

Mock Trial Syllabus

This course syllabus is intended to introduce you to Mock Trial the Ventura County competition, which is held at the end of February.

Our Goal:

Welcome to OPHS Mock Trial. This year, our goal is to have two (2) highly competitive teams. Try-outs are taking place in August. To ensure that our teams are as competitive as possible, it is important to understand that ***no position on either competition team is final.***

Objectives of the course:

For the students, the Mock Trial program will:

1. Increase proficiency in basic skills (reading and speaking), critical-thinking skills (analyzing and reasoning), and interpersonal skills (listening and cooperating).
2. Develop an understanding of the link between our Constitution, our courts, and our legal system.
3. Provide the opportunity for interaction with positive adult role models in the legal community.

For the school, the Mock Trial program will:

1. Provide an opportunity for students to study key legal concepts and issues.
2. Promote cooperation and healthy academic competition among students of varying abilities and interests.
3. Demonstrate the achievements of young people to the community.
4. Provide a hands-on experience outside the classroom from which students can learn about law, society, and themselves.
5. Provide a challenging and rewarding experience for teachers.

First Semester:

- Prepare for the February Ventura County Mock Trial Competition. Class shall be held online each Tuesday and Thursday after school, from 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. If class is in person, they shall take place in H-1 or during Distance Learning over Google Meet during the same time. Occasionally, rehearsals shall extend the class beyond the 5:00 pm hour in H-1, G-9, or over Google Meet and/or in separate Google Meet breakout sessions.

Second Semester:

- Practice our skills from the first semester and run our own trials/debates. Class shall be held each Tuesday and Thursday after school, in H-1, from 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **with an additional day of the week** in preparation for the competition, if needed in Google Meet, H-1 or G-9.

Classroom Policies:

Attendance:

- Please refrain from planning appointments of any sort during Mock Trial class time; however, if you do have an appointment during class time, please let Dr. Anderson, Charlize Ocon, and Florence Wang (Team Captains) know at least **two (2) days** prior to absence.
- If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to find out what they have missed. Get a homework buddy to call for information if you are absent! Do not come to class not knowing what you have missed. You should have already made arrangements of how you plan to make up your missing assignments. Do not use an absence as an excuse for not doing your work.
- The school policy regarding absences, tardies, and truancies shall be followed. Please refer to the OPHS Student Handbook for specific details.
- We will hold run-throughs over google meets, and attendance is mandatory. If school resumes, run-throughs will be frequent and will often extend past 5:00. You will be given notice and are expected to stay for the duration of the run-through.
- There will also be some team practices scheduled off-site towards competition-time, attendance for these meetings is mandatory unless a valid excuse is given at least a week in advance.

Make-up Policy:

Work not turned in due to *unexcused* [truant/suspended] absences is not accepted. If you have an *excused* absence, you are expected to find out what you missed from a classmate *and/or Q*, and turn the work in the next time the class meets. This includes being prepared for tests/quizzes. If you are absent for an extended time, contact Dr. Anderson and the Team Captains to arrange make-up work. Tests and quizzes must be made up by the following support period. Failure to appear during support period for a make-up test or quiz will result in a zero. Written work turned in one day late for reasons other than excused absences will receive **half-credit** (50% off), and work that is more than one day late will receive **no credit**. No late work will be accepted after each 5-week progress report. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to remind student about missed work. The student must attempt to receive work from a student in the class, from the instructor's web page, Q, Trello, Google Classroom, or see the instructor during Support Period.

