

Common Law and Trial Procedures

2023-2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will provide students the opportunity to expand their knowledge about the fundamentals of the American judicial system and how it can impact their lives in ways they might not otherwise imagine. The course will further students' understanding of the law, court procedures, civil liberties and the American legal system. It will also increase proficiency in basic life skills, such as listening, public speaking, rote memorization, reading, and analytical reasoning. Summer reading is required in this course. Students are required to think independently and develop their advocacy skills regardless of which side of an issue is being presented. Most importantly, the course will promote better communication and cooperation between the student, Chelmsford High School, and the legal profession. Students who take Common Law and Trial Procedures I and II will be required to participate in the Massachusetts Bar Association's Mock Trial program. This unique experience will heighten the student's consciousness of law-related professions and the academic studies, which lead to those professions. Many schools in the state participate in this competition-based program, including well-known educational facilities from the private sector.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mass Bar Association. Mock Trial Case Materials

COURSE GOALS and STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Present facts and apply Massachusetts General Law(s) to specific civil and criminal cases.
Practice and apply the (simplified) rules of evidence and procedures used by the Massachusetts Court system.
Participate in the Massachusetts Bar Association Mock Trial Competition.

COURSE STANDARDS

<https://www.massbar.org/mock-trial>

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chelmsford High School is committed to supporting the success and well-being of all students, regardless of varying abilities and levels of adaptive skills. The Special Education office provides services and resources to empower each student to attain their highest level of academic success and learning independence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Chelmsford High School, students are expected to maintain high moral and ethical standards, as exemplified by the final sentence of our mission statement: "*A spirit of respect is fostered, as members take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the rights and differences of others.*" (CHS Mission Statement)

Students should respect themselves, other students, staff members and the school.

The acts of cheating and plagiarism violate expectations that students will exhibit respectful, ethical behavior.

[The Academic Honor Code](#) exists to address the issues of cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING POLICIES

Students are graded by weighted categories: Classwork 20%; Homework 15%; Participation 15% and; Test and Performance 50%

Students will be able to monitor academic progress biweekly through X2/ASPEN.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the academic support programs and services (such as PRIDE Block, after-school help, etc.) available to them to help ensure and support success. Information about these services can be found at

COURSE SKILLS

Rote memorization
Analytical Reasoning
Written and Verbal Communication
Public Speaking
Listening
Self Discipline
Group Collaboration

COURSE OUTLINE

- Summer Reading
- Introduction to Elements and Affidavits
- Applying Elements to Affidavits
- Applying Case Law to Testimony.
- Mock Trial Performance 1
- Introduction of Current Year Case Packet
 - Ibid.
- Mock Trial Performance 2
- Mock Trial Competitions
- Case Reflection
- SCOTUS Case Presentations
- Summer Reading Preparation.

This syllabus and course outline are subject to change as Chelmsford High School seeks to continually improve the learning experiences for all students.

“We foster PRIDE* in our pursuit of excellence.”

PRIDE refers to our five core values – Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. These five pillars represent our points of emphasis in supporting the development of quality students and quality citizens.