

Western State College of Law at Westcliff University
Civil Procedure I; Sections A and B
Fall 2026 Syllabus
Professor Shireef Elmakawi

Class Times and Location

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10AM-11:15AM (Sect. A) 2PM – 3:15PM (Sect. B); Room TBD

Office Hours

Mondays and Wednesdays 11:45AM – 12:45PM and by appointment.

Class Materials

Glannon, Perlman & Raven-Hansen, Civil Procedure: A Coursebook (5th ed., 2025) (Casebook) (Required). Please do not buy an earlier edition of the casebook, because the page numbers in the syllabus will not line up with the page numbers in your book, and several of the cases we will be covering are not in the earlier editions of the text. Also, please do not rent the casebook for one semester, as you will be using it in Civil Procedure II in the spring. Online materials as assigned (via TWEN).

TWEN

All students must be registered for The West Education Network (TWEN). I will use the TWEN page to communicate with the class electronically and to post slides, handouts, and revised syllabi. Please be certain that you include your correct Western State College of Law email address when you register.

Western State College of Law – Programmatic Learning Outcomes

Western State College of Law's curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:

(1) Doctrinal Knowledge

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

(2) Practice Skills

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student's chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student's particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

(3) Legal Analysis

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule, and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

(4) Legal Research

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

(5) Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone, style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications, and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

(8) Legal Ethics

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.

Specific Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Course Goals:

This course is designed to give you a fundamental understanding of the federal rules of civil procedure. All major topics covered in the course are listed below, under the heading "Reading Assignments."

Course Learning Outcomes:

Over the course of this semester, we will work to develop and reinforce basic skills that are essential to legal practice, and to develop a fundamental understanding of the rules of federal civil procedure. Our overarching goals include knowledge and understanding of substantive law; legal analysis and reasoning; written and oral communication; and the exercise of professionalism and professional skills.

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

1. Carefully Read and Analyze Statutes.

After reading a statute, you should be able to (1) parse that statute into its component elements (such that you can analyze legal issues arising under the statute) and (2) determine whether that statute applies to a particular case or fact pattern. To achieve this goal, we will discuss and practice with statutes appearing in class readings, hypotheticals, and exercises. The statutes applicable to this class are primarily codified in Title 28 of the United States Code, along with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

2. Read, Brief and Understand Cases.

After reading a case, you should be able to identify (1) the case's procedural posture, (2) the background facts, (3) the legally significant facts, (4) the primary issue(s), (5) the legal rule(s) applied, (6) the holding(s), (7) the court's reasoning, (8) the reasoning of any concurrence or dissent, (9) the court's disposition and (10) the relevance of the case. You should also be able to synthesize a line of related cases and understand how to apply case law to new factual situations. To achieve this outcome, we will discuss and practice with the class readings and you will diligently prepare original briefs of assigned cases. If it seems that students are not carefully reading and briefing cases, I may require students to turn in case briefs.

3. Provide Effective Written and Oral Legal Analysis.

You must communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. To do so, you must use legal rules and doctrine to analyze legal issues. Legal analysis requires critical thinking that goes well beyond memorizing and restating the rules. Using the IRAC format, you should be able to make and convey an effective legal argument, in writing or orally, that: (1) identifies legal issues; (2) identifies and explains the applicable legal rule(s); (3) applies those rule(s) to the relevant facts; and (4) provides the appropriate conclusion or outcome. Ultimately, you will use legal analysis to counsel clients objectively, respectfully, and effectively about the best ways to solve or to prevent legal problems. We will develop these skills through classroom discussion and practice with cases, hypotheticals, and problems, and through quizzes, practice exams, a midterm examination, and the final examination.

4. Recall and Apply the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

You should be able to demonstrate an understanding of substantive legal rules and doctrine, which in this class will focus on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and related statutes. You should be able to state and discuss the elements of all the procedural rules that we will be covering this semester, as well as any exceptions to those rules. You will be required to apply those rules to hypothetical factual scenarios and predict the likely outcome in a case raising such issues. We will develop your knowledge of these procedural rules through your readings in the casebook and supplemental materials, material presented during class, class discussion, and feedback on practice, midterm, and final examinations.

5. Conduct Yourself with Professionalism.

You should be able to discuss controversial issues with a professional demeanor and to view and articulate competing sides to controversial concepts. You should exercise sound professional judgment, considering the duties of a lawyer to her client, whether representing a plaintiff or a defendant, and the lawyer's ethical duties to the profession as a whole. At all times you must act with honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, empathy, civility, and cultural competence.

Legal Ethics

Ethics are an important part of the practice of law. All students should be familiar with the Western State College of Law Honor Code. Any violation of law school rules and regulations relating to cheating, plagiarism, or other ethical matters addressed in the Honor Code will be vigorously enforced. The Honor Code is set forth in the Student Handbook, Section IX, https://www.wsulaw.edu/Uploads/Student-Handbook/WSU-Student_Handbook.pdf.

Attendance

Please come to class prepared and on time. Students who are late may be considered absent at the discretion of the professor. Students who know that they will be late or absent should email me prior to class if possible. Make your best effort to attend class every day. Each concept in this course relates to and builds upon others. If you fall behind, you will find it very difficult to catch up.

Western State College of Law requires regular attendance (85% of all scheduled classes). In this class, students who miss more than two classes per semester are subject to dismissal, thus receiving a "0" for the course absent extenuating circumstances. The attendance policy is set forth in the Student Handbook, Section IV/A/12, https://www.wsulaw.edu/Uploads/Student-Handbook/WSU-Student_Handbook.pdf.

