

Course Syllabus

Course Description

Provides a study of the nature and foundations of U.S. criminal law. Students focus on evolution of statutory crimes in the United States, analysis of contemporary federal and statutory offenses, criminal conduct, criminal responsibility, criminal defenses, criminal liability, and elements of the crime.

Course Textbook(s)

Schmallegger, F., & Hall, D. E. (2017). *Criminal law today* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Additional Required Course Material(s)

See each Unit Study Guide for additional required course material(s).

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Define terms related to criminal law.
2. Examine the purpose and function of criminal law.
3. Assess legal issues as presented in court cases.
4. Analyze key concepts related to criminal law.
5. Examine various laws.

Prerequisite(s)

BCJ 3301 - Judicial Process or equivalent

Credits

Upon completion of this course, the students will earn 3 hours of college credit.

CSU Online Library

The CSU Online Library is available to support your courses and programs. The online library includes databases, journals, e-books, and research guides. These resources are always accessible and can be reached through the library web page. To access the library, log into the myCSU Student Portal, and click on "CSU Online Library." You can also access the CSU Online Library from the "My Library" button on the course menu for each course in Blackboard.

The CSU Online Library offers several reference services. E-mail (library@columbiasouthern.edu) and telephone (1.877.268.8046) assistance is available Monday – Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The library's chat reference service, *Ask a Librarian*, is available 24/7; look for the chat box on the online library page.

Librarians can help you develop your research plan or assist you in finding relevant, appropriate, and timely information. Reference requests can include customized keyword search strategies, links to articles, database help, and other services.

LibGuides

Think of a LibGuide (a Library Guide) as a mini-website to help you with your assignments. It has relevant information such as databases, e-books, and websites specific to your courses. If you have any questions, please reach out to your friendly library staff.

Click [here](#) for the LibGuide for this course.

Unit Assignments

Unit I Journal

If you were a member of a jury that was hearing a case of negligent homicide against a physician for a medical misdiagnosis, would you have any preconceptions about either the law or the medical profession that might influence your verdict?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit I Case Study

For this assignment, you will explore the concept of *stare decisis* and whether it is an inexorable command. Click the link to access "[Is Stare Decisis an Inexorable Command?](#)", and write a case study that answers, at a minimum, the questions listed below.

- What does the court mean when it says "*Stare decisis* is not an inexorable command; rather it is a principle of policy and not a mechanical formula of adherence to the latest decision"?
- What would it mean for the American system of criminal justice if *stare decisis* actually was an "inexorable command" or a "mechanical formula of adherence to the latest decision"?

Your case study will be a minimum of two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. (Your response to each question should be roughly 250–300 words.) Your case study should present an insightful and thorough analysis with strong arguments and evidence.

You are required to use at least two outside resources, one of which may be your textbook. All resources used, including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations. Your case study, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit II Journal

Click the link to read the handout "[Should Medical Misdiagnosis be a Crime?](#)", and answer the questions below.

Do you believe that a medical misdiagnosis should be considered a crime? Why, or why not?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit II Essay

Refer back to the three reading assignments for this unit. Then, write an essay that answers the questions listed below.

1. Read "[What Constitutes the Corpus Delicti of an Offense?](#)", and answer the questions below.
 - a. How can the *corpus delicti* of robbery be demonstrated? How can it be demonstrated for theft?
 - b. Why did the court conclude that, "In this case, the evidence does not conclusively establish that Hoke's purse was taken forcibly from her. The evidence does, however, support an inference that she was robbed"?
2. Read "[For Purposes of Criminal Attempt, What Constitutes A 'Substantial Step' Toward Commission of the Targeted Offense?](#)", and answer the questions below.
 - a. Do you agree that the girls had taken a substantial step toward the commission of a targeted offense?
 - b. What test does the court establish for Tennessee to determine whether a substantial step has been taken?
 - c. Would your answer be different if Tennessee used the last-step test or the physical proximity test? If so, how?
 - d. Do you think that the court, in using common law rules of construction, modifies the legislative enactment?
 - e. Is the court using its judgment to replace that of the drafters of the statute? Explain your answer.
3. Read "[Can a Private Corporation be Held Liable for the Crime of Homicide?](#)", and answer the questions below.
 - a. In this case, McIlwain School Bus Lines, Inc. argued that the offense of homicide by vehicle could not be committed by a corporation. On what grounds did the corporation base its arguments?
 - b. Why did the court conclude that a corporation was a "person" for purposes of the law? How was such a conclusion reached?
 - c. What are the potential legal ramifications of granting the status of "person" to a corporation?

