

AJ 14 - CONCEPTS OF CRIMINAL LAW

Spring 2000
Professor Lou Holscher
Office: MQH 521
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 10:30 – 12:00
Phone: 924-2948; Fax: 924-2953
Email: holscher@email.sjsu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A comprehensive study of sources, distinctions, and limitations relating to criminal law; the development of criminal law in the United States; the principles of criminal liability; the criteria considered in determining capacity and defenses; the various crimes and their elements.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the theory involved when determining what conduct is to be made criminal.
2. Distinguish between common law crimes and statutory crimes.
3. Distinguish between torts and crimes.
4. List and explain the general principles regarding responsibility and liability.
5. Describe the defenses available to those charged with criminal activity including such defenses as entrapment, alibi, duress, necessity and self-defense.
6. Recognize that a person may be guilty of an offense if the acts or conduct is part of the preparation for the commission of another offense and state the elements of the crimes relating to preparatory activity such as attempt, criminal solicitation and conspiracy.
7. List, define and interpret crimes against persons and crimes against property.

TEXTBOOK

Criminal Law, 6th Edition, (1999), Joel Samaha, West Publishing Co.

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on four exams, and five written briefs, plus optional extra-credit exam.

1. The four exams are objective: multiple choice and true/false. The questions are from the chapters in the text, the cases in the text, and lectures. The fourth exam will be during finals week. Exams = 80% of final grade.
2. The cases for the briefs will be assigned by me. (A brief is a summary and analysis of a case). An example of a brief will be given out in class. Briefs = 20% of final grade. To receive full credit for writing a brief you must submit it to me in class the day we discuss that case. Briefs turned in late will receive one letter grade lower. No briefs will be accepted after the date I return that particular case brief in class.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 27	Introduction: Course description and nature of criminal law
Feb. 1 & 8	Nature and origins of criminal law; general principles of criminal law - chapters one and two
Feb. 15-24	Criminal liability - chapter three
Feb. 29-Mar. 7	Parties to crime - chapter four
Mar. 14-Apr. 4	Attempts, solicitation, and conspiracy - chapter five
Apr. 6-18	Justifications - chapter six
Apr.20-27	Excuses - chapter seven
May 4-16	Homicide, assault and battery, burglary, theft, and robbery - chapters eight and nine

EXAMS

Exam #1	Chapters one and two. 10% of final grade. Approximate exam date: Feb. 10.
Exam #2	Chapters three and four. 20% of final grade Approximate exam date: March 9.
Exam #3	Chapters five, six, and seven. 30% of final grade. Approximate exam date: May 2.
Exam #4	Chapters eight and nine. 20% of final grade. Exam date: Thursday, May 24, 8 AM.
Exam #5	Extra credit. Chapters ten and eleven. Date and time same as fourth exam.

Makeup Exams: Given only in emergency cases; documentation may be required.