Course Description

Teaches the elements of proof for major and common law crimes and the legal classification of offenses. Studies the kinds, degrees and admissibility of evidence and its presentation in criminal proceedings with emphasis on legal guidelines for methods and techniques of evidence acquisition. Surveys the procedural requirements from arrest to final disposition in the various American court systems with focus on the Virginia jurisdiction. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an introduction to the substantive criminal law, its history, philosophy and application.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of the sources of criminal law and the elements of the various criminal offenses and legal defenses
- Prepare for the collection, identification, preservation and introduction of evidence

Major Topics To Be Included

- Definition and sources of criminal law
- Types of and parties to crime, capacity to commit crime and defenses
- Crimes against persons
- Crimes against property
- Crimes against public health, administration of justice, etc
- Inchoate crimes
- Kinds and competency of evidence
- Privileged communications
- Lay and expert witnesses
- Impeachment of witnesses
- Hearsay and its exceptions

Extra Topics (Optional)

Related topics at the discretion of the instructor