Your essay will be a minimum of two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. Your essay should contain a clear introduction and be well organized.

You are required to use at least two resources to support your essay, one of which may be your textbook. All resources used, including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations.

Your essay, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit III Journal

Click the link to read the handout "[What Constitutes Entrapment by Government Agents?](#)", and answer the questions below.

Do you think that, in this case, "the government overstepped the line between setting a trap for the 'unwary innocent' and the 'unwary criminal'?" Why, or why not?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit III Essay

Refer back to the two reading assignments for this unit. Then, write an essay that answers the questions listed below.

1. Read "[Can a Defendant Who Lies About her Role in Spousal Homicide Still Raise a "Battered Woman's" Defense?](#)", and answer the questions below.
 - a. The Illinois Appellate Court, citing a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, says that "Perhaps we could never succeed in intelligibly defining the kinds of matter we understand to be embraced within the shorthand description of battered woman's syndrome." Why not?
 - b. Would you be able to formulate an effective legal description of battered woman's syndrome? If so, what would it be?
2. Read "[Is there a Meaningful Difference Between 'Insanity' and 'Temporary Insanity'?](#)", and answer the questions below.
 - a. Miller claimed to be sane before and after the killing but insane during the time the crime was committed. His attorneys asked that, at the end of the trial, the jury be instructed on the issue of temporary insanity and that they be told that "regardless of its duration, legal insanity that existed at the time of the commission of the crime is a defense to the crime." Why do you think that the trial court refused to give the jury instructions regarding the insanity defense, which the defendant wished to have communicated?
 - b. In this case, the appellate court reversed the defendant's conviction and remanded the case for a new trial. On what basis was that decision reached? Do you agree that the appellate court should have reached such a decision? Why, or why not?
 - c. What does this case have to tell us about the difference between insanity and temporary insanity? Are differences between the two terms significant in cases such as this one? Why, or why not?

Your essay will be a minimum of two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. Your essay should contain a clear introduction and be well-organized.

You are required to use at least two resources to support your essay, one of which may be your textbook. All resources used including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations. Your essay, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit IV Journal

Click the link to read the handout "[Assisted Suicide Laws](#)", and answer the questions below.

Do you agree with the Hemlock Society that "people who wish to retain their dignity and choice at the end of their lives should have the option of a peaceful, gentle, certain, and swift death in the company of their loved ones"? If so, what kind of option do you envision?

Would you add or delete any features to the society's proposed legislation? Why, or why not?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit IV Case Study

This case study assignment explores euthanasia. Using the CSU Online Library and additional scholarly resources, research euthanasia in your state, and address the items below.

- What is euthanasia?
- Identify and describe laws regarding euthanasia in your state.
- Explain a recent case about euthanasia and its outcome.
- Based upon what you have read, give your opinion on euthanasia, and support your argument.

Your case study will be at least two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. It should present an insightful and thorough analysis with strong arguments and evidence.

While you may use your textbook to complete this assignment, you are required to use at least two outside resources, one of which must be from the CSU Online Library. All resources used, including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations. Your case study, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit V Journal

Click the link to read the handout "[Consensual Sex Versus Rape](#)", and answer the questions below.

Should Linda's police record be admitted into evidence? May Paul be convicted of rape? Would your answer be different if Paul had gotten Linda intoxicated?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit V Case Study

Read "[What Constitutes the Crime of Stalking?](#)", and write a case study that addresses the questions below.

- Provide a brief overview of the handout.
- What are the elements of the crime of stalking under the statute discussed in this case?
- Do you agree with the court of appeals that the statute is not unconstitutionally vague?
- Is the evidence in this case sufficient to support a stalking conviction?

Your case study will be at least two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. It should present an insightful and thorough analysis with strong arguments and evidence.

You are required to use at least two outside resources, one of which may be your textbook. All resources used, including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations. Your case study, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit VI Journal

Paul steals an expensive watch from the local jewelry store. He knows that Ken needs a watch. At the time Paul stole the watch, he intended to sell it to Ken. As he is leaving the jewelry store, he is apprehended by police. Paul begs for mercy. He states that he has an agreement to sell any watch that he may steal to Ken. The police tell Paul that if he cooperates, his sentence will be lighter. They give the watch back to Paul. Paul meets Ken and shows Ken the watch. Paul tells Ken the watch is stolen. Ken buys the watch.