Participation

Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to class. You should engage in at least six hours of course preparation per week. All students are expected to engage in class discussion. Participation is key to making this class enjoyable, so everyone must be prepared to intelligently discuss and critically evaluate that day's assignment in class. In particular, each student must be prepared to discuss the pertinent facts, issues, law and court findings and rulings of each case. All students are expected to engage in professional and respectful discussion of the case materials and subject matter. All views are welcome. I call on students at random and take volunteers for class discussion. A consistent or significant lack of preparation or professionalism may result in a grade reduction at the discretion of the Professor. Likewise, exemplary performance may result in a grade increase, also at the Professor's discretion.

Grading

Your grade in this class will be based on your midterm and final examination scores.

The midterm will account for 20% of your final grade. The mid-term covers the assigned readings and information contained in class slides and discussions from the beginning of the semester through, at most, the mid-term. The midterm will consist of 20 multiple choice questions. The exam will be administered during class, as indicated on the syllabus.

The final examination is cumulative, i.e., it covers the entire semester's materials. The final exam will account for the remaining 80% of your grade, divided between multiple choice questions and one or two essay questions. You will have three hours to complete your final exam. **Both the midterm and the final exam will be closed book assessments.**

Accommodations

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law. To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator, whose office is in the Students Services Suite. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of their specific limitations and, if known, their specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive; they are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza or Dean Halim Dhanidina, at halimdhanidina@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the Policy against Discrimination and Harassment, set forth in the Student Handbook, Section XIV, https://www.wsulaw.edu/Uploads/Student-Handbook/WSU-Student_Handbook.pdf.

Reading Assignments

Reading assignments for the fall semester are noted below. **Please note that assignments are subject to revision depending on the Professor's assessment of course progress. Updates regarding the syllabus will be sent to the e-mail address provided by the student when registering for this class on TWEN.** For each week, you should always read the statutes and/or Federal Rules of Civil Procedure that are referenced in the text.

You can access the federal statutes and the FRCP at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcp>, or <https://www.uscourts.gov/rules-policies/current-rules-practice-procedure/federal-rules-civil-procedure>, on Lexis or Westlaw, or you can buy a paper copy, such as Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Pocket Reference Guide (2025), <https://www.amazon.com/Federal-Rules-Civil-Procedure-Practitioners/dp/B0CQ5DR1N7> (\$10).

Week 1 (Aug. 17)

Introduction to Civil Procedure and the American Court System

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 3-40 (Introduction)
- Wednesday: (cont. above discussion)

Week 2 (Aug. 24)

Introduction and Evolution of Personal Jurisdiction

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 149-166 (Evolution of Personal Jurisdiction)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 166-180 (Evolution of Personal Jurisdiction Cont'd)

Week 3 (Aug. 31)

Long-Arm Statutes; Specific Personal Jurisdiction

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 299-316 (Long Arm Statutes)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 181-210 (Volkswagen; Burger King)

Week 4 (Sep. 7)

Specific Personal Jurisdiction Cont'd

- Monday: **Labor Day Holiday (no class)**
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 211-228 (Asahi)

Week 5 (Sep. 14)

Specific PJ Cont'd; General Jurisdiction; Other Constitutional Bases for Personal Jurisdiction

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 228-243 (Ford Motor Co.); 243-254 (Burdick)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 255-278 (Other Constitutional Bases for Personal Jurisdiction)

Week 6 (Sept. 21)

Other Constitutional Bases for Personal Jurisdiction Cont'd; Subject Matter Jurisdiction: Diversity of Citizenship (Individuals and Entities)

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 278-297 (Other Constitutional Bases for Personal Jurisdiction)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 43-55, 58-63 (skip Mas v. Perry) (SMJ – Diversity – Individuals); 63-76 (SMJ – Diversity – Entities); McCall v. Monsanto (Complaint posted on TWEN).

Week 7 (Sept. 28)

Diversity Jurisdiction and the Amount-in-Controversy (AIC) Requirement; Federal Question Jurisdiction

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 76-87 (SMJ – Diversity – AIC); 87-92 (Constitutional vs. Statutory Limits on DJ)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 93-109 (SMJ – Federal Question); Garcia v. Noem (Complaint posted on TWEN)

Week 8 (Oct. 5)

Federal Question Jurisdiction Cont'd (Embedded Federal Issue)

- Monday: **Midterm Exam**
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 110-127 (SMJ – Federal Question – Embedded Federal Issues)

Week 9 (Oct. 12)

Basic Joinder of Claims and Parties

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 567-590 (Claims, Permissive Joinder of Parties, Counterclaims)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 591-605 (Cross-claims and Third Party Claims)

Week 10 (Oct. 19)

Supplemental Jurisdiction

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 671-699 (SMJ – Supplemental J); Burberry v. Target (Complaint posted on TWEN)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 700-705 (SMJ – Supplemental J – Exxon)

Week 11 (Oct. 26)

Removal Jurisdiction; Basic Venue

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 129-139 (SMJ – Removal J)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 355-371 (Basic Venue)

Week 12 (Nov. 2)

Venue Transfers and Dismissals; Forum Non Conveniens

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 373-384 (Venue Transfers and Dismissals)
- Wednesday: Casebook, pp. 384-398 (Forum Non Conveniens) [skip Section IV – Transfers and Dismissals in State Court]

Week 13 (Nov. 9): Note that we will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 10

The Erie Doctrine: State Law in Federal Courts

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 811-841 (Erie Doctrine) [Skip Section V— Federal Common Law]
- Tuesday: (cont. above discussion)

Week 14 (Nov. 16)

The Erie Doctrine: Distinguishing Substance and Procedure

- Monday: Casebook, pp. 851-875
- Wednesday: pp. 875-890 [skip Shady Grove]

Week 15 (Nov. 23)

- Catch-up and Review

Final Exam: TBA (Check final exam schedule)