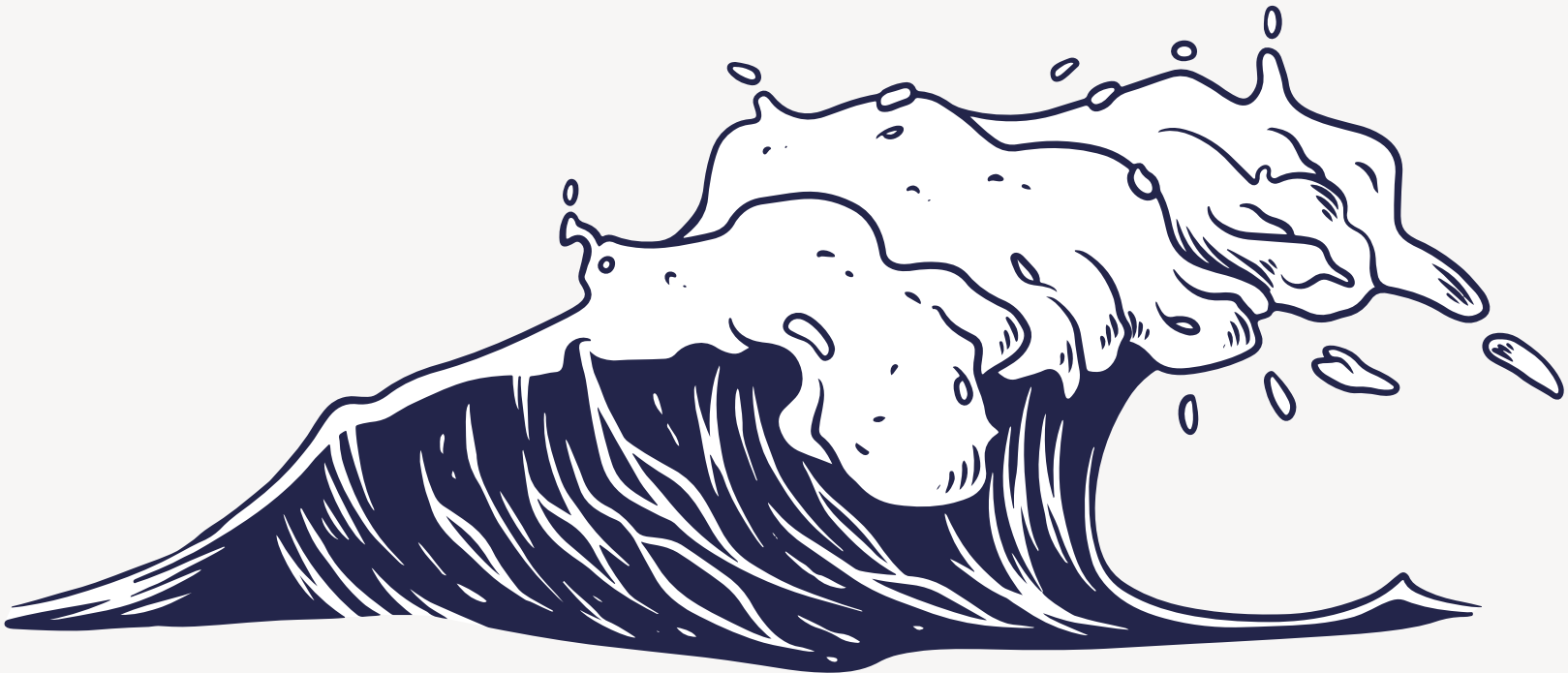
Mock Trial Institute

@ UCLA

Student Handbook



A Message from Our Faculty Advisor

Welcome to the Mock Trial Summer Institute! We are proud to host a program that not only introduces high school students to the legal system, but also fosters the habits of thought, discipline, and character that define leadership in any field.