Could Ken be convicted of receiving stolen property? Is Paul guilty of larceny? Explain your reasoning.

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit VII Journal

You have been asked to serve on a special citizen committee designed to provide lawmakers with feedback on the legalization of victimless crimes. You are specifically asked whether or not you think these types of crimes should be legalized. What is your answer? How would you justify your answer?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

Unit VII Essay

Refer back to the two reading assignments for this unit. Then, write an essay that addresses the areas listed below.

1. Read "[Should Cross Burnings be Protected as a Form of Free Speech?](#)", and address the elements listed below.
 - a. Summarize the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in both of the cases that are excerpted in the handout. In a few words, explain why the court in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* overturned the decision of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Explain why the court upheld the Virginia statute in *Virginia v. Black*.
 - b. In *Virginia v. Black*, what did the court mean when it held that "just as any state may regulate only that obscenity which is the most obscene due to its prurient content, so too may a state choose to prohibit only those forms of intimidation that are most likely to inspire fear of bodily harm"?
2. Read "[Does the Sending of Obscene Material Over the Internet Constitute the Transportation of Obscene Material in Interstate Commerce?](#)", and address the questions below.
 - a. Do you agree that the statute in question applies to computer-generated and computer-transmitted information?
 - b. Should the government be required to present expert witnesses to establish that the material in question is obscene? Is this a question that a jury can decide on its own? How are jury members aware of "community standards"?
 - c. If the community standards are different in Milpitas, California, from those of Memphis, Tennessee, why should the defendants be held accountable for the standards in Memphis and not those in the location where the material was transmitted?
 - d. Are you satisfied with the test for obscenity? In what manner, if any, would you change the standard?

Your essay will be a minimum of two pages in length, not counting the title and reference pages. Your essay should contain a clear introduction and be well-organized.

You are required to use at least two resources to support your essay, one of which may be your textbook. All resources used including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations. Your essay, including all references, will be formatted in APA style.

Unit VIII Journal

Reflect on how you believe the knowledge you have obtained in this course will assist you in future academic or professional endeavors. Share an example of a course topic or activity you found particularly beneficial.

Optional: What is meant by victims' rights? Should today's crime victims have more rights? Why, or why not?

Your journal entry must be at least 200 words. No references or citations are necessary.

APA Guidelines

The application of the APA writing style shall be practical, functional, and appropriate to each academic level, with the primary purpose being the documentation (citation) of sources. CSU requires that students use APA style for certain papers and projects. Students should always carefully read and follow assignment directions and review the associated grading rubric when available. Students can find *The CSU Citation Guide* by clicking [here](#). This document includes examples and sample papers and provides information on how to contact the CSU Writing Center.

Grading Rubrics

This course utilizes analytic grading rubrics as tools for your professor in assigning grades for all learning activities. Each rubric serves as a guide that communicates the expectations of the learning activity and describes the criteria for each level of achievement. In addition, a rubric is a reference tool that lists evaluation criteria and can help you organize your efforts to meet the requirements of that learning activity. It is imperative for you to familiarize yourself with these rubrics because these are the primary tools your professor uses for assessing learning activities.

Rubric categories include (1) Journal, (2) Assessment (Written Response), and (3) Assignment. However, it is possible that not all of the listed rubric types will be used in a single course (e.g., some courses may not have Assessments).

The Journal rubric can be found within Unit I's Journal submission instructions.

The Assessment (Written Response) rubric can be found embedded in a link within the directions for each Unit Assessment. However, these rubrics will only be used when written-response questions appear within the Assessment.

Each Assignment type (e.g., article critique, case study, research paper) will have its own rubric. The Assignment rubrics are built into Blackboard, allowing students to review them prior to beginning the Assignment and again once the Assignment has been scored. This rubric can be accessed via the Assignment link located within the unit where it is to be submitted. Students may also access the rubric through the course menu by selecting "Tools" and then "My Grades."

Again, it is vitally important for you to become familiar with these rubrics because their application to your Journals, Assessments, and Assignments is the method by which your instructor assigns all grades.

Final Examination Guidelines

Final Exams are to be administered to students by an approved Proctor. CSU approves two flexible proctoring options: a standard Proctor, who is chosen by the student and approved by the university, or Remote Proctor Now (RP Now), an on-demand, third-party testing service that proctors examinations for a small fee.

Students choosing RP Now must have an operational webcam/video with audio, a high-speed Internet connection, and the appropriate system rights required to download and install software.

