

Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Sam Houston State University

CJ 2364-05
Fundamentals of Criminal Law
Spring 2018

Professor: Bennie L. Schiro
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Class Hours: Online
Classroom: Online
Office Hours: By appointment

Always put "CRIJ.05" in Subject Line when corresponding with me. In addition, please do not submit assignments by email unless first requesting to do so. Otherwise it may cause problems with Blackboard.

Required Textbooks:

Criminal Law (Justice Series) Author: Jennifer L. Moore; John Worrall, University of Texas at Dallas
ISBNIO: 0133145573 • ISBN-13: 9780133145571 © 2015 • Prentice Hall • Paper, 264 pp Published 1/22/14

Texas Criminal Law: Principles and Practices Author 2d Edition: Jerry L. Dowling, Sam Houston State University ISBN 13: 978013351257 (978-0-13-351-257-1)

Supplemental Reading Material: ACCESS TO ANY CURRENT version of the Texas Penal Code. Several companies publish the penal code if you wish to have a hard copy. Make sure your copy is complete through the 2015-2017 legislative session. A digital copy of the current Texas Penal Code is available on the internet.

Course Description:

A course in the substantive criminal law which includes definition of law, definition of crime, general principles of criminal responsibility, elements of major crimes, punishments, and conditions or circumstances which may excuse from criminal responsibility or mitigate punishment. Particular emphasis is on the penal laws of the State of Texas.

Course Objectives:

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.

Course Requirements:

This online course will be delivered via an education software called Blackboard. It is important that the students have a computer/laptop and internet connection that work properly. For the technical requirements and the specifics about how to get started in the online class, please refer to the website “Online Student Orientation” at <http://distance.shsu.edu/current-students/orientation.html>

The class material will be presented by using PowerPoint slides posted online. The length of the PowerPoint slides varies depending on the complexity of the chapter content. Students are expected to REVIEW each slideshow. Students are also expected to read the assigned readings, complete the Discussion assignments, take the quizzes and exam. When you have questions about the course content, feel free to email me.

Students will be informed of the class updates, changes and new developments by means of mass emails and class announcements. It is important for the students to check the SHSU email accounts for the class updates on a frequent basis.

Grading:

Your grade will not be curved or bartered. It is recommended that you monitor your own progress. To protect your privacy, grades will not be discussed via phone, email, or anywhere other than in the professor’s office.

A: 100-90% B: 89-80% C: 79-70% D: 69-60% F: <59

Exam: (75%) Two exams will be based on the course material. The exams are designed to assess knowledge, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. The final exam must be completed **May 9, 2017 by 11:59pm**. While the exams are “open book” and students are permitted to use notes and the textbook, the exams are timed and it will be impossible to locate the answers without having read the material in advance. To do well on exams, students should view PowerPoints and complete assigned reading before beginning the exam.

Discussions: (25%) The discussion questions for this class are based on the Your Decision questions posed within the chapters of the Criminal Law textbook or proposed by me. The first assignment will ask you to introduce yourself so that you can become familiar with the layout and assignment. After that first one, for each discussion assignment, you will be provided with 3 or 4 questions in the assigned chapters, and given a choice of which Your Decision question you would like to answer. These are designed to promote critical thinking about the subject matter you are learning about.

Participation must be more than trivial, e.g. substantive and substantial (3-4 sentence paragraph at minimum); did you support your belief; and for bonus professor appreciation, can you relate the question to wording in the Texas Penal Code (e.g. In Texas, this situation would be under Sec. 42.03) Note: Written information drawn from a source other than the textbook must always be cited.

There is a total of 10 discussion assignments that are graded at 10 points each.

Original posts will be due at 11:59pm on Wednesday evenings. Late original posts will NOT be accepted after Wednesday evenings and will be given a -0-.

Make-up Exams:

Make-up exams will be at the discretion of the professor based on communication between the student and professor.

