

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
ADJ 120 - INTRODUCTION TO COURTS (3 CR.)

Course Description

Presents an overview of the American judiciary -- the Federal and State Judicial Systems -- with emphasis on criminal court structures, functions, and personnel. Surveys the judicial system in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with knowledge of the role of the courts (federal and state) and how they relate to the adult offender in the criminal justice system.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

Course Objectives

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

- a) state the role of the federal court in the criminal justice system.
- b) state the role of the state court in the criminal justice system.
- c) describe the operation of the judicial system of the commonwealth of Virginia.
- d) list current problems within the criminal justice system.

Major Topics to be Included

- a) Legal basis of the criminal courts
 - a. criminal procedures
 - b. criminal law
 - c. the organization of the courts
- b) Introduce the legal actors
 - a. judges
 - b. prosecutors
 - c. defense attorneys with emphasis on the working relationships between them and their exercise of discretion
- c) General stages that a case passes through from arrest to determination of guilt or innocence
- d) Sentencing procedures for the guilty
- e) Identify problems with the system and discuss key aspects of reforming the criminal court process

Extra Topics (Optional)

Related topics at the discretion of the instructor