To review the complete Examination Proctor Policy, including a list of acceptable Proctors, Proctor responsibilities, Proctor approval procedures, and the Proctor Agreement Form, go to the myCSU Student Portal from the link below.

<http://mycsu.columbiasouthern.edu>

You are permitted four (4) hours to complete this exam in the presence of your approved Proctor. This is an open book exam. Only course textbooks, writing utensils, and a calculator, if necessary, are allowed when taking proctored exams.

You may use only your textbook as source material for your response. All source material must be referenced (paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations). You may use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA Style Guide) or the CSU Citation Guide for reference.

Communication Forums

These are nongraded discussion forums that allow you to communicate with your professor and other students. Participation in these discussion forums is encouraged but not required. You can access these forums with the buttons in the Course Menu. Instructions for subscribing/unsubscribing to these forums are provided below.

Once you have completed Unit VIII, you MUST unsubscribe from the forum; otherwise, you will continue to receive e-mail updates from the forum. You will not be able to unsubscribe after your course end date.

[Click here for instructions on how to subscribe/unsubscribe and post to the Communication Forums.](#)

Ask the Professor

This communication forum provides you with an opportunity to ask your professor general or course content questions. Questions may focus on Blackboard locations of online course components, textbook or course content elaboration, additional guidance on assessment requirements, or general advice from other students.

Questions that are specific in nature, such as inquiries regarding assessment/assignment grades or personal accommodation requests, are NOT to be posted on this forum. If you have questions, comments, or concerns of a non-public nature, please feel free to e-mail your professor. Responses to your post will be addressed or e-mailed by the professor within 48 hours.

Before posting, please ensure that you have read all relevant course documentation, including the syllabus, assessment/assignment instructions, faculty feedback, and other important information.

Student Break Room

This communication forum allows for casual conversation with your classmates. Communication on this forum should always maintain a standard of appropriateness and respect for your fellow classmates. This forum should NOT be used to share assessment answers.

Schedule/Grading

The following pages contain a printable Course Schedule to assist you through this course. By following this schedule, you will be assured that you will complete the course within the time allotted.

Unit I	Purposes and Sources of Criminal Law	[Weight: 12%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit I Study Guide Chapter 1: The Nature and History of Criminal Law Reading Assignment (1 document): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit I Journal Unit I Quiz Unit I Case Study 	2% 2% 8%

Unit II	Criminal Liability	[Weight: 12%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit II Study Guide Chapter 2: Criminal Liability and the Essence of Crime Chapter 3: Expanding the Concept of Crime Chapter 4: Extending Criminal Liability: Inchoate Offenses and Parties to Crime Reading Assignments (4 documents): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit II Journal Unit II Quiz Unit II Essay Proctor Approval Form 	2% 2% 8%

Unit III	Defenses and Insanity	[Weight: 12%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit III Study Guide Chapter 5: Justifications as Defenses Chapter 6: Defenses: Excuses and Insanity Reading Assignments (3 documents): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit III Journal Unit III Quiz Unit III Essay 	2% 2% 8%

Unit IV	Personal Crime: Homicide	[Weight: 15%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit IV Study Guide • Chapter 7: Crimes Against Persons: Homicide • Reading Assignment (1 document): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit IV Journal • Unit IV Quiz • Unit IV Case Study 	2% 3% 10%

Unit V	Crimes Against Persons	[Weight: 10%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit V Study Guide • Chapter 8: Crimes Against Persons: Assault, Sex Offenses, and Other Crimes • Reading Assignments (2 documents): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit V Journal • Unit V Case Study 	2% 8%

Unit VI	Property and Computer Crimes	[Weight: 8%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VI Study Guide • Chapter 9: Property and Computer Crimes 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VI Journal • Unit VI Assessment 	2% 6%

Unit VII	Public Order, Public Decency, and Morality Crimes	[Weight: 12%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VII Study Guide • Chapter 10: Offenses against Public Order and the Administration of Justice • Chapter 11: Offenses against Public Morality • Reading Assignments (2 documents): See Study Guide 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VII Journal • Unit VII Quiz • Unit VII Essay • Request to Take Final Exam 	2% 2% 8%

Unit VIII	Victims, Punishment, and Sentencing	[Weight: 19%]
Read/View:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VIII Study Guide • Chapter 13: Victims and the Law • Chapter 14: Punishment and Sentencing 	
Submit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit VIII Journal • Unit VIII Quiz • Final Exam 	2% 2% 15%