Technical:

This course requires regular access to the Internet, Microsoft Word, and Adobe PDF files. If you do not know how to use blackboard, or if you encounter technical difficulties with the course website, contact the DELTA Center 24/7 helpdesk (1-877-870-9214 or helpdesk@shsuonline.net)

STUDENT ACADEMIC POLICIES concerning Attendance, Academic Honesty, Disabled Student and Services for Disabled Students, and Absences on Religious Holy days may be found at:
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>

Technical Support:

For questions about Blackboard or technical issues with videos, assignments, or tests, please contact SHSU Online Support Desk:

Technology Call Center: Dedicated personnel available: Phone: (936) 294-2780 Monday - Friday Toll Free: (877) 759-2232 7:00 am – Midnight CST

Saturday 8:00 am – 8:00 pm CST
E-mail: blackboard@shsu.edu

Chat & Twitter with the Support Desk: Monday - Friday, 7am - Midnight CST Saturday 8 am to 8 pm CST

For questions about your email account, or password assistance, please refer to the IT@Sam Help Desk: Phone: (936) 294-1950 Email: helpdesk@shsu.edu Monday – Friday 7:00am – Midnight CST Saturday 8:00 am – Midnight CST

I CANNOT EXPRESS ENOUGH TO NOT GET BEHIND IN THE ASSIGNED READINGS!

WEEK	ASSIGNMENT	SPECIFIC READING
1/17/18 – 1/24/18	Chapter 1: Foundations of Criminal Law Chapter 2: Limitations of the Criminal Law Discussion #1 due by 1/24/18	
1/24/18 - 1/31/18	Chapter 3: The Elements of Criminal Liability	

	Texas Foundations of Criminal Law (Ch. 1)	Pgs. 1-14; 19-22
	Texas Elements of a crime (Ch. 2)	Pgs. 30-36; 44-51
	Discussion #2 due by 1/31/18	
1/31/18 - 2/07/18	Chapter 4: Justification Defenses Chapter 5: Excuse Defenses	
	Discussion #3 due by 2/07/18	
2/07/18 - 2/14/18	Chapter 6 Complicity and Vicarious Liability	
	Discussion #4 due by 2/14/18	
2/14/18 - 2/21/18	Texas Parties to Offenses (ch. 4)	Pgs 78-84
	Texas General Defenses and Justification (ch 15)	Pgs 412-426; 429-440
	No Discussion this Week (more time to study for next week)	
2/21/18 - 2/28/18	Exam One will be open from 2/26/18 through 2/28/18	
2/28/18 - 3/07/18	Chapter 7 Inchoate Crimes Chapter 8 Homicide	
	Discussion #5 due 3/07/18	
3/07/18 - 3/14/18	SPRING BREAK	
3/14/18 - 3/21/18	Chapter 9 Assaultive Offenses	
	Texas Homicide (Ch. 5) Texas Assault and Sexual Assault (Ch. 6)	
	Discussion #6 due 3/21/18	
3/28/18 - 4/04/18	Chapter 10: Property Damage and Invasion Texas Kidnapping and Related Offenses Ch 7 Texas Robbery (Ch. 10a) Texas preparatory Offenses (Ch. 14)	Pgs. 259-267
	Discussion #7 due 4/04/18	
4/04/18 - 4/11/18	Chapter 11 Theft and Analogous Offenses	
	Discussion #8 due 4/11/18	

4/11/18 - 4/18/18	<p>Chapter 12 Public Order, morality and Vice Crimes</p> <p>Texas Criminal Law in Daily Practice (Ch. 3)</p> <p>Texas Intoxication Offenses (Ch. 13)</p> <p>Discussion #9 due 4/18/18</p>	
4/18/18 - 4/25/18	<p>Chapter 13: Terrorism and Offenses against the State</p> <p>Texas Property Destruction Offenses (Ch. 8)</p> <p>Texas Burglary and Criminal Trespass (Ch. 10b)</p> <p>Discussion #10 due 4/25/18</p>	Pgs. 268-286
4/25/18 - 5/2/18	<p>Texas Theft Fraud and Related Offenses (Ch. 9)</p> <p>Texas Public Disorder, Indecency, Health and Safety Offenses (Ch. 12)</p> <p>No Discussion Assignment</p>	
5/02/18 - 5/09/17	FINAL EXAM	