

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY
COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Sam Houston State University
Phone: 936-294-1635
College Web Site: <http://www.cjcenter.org/college/>

CRIJ 2364.01 Fundamentals of Criminal Law

Professor: Dr. Michael S. Vaughn, Ph.D.
Email: mvaughn@shsu.edu
Semester/Year: Fall, 2017
Office Hours: By appointment (email me)
Course Prerequisites: None

Credit Hours: 3
Phone: 936.294.1349
Office: 217 CJ Hotel
Class Location: A190 CJ Center
Course Time: 9:30—10:50 am MW

Course Description: This course will analyze substantive criminal law that includes an overview of the law, definition of crime, general principles of criminal responsibility, elements of major crimes, punishments, and conditions or circumstances that may excuse from criminal responsibility or mitigate punishment. Particular emphasis is on the penal laws of the State of Texas.

Course Objectives: This course will discuss various concepts and issues in criminal law. At various points and at the end of the semester, the students are expected to accomplish the following:

1. Develop an understanding of the basic principles that underlie the American system of law;
2. Explain and distinguish the different types of crimes;
3. Familiarize themselves with the elements of the primary state criminal offenses as defined by the Texas Penal Code;
4. Identify and discuss the possible criminal liabilities, defenses and mitigations of different parties to a crime; and
5. Utilize and develop critical thinking in handling specific cases involving possible criminal liability.

Required Text: None. All you need to do well in this class is to follow the lectures on power point, come to class, and answer the Top Hat questions correctly.

Attendance: Students are referred to the Sam Houston State University Undergraduate Catalog, 2016-2017 for the official university policy on class attendance. Students are expected to read all course lectures on a regular basis. Excessive Students' grades will be adversely impacted if they miss course lectures and assigned readings because test and quiz material will be presented through lectures. <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Academic Honesty: All students at this University are expected to engage in academic pursuits on their own with complete honesty and integrity. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The Faculty of Sam Houston State University expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit), the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college. The University's policy on **academic honesty** and appeal procedures can be found at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Disability Student Policy: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Services for Disabled Students <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Day Policy: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Use of Telephones and Text Messages in Academic Classrooms and Facilities:
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-curriculum.html>

Withdrawals: Students wishing to withdraw are cautioned to follow formal procedures outlined by the university. Consult the Sam Houston State University Undergraduate Catalog, 2016-2017 for official policies under “tuition and fees refund policy” and “dropping courses.”

Incompletes: Except for the gravest of emergencies, a grade of "incomplete" will not be allowed for the course. Any missing grades, whether for examination or assignments, will be assumed to be zeros and will be averaged as such.

Tests and Make-up Exams: There will be 4 non-cumulative tests over the course of the semester, **September 18, October 11, November 13, and Wednesday December 6 (9:30—11:30 am)**. Each test will consist of 20% of the final grade. The exams will cover lectures and in-class Top Hat questions. This means that exams be multiple choice questions. All tests must be taken during the time indicated. Students will have the entire class time to take the exams. If a student misses an exam, a make-up exam may be scheduled, but make-up exams will be given only in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Bonus Points: 10 bonus points are available to students who write a 3-page TIMES ROMAN 12 POINT (3 pages of text; must be 3 full pages; if not 3 full pages you get no points), double-spaced, typed, any format is acceptable) summary of the U.S. Supreme Court case *Moore v. Texas*. (2017). You can Google the name of the case to find it. Bonus points are added to the final grade after all scores have been calculated. **Due on the day you take the final exam.** Submit to professor paper copy only; no email submissions.

Grade Curving: Grades will be curved for the exams; hence, no curving will occur, except the bonus points, when the students' final grades are calculated at the end of the semester.

Class Attendance and Participation: Class attendance and participation is required. Both will be measured by Top Hat attendance and participation grade is worth 20% of the final grade. There is no make-up of class attendance unless it is excused; participation grades cannot be made-up. If class non-attendance is excused, it will be credited on Top Hat, but class participation will not be credited on Top Hat, if you are absent, even if the absence is excused.

Grade Distribution: The final grade will be based on the 4 tests (20% each) and Top Hat attendance and participation worth 20%. 100-90%=A, 89-80%=B, 79-70%=C, 69-60%=D, 59% and below=F. If a student has an 89.4% at the end of the semester, the student will have earned a “B.” A final grade of 89.5% will be rounded up to an “A.”

NOTE--This syllabus is primarily for planning purposes, and the professor reserves the right to alter it in any fashion.

Top Hat

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

Attendance will be taken on Top Hat. If you are late to class and miss the time for recording your attendance on Top Hat, you will be counted as not here that day, even if you show up for class after attendance was taken and answer the Top Hat questions. Your answers to the questions will still count on Top Hat, but your attendance will be recorded as absent. This includes everything that would make you late for class: traffic jams, full parking lots, family emergencies, acts of God, etc. The only exceptions to this policy would be excused absences (jury duty, court appearances, family deaths, religious holidays)

You must bring any Top Hat concerns to my attention one week (7 days) after their occurrence. Bringing it to my attention means you must tell me verbally of the issue after class AND write me an email explaining the specifics of the situation (i.e., what question(s) you could not answer because of technical problems). This means you have one week after you have a Top Hat issue to bring the problem to my attention. After one week, the issue will NOT be addressed, and you will have forfeited your right to contest the issue. (I.E., your phone froze, was not charged, or due to a lack of connection you could not log-in to Top Hat; you contest a Top Hat recording of your answer or a Top Hat question in general; excused absences, etc.).

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: Note: our Course Join Code is the number (706780)

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

Top Hap Support

Should you require further assistance with Top Hat, our Support Team is here to help! You can contact us directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, the *Contact Support* button on this page, or calling us at 1-888-663-5491.

	AREA OF DISCUSSION
	Orientation; Review of Course Syllabus
	Foundations of Criminal Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview of crime and criminal law, including sources, classification and purpose of criminal law
	Elements of a Crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of basic elements of crime ▪ Analysis of hypothetical cases to illustrate the elements of a crime
	The Criminal Law in Daily Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the process for filing criminal charges and the procedure under Texas Courts ▪ Discussion of various legal doctrines such as double jeopardy and ex post facto law ▪ Analysis of issues in sentencing and bias crimes
Exam	First Exam September 18
	Parties to Offenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of nature and scope of criminal liabilities of parties to the offense under common law and Texas law ▪ Criminal liability of corporations
	Criminal Homicide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of murder, capital murder, voluntary and involuntary manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
	Assault and Sexual Assault <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of assault and sexual assault. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
Exam	Second Exam October 11
	Kidnapping and Related Offenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of kidnapping and related offenses. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
	Property Destruction Offenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of property destruction. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
	Theft and Fraud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of theft and fraud. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
Exam	Third Exam November 13
	Robbery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of the elements of robbery. ▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.

	<p>Burglary and Criminal Trespass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Discussion of the elements of burglary and criminal trespass.▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
	<p>Offenses Against Government Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Discussion of the elements of various offenses against government operations.▪ Interpretation of each of these elements according to cases decided by U.S. courts.
Exam 4	Fourth Exam Wednesday December 6 (9:30—11:30 am).