your own best inner advocate. Our goal is to create a teaching and mentoring environment where you can take the time to dive deeply into becoming the best advocate possible. We will accomplish this through the use of large group, small group, and individual work, with an emphasis on self-discovery and skills development. You will learn the fundamentals of trial practice, with a particular emphasis on case analysis, storytelling, and presentation. We have brought some of the best advocacy professors together to give you multiple viewpoints on the art of advocacy and to provide you with insights in the differences between advocacy in the United States and Great Britain. Through lecture, discussion, and guided tours, students will be able to identify various practical and ethical differences in these legal systems.

TEXT:

There are supplemental readings and a case file required for this course. All of the materials have been provided on the Canvas course page. You do not need to purchase any textbooks.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students explore methods of persuasion and apply the lessons learned through performance-based exercises designed to expand the boundaries of their understanding and mastery of techniques. This course includes a strong

emphasis on establishing and maintaining personal connections in order to facilitate effective communication. This course will include recorded lectures, in-person lectures, individual exercises with coaching feedback, self-reflection, and a final series of advocacy exercises where skills will be assessed.

Outcomes and Assessments	
Outcomes	Assessments
Deepen your understanding of theoretical constructs that are the foundation of persuasive advocacy.	Participation in small group discussions, exercises and individual reflections.
Improve your individual advocacy skills based on your current skill sets and long-term interests.	Performance in small group exercises and final presentations.
Develop your ability to understand, identify, and use “best practice” techniques for oral advocacy.	Performance in small group exercises and final presentations.
Experience advocacy approaches from other common law systems.	Reflection on comparative law concepts and presentations.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY AND DRESS CODE:

Class attendance each day is required. Students are to arrive on time for all class sessions and scheduled tours and events. Students may dress casually for regular class sessions and tours. Students should have one business/cocktail outfit for the reception at the St. Hugh’s Principal’s home on **TBD**. Students should wear courtroom attire for final assessment simulations on Thursday, July 31st and Friday, August 1st.

RESOURCES:

All course resources can be found on the course page on Canvas.

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

There will be a mixture of general lecture sessions, which all students will attend, and lectures/workshops in small group sessions. There are also guided cultural tours. Students are required to attend all applicable sessions, workshops, and tours.

GRADING:

There will not be a final written exam, but we will instead base grades upon student participation in large and small group discussions, preparedness for in-class exercises, written self-reflection, and final presentations. Professors will also consider the students' improvement over the duration of the course in their final grade.

TIME NECESSARY TO PREPARE FOR CLASS:

It is important that you read assigned materials prior to class. Students are required to spend 2 hours out of class time preparing for each hour of in class time. In total it is necessary for students to spend 127.5 hours on this 3-credit class.

PRE-COURSE RECORDED MATERIALS:

Recorded Videos	Topic
	Organizing & Executing Effective Opening Statements
	Organizing & Executing Effective Direct Examinations
	Organizing & Executing Effective Cross Examinations
	Two Evidence Videos

DAILY SCHEDULE

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Program Orientation @ 5:00 p.m.

Welcome Gathering @ 6:30 p.m.

Monday, July 21, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 9:15	Announcements	Boals/Vaughan	
9:15 - 10:15	Case Analysis	Concepcion/Fasulo	Lecture/Interactive
10:15 - 11:00	Differences In the US and UK Legal Systems	O'Grady	Lecture
11:00 - 11:15	Tea & Cookies		
11:15 - 1:00	Storytelling & Persuasion	Foreman	Lecture/Interactive

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 10:30	Case Analysis	All Professors	SSW
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & Cookies		
10:45 - 12:00	Opening Statements	Concepcion/Donoghue	Lecture/Interactive
12:15 - 1:00	Opening Workshop/Themes & Theories	All Professors	SSW
2:00 - 5:00	Oxford Walking Tour	Mandatory Attendance (walking shoes)	Meet in courtyard at 1:15

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 10:30	Opening Statements	All Professors	SSW
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & Cookies		
10:45 - 12:15	Direct Examination	Flowers	Lecture/Interactive
12:15 - 1:30	Admitting Exhibits	Donoghue	Lecture/Interactive

Thursday, July 24, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 10:30	Direct Examinations	All Professors	SSW
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & Cookies		
10:45 - 12:15	Cross Examination	Boals/Fasulo	Lecture/Interactive
12:15 - 1:30	Cross Workshopping	All Professors	SSW

Friday, July 25, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 10:30	Cross Examination	All Professors	SSW
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & Cookies		
10:45 - 11:45	Solicitor v. Barrister	More/O'Grady	Lecture/Interactive
12:00 - 1:30	Closing Arguments	Concepcion/Foreman	Lecture/Interactive

