

CRIMINAL LAW #125 – FALL 2024

Harold E. Johnson, Instructor

SYLLABUS*

WELCOME ABOARD!

SUBSTANCE:

This course is an introduction to Criminal Law. It will include a discussion of the Common Law and statutory law in the topic, as well as some relevant Constitutional material. It is intended to provide the basic foundation for the Bar Examination on the subject and to introduce fundamental principles of substantive criminal law to the potential practitioner as well.

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS*:

*N.B. This syllabus is only an approximation of the material that is likely to be covered in the suggested time period. The actual pace will depend upon class session progress.

*I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE OR ALTER THE SYLLABUS IN ANY WAY, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, GRADING AND QUIZ AND EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING METHODS AND PLATFORMS.

CLASSES:

All classes are expected to be in person. It is not expected that Zoom recordings will be made of the classes nor that there will be an “official” audio recording of the classes.

Please be aware that any class session or review may be recorded by any individual student who attends such class or review.

It is important that all students read the assigned material in the casebook, along with any other assigned material, and are prepared to discuss it during class.

GRADING:

Assessed performance on intermittent quizzes, a midterm examination and, of course, the final exam, will determine the grade awarded. The date of the administration of the quizzes and the midterm examination will depend on class progress. Of course, the final exam’s time and date will be set by the Administration. Please note that the anticipated method of administration of quizzes and exams is expected to be in-person with the possibility of Massachusetts School of Law approved software on the midterm and the final to be used in-person. The amount of credit for the quizzes is expected to be 10% of the total grade, the midterm 15% of the total grade and the final exam 75% of the total grade. Again, the credit amount of each may be subject to change.

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF LAW POLICY

It is, of course, expected that all students will comply with all Massachusetts Law School policies including, but not limited to, the Massachusetts School of Law Honor Code and other school requirements.

Grading and testing administration and platforms will be consistent with the school policy and are, as noted, like the remainder of this syllabus, subject to change.

MISCELLANEOUS:

OFFICE HOURS:

I will conduct office hours, for those students who wish to meet with me, by appointment and generally via Zoom. Please be aware that these meetings may be recorded. I will try to be as flexible as possible in setting a mutually convenient time on such requests.

STUDY GROUP(S)

I expect to hold “study group” sessions, dependent on student interest, to work through questions on the material. Generally, such sessions will be conducted during the weekend. Please be aware that such sessions may be recorded. Study group sessions are expected to be conducted via Zoom.

EMAIL

Please know that email questions by students on the substance of the material are welcome. If a student poses a substantive question, I will answer it either via email to the student or, if I believe it is of general class interest, via email to all students, or will discuss the answer in class. I generally will not disclose the name of the original questioner in the email or discussion. It is hoped that such questions will help students to think more about the substance. Email: hjohnson@mslaw.edu

REVIEW

I expect to conduct a review or reviews of the class material. The platform for the review is expected to be via audio recording, which will be posted in the school’s Dropbox file for the class. We will discuss this as the class progresses and I am better able to assess the time requirements for coverage of the material.

TEXT: DRIPPS, BOYCE AND PERKINS, CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (14th ED.), UNIVERSITY CASEBOOK SERIES, FOUNDATION PRESS (NEW YORK 2021).
ISBN: 978-1-64708-811-8**

****It is also expected that outside materials will be assigned. Other outside references will also be suggested.**

FIRST CLASS, AUGUST 19, 2024***

INTRODUCTION
THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
TWO CENTURIES, TWO CASES

PT. 1. THE SUBSTANTIVE CRIMINAL LAW

CHAPTER 1: CRIMINALIZATION, DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

CLASS #2

CHAPTER 1: CONTINUED

CHAPTER 2: OFFENSES AGAINST THE PERSON

CLASS #3

CHAPTER 2: CONTINUED

CLASS # 4

CHAPTER 3: OFFENSES AGAINST HABITATION AND OTHER
PROTECTED ENTITIES

CHAPTER 4: OFFENSES AGAINST PROPERTY

CLASS #5

CHAPTER 4: CONTINUED

CLASS #6

CHAPTER 5: IMPUTABILITY

CLASS #7

CHAPTER 5: CONTINUED
CHAPTER 6: RESPONSIBILITY IN GENERAL

CLASS #8

CHAPTER 6: CONTINUED
CHAPTER 7: RESPONSIBILITY: LIMITATIONS ON CRIMINAL CAPACITY

CLASS #9

CHAPTER 7: CONTINUED
CHAPTER 8: RESPONSIBILITY: MODIFYING CIRCUMSTANCES

CLASS # 10

CHAPTER 8: CONTINUED
CHAPTER 9: SPECIAL DEFENSES

CLASS #11

CHAPTER 9: CONTINUED

LAST CLASSES:

UNFINISHED MATERIALS AND REVIEW

***As noted, the pace at which the material is covered in each class session is often determined by student appreciation of the material. The pace will vary.

No class on Labor Day / No class on Indigenous Peoples' Day / Last Class Dec. 2, 2024.