

# What's the Meaning of This?

Making Sense of Statutory Interpretation

Emily Johnson-Liu  
Asst. State Prosecuting Attorney

1

## Roadmap

### Theory

- CCA will observe “time-honored canons” that “esteem TEXTUALISM”
- Fodder to Refute Opponent’s Arguments

### Texas Law: Code Construction Act vs. *Boykin*

### Doing the Interpretive Work

- What to look at, When
- How Canons Relate to Each Other

2



# Fundamentals

3



Legislature

Judiciary

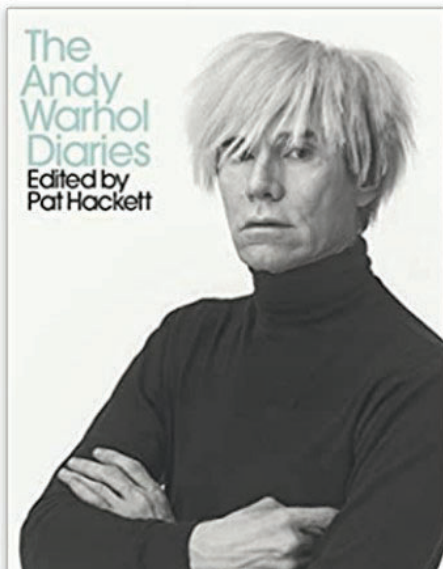
Legislature Makes the Laws

4



## Need for Objectivity

5



### Legislators

- Don't speak for everyone
- Can't always anticipate circumstances of how a law could apply
- Can't always agree on how it would apply

→ **Legislative History isn't the law**

Danger of Looking to Legislative Record/History

6

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](https://utcle.org/elibrary)

## Title search: What's the Meaning of This? Making Sense of Statutory Interpretation

Also available as part of the eCourse

[2023 Robert O. Dawson eConference on Criminal Appeals](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the  
2023 Robert O. Dawson Conference on Criminal Appeals session  
"What's the Meaning of This? Making Sense of Statutory Interpretation"