At UCLA, we believe that the foundation of any successful endeavor—whether in the courtroom, the classroom, or the boardroom—rests on a clear set of values. This program is built on UCLA's True Bruin Values: **Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Service, and Excellence**. These are not abstract ideals; they are daily commitments. We expect each student to treat others with dignity, to take ownership of their actions, to uphold truth even when it's inconvenient, to contribute to the community, and to strive for their best effort in every task.

The Mock Trial Summer Institute is more than a camp. It is a space where bright, curious students begin to see themselves as advocates, collaborators, and thinkers. We take that seriously. That's why our expectations are high, and why our priorities—learning, inclusion, professionalism, and teamwork—guide everything we do.

We are excited to have you here and confident that you will rise to meet the standards of this program and exceed them. Your journey begins now—not just as a mock trial participant, but as a young leader learning how to use your voice for good.

Sincerely,
Professor Gonzalo Freixes
Faculty Advisor, UCLA Mock Trial

Our Mission

The UCLA Mock Trial Summer Institute empowers high school students to explore the American legal system through hands-on learning, critical thinking, and persuasive advocacy. Our mission is to develop confident, ethical leaders who understand the power of communication, the value of teamwork, and the importance of civic engagement.

Our program is grounded in five core values (UCLA's True Bruin Values):

- **Respect** – We listen actively, engage thoughtfully, and treat others with dignity.
- **Accountability** – We take responsibility for our actions, our preparation, and our growth.
- **Integrity** – We hold ourselves to the highest standards of honesty and fairness.
- **Service** – We support one another and contribute positively to our community.
- **Excellence** – We challenge ourselves to think deeply, perform skillfully, and lead with purpose.

Together, these values shape an inclusive, ambitious learning environment where every student has the opportunity to grow—as an advocate and as a person.

General Information

This course will familiarize high school students with law and jurisprudence, the American justice system and effective trial advocacy techniques. The course is ideal for students competing in high school mock trial programs. However, no prior mock trial or public speaking experience is necessary. All students will learn about persuasive oral presentation, thinking on their feet and legal analysis.

The course will cover basic concepts of law, courtroom demeanor, direct and cross examination, opening statements, closing arguments, courtroom exhibits, evidentiary trial objections and witness portrayal. The program will feature a visit to trials in the Los Angeles Superior Court and a final mock trial competition. Students will work with UCLA Trial Advocacy Faculty. They will also work extensively in small teams with college counselors who are competitors in the UCLA Mock Trial Program or who compete at other universities. The Mock Trial will be based on a criminal felony trial.

Schedule

Here is a sample schedule! Please note that slight modifications will be made depending on which session you will be attending. Be sure to review the BruinLearn class website to ensure you are up to date with your session's information!

UCLA MOCK TRIAL INSTITUTE: SAMPLE IN-PERSON SCHEDULE

SAMPLE ONLY. The actual schedule is sent to registered students. Times and the order of activities may change.

Online sessions follow a similar structure, live on Pacific Time.

Sunday	
4:00–6:00	Check-in
6:00–7:00	Dinner
7:00–9:00	Team Workshop

Monday	
8:00–8:45	Breakfast
9:00–10:30	Lecture: Direct Examinations
10:45–12:15	Team Workshop
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:45–3:15	Lecture: Cross-Examinations
3:30–4:15	Team Workshop
4:30–6:00	Lecture: Expert Witnesses and Impeachment
6:15–7:00	Dinner
7:00–9:00	Team Workshop

Tuesday	
8:00–8:45	Breakfast
9:00–10:30	Lecture: Opening Statements
10:45–12:15	Team Workshop
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:45–3:15	Lecture: Closing Arguments
3:30–5:45	Team Workshop
6:00–7:00	Dinner
7:00–9:00	Team Workshop

Wednesday	
8:00–8:45	Breakfast
9:00–11:00	Careers in Law Panel
11:00–12:00	Team Workshop
12:00–4:00	Westwood Village outing with counselors (team lunch)
5:00–7:00	Dinner
7:00–9:00	Team Workshop