Monday, July 28, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 10:30	Closing Arguments	All Professors	SSW
10:30 - 10:45	Tea & Cookies		
10:45 - 11:30	Evidence Review	Boals	Lecture/Interactive
11:45 - 1:30	Skill Drilling & Small Section Workshops	All Professors	SSW

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Stratford On Avon – Shakespeare Tour

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 11:00	Preparation Sessions	All Professors	SSW
11:00 - 11:15	Tea & Cookies		
11:15 - 12:15	Ethics	Flowers	Lecture/Interactive
12:15 -	Preparation Sessions	All Professors	By Appointment

Thursday, July 31, 2025

Time	Topic	Professor	Small Section Workshop (SSW) or Lecture
9:00 - 11:00	Preparation Sessions	All Professors	SSW/By Appointment
12:00 – 3:00	Final Presentations	All Professors	

Friday, August 1, 2025

Final Presentations 9 AM – 3 PM All Professors

Daily Subject Schedule

Prior to arriving at the Program, students are required to watch the assigned recorded presentations and read the assigned case file (*State v. Murray*).

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Orientation & Welcome Reception

Monday, July 21, 2025

Case Analysis, Storytelling, and Persuasion:

Discussion and exercises focused on techniques and strategies used for comprehensive case analysis. Through lecture and small group exercises, students will be exposed to a ‘non-lawyer’ way of approaching storytelling and the very real need to connect their humanity with legal presentations.

The day concludes with a walking tour of Oxford.

Assignment for next day: All students are assigned to small working groups, and should reread the case file. Students come to next class with a preliminary case analysis for both sides of the case.

Students should review the recordings on opening statements and evidence.

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Case Analysis and Opening Statements:

Small group in-depth case analysis workshops.

Presentation on presenting a persuasive opening statement.

Assignment for next class: Students prepare a 4 to 6-minute opening statement. Review the recording on direct examination.

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Opening Statements, Direct Examination, and Exhibits:

In small group sessions, trial students perform opening statements, receive individualized feedback.

In the large group session, all students will explore the structure and presentation techniques for effective direct examination. Students work through the case file exhibits.

Assignment for next class: Students prepare a 4 to 6-minute direct examination of a witness of your choosing. Please enlist the help of another student in your small group to play your witness. Review the cross-examination recording.

Thursday, July 24, 2025

Direct and Cross Examinations and Witness Preparations:

Students conduct direct examinations in small groups with individualized feedback from professors.

In a large group session, students will learn about the differences in witness preparation procedures and policies in the US and UK. Students will also work on their cross-examination skills and try varying techniques for controlling witnesses.

Assignment for next class: Students prepare 4 to 6-minute cross examination of a witness of your choosing. Please enlist the help of another student in your small group to play your witness.

Friday, July 25, 2024

Cross Examination and Closing Argument:

Students present short cross-examinations for feedback.

In a large group session, students discuss closing arguments in an interactive session. Students are exposed to the different roles played by lawyers in the British system by discussing the differences between barristers and solicitors.

Assignment for Monday's class: Trial students prepare 4 to 6-minute closing arguments due Monday, July 28, 2025. Final assessment assignments will be distributed Monday, July 28, 2025.

Monday, July 28, 2025

Closing Arguments and Trial Preparation:

Students present short closing arguments for feedback and work through redrafting in small group sessions.

Students work through drills designed to build confidence and master witness examination skills.

Interactive evidence review.

Assignment: All students work on final assessment assignments.

Don't Forget the Assignment Due on Monday, August 4, 2025 by noon Eastern Time – reflection paper. See end of syllabus for full assignment details.

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Cultural Tour of Stratford-Upon-Avon

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Skill Drilling, Witness Preparation Ethics, and Final Assessment Preparation Sessions:

Students meet with their small section professors to work individually and in pairs on the final trial assignments.

Assignment: All students work on final assessment assignments.

Thursday, July 31, 2025 - Final Assessment Preparations and Presentations

Students prepare for and present final assessment simulations. When not performing students will assist in the assessment of others by performing witness and support roles.

Friday, August 1, 2025 - Final Assessment Presentations

Students perform their designated skills as assigned. When not performing students will assist in the assessment of others by performing witness and support roles.

Assignment Due on Monday, August 4, 2025 by noon Eastern Time:

Students must prepare a reflection paper pages, after reviewing the recording of one of their small group performances. The paper should be two to three pages double spaced and answer the following questions:

1. Identify three things that you saw in your performance that you would change to make the performance more persuasive. Explain how the change would have positively affected your persuasive power.
2. Identify three things you saw in your performance that you thought had a positive impact on your credibility, likeability, or overall persuasive power. Explain your answer.
3. Identify your greatest area of improvement during the course.
4. Identify one skill that you would like to work on in the future and how you plan to improve in that skill.

Please use headings in the reflection paper to separate the paper by the four above questions.