

NVCC COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
LGL 218 - CRIMINAL LAW (3 CR.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on major crimes, including their classification, elements of proof, intent, conspiracy, responsibility, parties, and defenses. Emphasizes Virginia law. May include general principles of applicable Constitutional law and criminal procedure. Lecture 3 hours per week.

GENERAL COURSE PURPOSE

This course is designed to introduce the student to the various substantive and procedural areas of criminal law.

ENTRY LEVEL COMPETENCIES

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, proficiency (at the high school level) in spoken and written English is recommended for its successful completion.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the structure of the criminal justice system
- describe the elements of various federal and Virginia state crimes
- understand the ways in which a person can become a party to a crime
- describe the elements of various affirmative defenses to federal and Virginia state crimes
- understand the basic structure of the law governing arrest, search and seizure, and recognize Constitutional issues posed in these areas
- describe the stages of criminal proceedings, in both federal and state courts, and assist a prosecutor or defense lawyer at each stage of such proceedings

MAJOR TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED

- crimes versus moral wrongs
- felonies vs. misdemeanors
- criminal capacity
- actus reas, mens rea and causation
- elements of various federal and Virginia state crimes
- inchoate crimes: attempt, solicitation, and conspiracy
- parties to a crime
- affirmative defenses
- insanity
- probable cause
- arrest, with and without a warrant
- search and seizure, with and without a warrant
- grand jury indictments
- bail and pretrial release
- pretrial proceedings
- steps of trial and appeal

EXTRA TOPICS WHICH MAY BE INCLUDED

- purposes of criminal law and punishment
- sentencing, probation and parole
- special issues posed by mental illness
- special issues posed by the death penalty