Classroom Management Policies

Students will be discussing and creating standards and consequences for classroom behavior on the first day of class based upon the instructor's expectations and Oak Park High School/District standards, as follows:

1. Act in a Safe and Healthy Way (compelling State interest: Health and Safety)
2. Respect Yourself (compelling State interest: Health and Safety)
3. Respect Property (compelling State interest: Property)
4. Respect Others (compelling State interest: Health and Safety, Legitimate Educ. Process)
5. Take Responsibility for Learning (compelling State interest: Legitimate Educ. Process)

Participation Points:

Points may be earned for positive contributions to the class or lost for negative conduct and not participating. Points shall be taken away for various infractions including, but not limited to, the following:

- Failure to come to class prepared
 - Being prepared for class means having in your possession the following items:
 - Mock Trial notebook with college ruled paper; a working pen and/or a sharpened pencil; any assignments that are due
- Disrupting the class

Recommended Materials

1. 3-Ring Binder – White (1-inch min.) [Print and place this syllabus packet in the front of your binder for the entire year for future reference].
2. Tab Dividers: Separating your roles.
3. Loose-leaf, 3-Hole Punched, College-Ruled, notebook paper for class work/notes.
4. 2 sharpened Pencils, & 2 Pens (dark blue or black ink).
5. Highlighters.
6. MOTIVATION & A DESIRE TO WIN!

Assignments:

- Several assignments each month will be assigned.
- Assignments and their due dates are given in advance. If you miss class and fail to turn in assignment before your absence, you must turn it in the following class for full credit.

Quality is important:

- It is, therefore, imperative that your answers are written or spoken in complete, intelligent, cogent, and succinct sentences (clearly understood, and thorough in content).

CODE OF ETHICS

All participants in the Mock Trial competition must follow all rules and regulations as specified in the California Mock Trial materials or disseminated by Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) or County Coordinators. Failure of any member or affiliate of a team to adhere to the rules may result in disqualification of that team.

All participants also must adhere to the same high standards of scholarship that are expected of students in their academic performance. Plagiarism and scouting of any kind is unacceptable. Students' written and oral work must be their own.¹

In their relations with other teams and individuals, students must make a commitment to good sportsmanship in both victory and defeat.

Encouraging adherence to these high principals is the responsibility of each team member and teacher sponsor. Any matter that arises regarding his code will be referred to the teacher sponsor of the team involved.

¹ Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarism as, "to steal the words, ideas, etc. of another and use them as one's own."

Grades:

Your final letter grade in the class shall be based on the following weighted percentages:

- 50% of your grade is based on participation.
 - 30% of your grade is based upon quizzes, tests, and final exams.
 - 20% of your grade is based on routine assignments (class work, homework)
- The grades shall be based on the minimum following point/percent system (**NO**
- **ROUNDING**):

• **A+ = 99.0%**

• **A = 94.0%**

• **A- = 90.0%**

• **B+ = 87.0%**

• **B = 84.0%**

• **B- = 80.0%**

• **C+ = 77.0%**

• **C = 74.0%**

• **C- = 70.0%**

• **D+ = 69.0%**

• **D = 66.0%**

• **D- = 65.0%**

• **F = 0.0%**

OUR MOCK TRIAL TEAM SHALL BE PREPARING FOR APPROXIMATELY SIX (6) MONTHS PRIOR TO THE VENTURA COUNTY MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION.

FAILURE TO ATTEND THE COMPETITION, ONCE YOUR ROLE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED, MAY RESULT IN A FAIL FOR THE CLASS!

Sign Off:

Please sign where indicated below so that your son/daughter can return this to me. The syllabus will be returned to the student following confirmation of receipt. I encourage you to view my webpage regularly by selecting my name in the **Staff Pages** at <http://www.oakparkusd.org/Domain/162> or by entering the following web address: <http://www.oakparkusd.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1459> so that you may be able to provide guidance to your son/daughter during the year. My preferred method of communication is e-mail at: vanderson@opusd.org

By signing and dating this page, you are acknowledging both your reading and understanding of the Oak Park High School Student Handbook, Mock Trial Code of Ethics, as well as accepting the terms and conditions contained within this course syllabus.

Student's name (Please print)

Parent's name (Please print)

Parent's signature

Sincerely,

/S/

Mr. Anderson, M.Ed., J.D.
AP U.S. History & Mock Trial
History/Social Science Department
Oak Park High School

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. - Aristotle (384-322 BCE)