Thursday	
8:00–8:45	Breakfast
9:00–10:30	Lecture: Objections and the Rules of Evidence I
10:45–12:15	Team Workshop
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:45–3:15	Lecture: Objections and the Rules of Evidence II
3:30–5:45	Team Workshop
6:00–7:00	Dinner
7:00–9:00	Team Workshop

Friday	
8:00–9:30	Breakfast
10:00–12:00	Scrimmage 1
12:00–2:00	Lunch
2:00–4:00	Scrimmage 2
4:00–5:00	Scrimmage Debrief
5:15–7:00	Dinner

Saturday	
8:00–9:00	Breakfast
9:30–12:30	Final Tournament: Trial Round 1
12:30–1:30	Lunch
1:30–4:30	Final Tournament: Trial Round 2
4:30–5:00	Break and ballot tabulation
5:00–6:00	Awards Ceremony

Key
Meal Break
Lecture
Team Workshop
Special Event / Outing
Tournament Round

Families are welcome to watch the final tournament.

Check-In and Check-Out

Check-In: All participants will check-in on the Sunday afternoon of their selected program. (I.e., if the program runs from July 11 through July 17, check-in will be the afternoon of July 11.) Program check-in will be in-person, in front of the residence hall assigned for the program's duration. Students need not be accompanied by a parent or other adult but may be. Once participants find the Mock Trial Institute table, several counselors will be waiting to help. At check-in, we will ensure that participants have access to our main method of communication (GroupMe), help students find their dorm rooms, and confirm emergency contact information.

Check-Out: All participants will check-out on the Saturday evening of their selected program. (I.e., if the program runs from July 11 through July 17, check-out will be the evening of July 17.) Students will leave their luggage in a communal storage room on Saturday morning, compete in the scheduled tournament during the day, and return to the storage room with counselors to retrieve their luggage. Students are responsible for arranging rides from UCLA's campus.

**If any student needs check-in or check-out accommodations (i.e., a different time), please do not hesitate to reach out to the student director, Emily Michie, at emilyemichie@gmail.com.

Student Conduct

To ensure a respectful, safe, and productive environment for everyone, all participants in the Mock Trial Summer Institute are expected to follow a shared Code of Conduct. These expectations apply both in and out of the classroom and are designed to help every student get the most out of the program.

The Code of Conduct is divided into two primary parts:

1. **Program Conduct** – Guidelines for behavior during workshops, practices, meals, and all official activities.
2. **Dorm Conduct** – Expectations for behavior in the residence halls and during free time.

By following these standards, students help create a positive, inclusive, and focused community for all.

**This section also includes conduct guidelines for the field trip to Westwood Village.

Program Conduct

As a participant in the UCLA Mock Trial Summer Institute, you are expected to conduct yourself with maturity, respect, and responsibility throughout all parts of the program. These rules are in place to keep everyone safe, focused, and supported.

1. Respect
Be kind, inclusive, and professional with your peers, counselors, instructors, and campus staff. Disrespectful behavior—such as interrupting, mocking, or excluding others—will not be tolerated.

2. Academic Dishonesty
All written and spoken work must be your own. Representing someone else's ideas or words as your own is a serious violation of academic integrity and mock trial ethics. You are here to learn, not to be perfect—ask for authentic help when you need it.

3. Moving Throughout Campus
For your safety, you must always walk with your counselor or group when traveling around campus. UCLA is a large, busy environment, and it is easy to get lost or separated. Never leave a location without checking in with a counselor first.

4. Following Instructions
When a counselor, director, or faculty member gives an instruction, follow it the first time. This helps us stay on schedule, maintain safety, and ensure everyone has a positive experience.

5. Punctuality
You are expected to attend all scheduled activities unless given permission to miss something. Arrive on time, stay for the duration, and be present—both physically and mentally.

6. Responsible Use of Technology
Phones and devices should be away during workshops and activities unless otherwise permitted. Social media, messaging apps, and games can wait—your focus should be on learning and connecting with others.

Dorm Conduct

Your time in the residence halls is part of the Mock Trial Summer Institute experience. To make the dorms a safe, respectful, and comfortable space for everyone, all students are expected to follow these rules:

1. Curfew @ 11:00 Each Night
All students must be in their assigned rooms by **11:00 PM each night**. This ensures that everyone is well-rested and prepared for the next day.

2. Nightly Room Checks
Counselors will conduct nightly room checks to confirm everyone is safe and present. These are required and non-negotiable. Do not leave your room after room check unless it's an emergency.

3. No Illicit Substances
Absolutely no drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products are allowed—this includes possession or use. Any violation will result in disciplinary actions.

4. No Entering Another Student's Room Alone
You may not enter another student's dorm room unless invited and with at least one other person present. This protects everyone's privacy and safety.

5. Never Leave Campus Without a Counselor
Students must stay within approved areas of campus at all times and may not leave the premises unless accompanied by a counselor or given direct permission by program staff.

6. Be Respectful of Shared Spaces
Keep common areas clean, quiet, and welcoming. This includes hallways, lounges, and bathrooms. Treat dorm staff and fellow students with courtesy at all times.

7. Report Any Concerns Immediately
If anything makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, tell your counselor right away. We are here to help, and your well-being is our top priority.

Field Trip to Westwood Village

Students will have the option of participating in a field trip to Westwood Village, which is a ten-minute walk from campus. This is not required; however, if you do choose to partake, here are the guidelines you are expected to follow:

1. You must walk to Westwood with your team and at least one counselor.

Students are not allowed to leave campus unauthorized or unattended. This ensures that students do not get lost in a new environment.

2. You must agree on a designated meeting spot and time with your counselor(s) and team.

Your team will walk to a designated meeting spot (Target, Van Leeuwen, etc.). Everyone must agree to meet at that location at the time specified by your counselor.

3. You must explore Westwood in groups of three or more students.

Groups of three ensure that if someone gets lost, needs help, or something unexpected happens, no one is ever left alone. It also allows one person to stay with someone in need while another can get help if necessary. It's a simple way to make sure everyone is accounted for, supported, and safe while off campus.

4. You must update your counselors as to your location.

Your counselors are entrusted with your safety. Do your part and let them know where you are! Send a quick message in the group chat at least every 30 minutes to inform them of your group's location.

5. You must arrive at the designated meeting spot on time.

Once the trip has concluded, you must return to the meeting spot at the time specified by your counselor(s). From there, your team will return to campus. Failure to return to the meeting spot, at the correct time, and without communication will result in disciplinary action.

**All students are further expected to follow UCLA's Student Conduct Code, accessible here.

Emergency Protocols

The safety and well-being of our students are our top priorities. In the event of an emergency, it is essential that all participants follow the established communication procedures to ensure that the situation is addressed promptly and effectively.

In case of an emergency:

1. **Students should immediately notify their counselor** if they feel unsafe, require medical assistance, or experience any other urgent issue.
2. **Counselors are responsible for reporting the situation** to the **Student Director** as soon as possible. Counselors should provide clear and concise information about the nature of the emergency and any steps already taken to address it.
3. **The Student Director will then escalate the matter** to the necessary **faculty or campus authorities**, depending on the severity of the situation. This may involve contacting campus security, medical personnel, or other emergency responders, as needed.

This chain of communication ensures that every emergency is handled by the appropriate individuals and with the necessary urgency. All staff are trained to respond quickly and appropriately, and all students are encouraged to ask for help whenever needed.

In case of **life-threatening emergencies**, please call **911** directly and notify a counselor or staff member as soon as possible.

Emergency Contacts

Faculty Director: Gonzalo Freixes
- email: gonzalo.freixes@anderson.ucla.edu

Program Director: Elizabeth Smiley
- email: egsmiley@g.ucla.edu

Student Director: Emily Michie
- email: emilyemichie@gmail.com
- phone: (805) 861-8345